

# 108 Mala Beads

John Linton



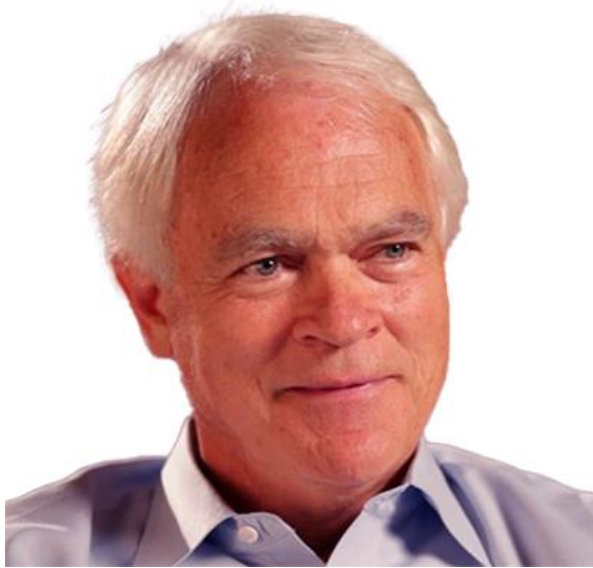
A Journey to Healing and Joy

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Let My Experience Give You Hope

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This book is dedicated to the belief that peace comes from understanding yourself, those around you, accepting and forgiving, and most importantly, connecting to your Divinity.



## What Readers are Saying

Thoroughly enjoyable! John's storytelling ability is well displayed as he takes you through his journey to healing and hope. The honesty and humor and great lessons backed by so much research and life experience is easy to read and easy to feel. We all have our own journey, but John's book will hopefully shorten your path to the destination of hope and joy.

John Neal, Hartford, Connecticut

Written with remarkable transparency, the book helped me realize that sometimes we act from other people's wishes and not our own soul, not living a life of honesty as to who we really are. It's a heartwarming experience to appreciate yourself and know that you are enough.

Alicia Huerta, Mexico City

Rather than giving in to disease, John charted a path of self-discovery. You will learn tools to spiritually guide you to your own purpose. Everyone should read this book. It is possible to create a life of love and happiness without the fear of being judged.

Brett Rohmer, Wendover, Nevada

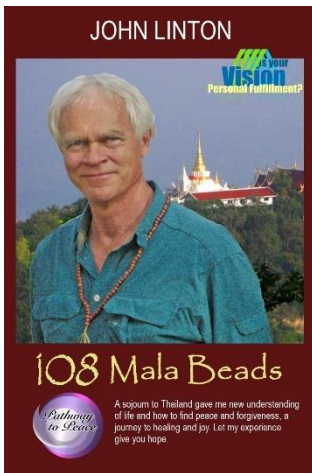
Well written, the book is filled with strategies to help anyone who is overcoming pain and uncertainty. It is a message of hope much needed in the world today. The author is a great storyteller. It's refreshing to read someone who is so totally honest, yet humble, loving and forgiving.

Diane Merideth, Redding, California

# Author's Note

This book is one of five books I have been developing for several years. Now complete, each book represents a very important aspect of my lifetime of experiences which I present in the program *A Pathway to Peace*.

Vision is a very important concept to me, and I believe it should be at the core of every human being. What is it you want? Where do you want to be? What do you hope to accomplish? What is your vision of happiness?

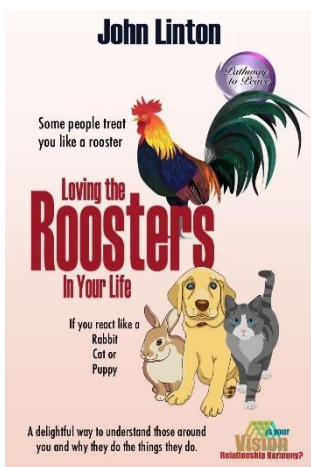
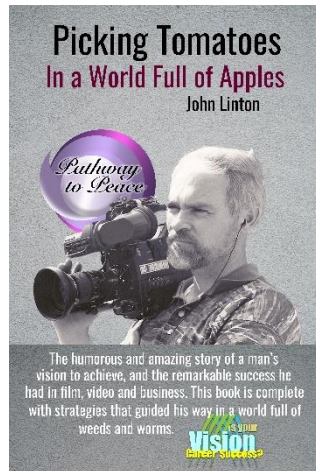


This book *108 Mala Beads* chronicles my personal spiritual journey. It asks the question, “What is your vision of personal fulfillment?” Within the book I reflect on the joyous experiences of relationships including family, marriage, children, grandchildren and many other associations. I delve into the importance of spirituality, religion, meditation, and education with an underlying cognizance of my own unique humanity.

I come from a huge ancestry with many aunts and uncles and have a growing posterity which brings me great joy.

However, amidst this, I had many personal struggles and crises which culminated in my sojourn in Thailand 17 years ago. There I received a Japa Mala with 108 beads, each representing happy, joyous, and meaningful experiences throughout my life. I share many insights of personal growth with you.

The book, *Picking Tomatoes In a World Full of Apples*, asks the question, “What is your vision of career success?” Within are various adolescent, educational and career moves—some deliberate, some foolish, some involuntary—but all culminating in a happy life for me. This is one aspect of my journey on the pathway to peace. There are many stories, some offering useful advice to anyone charting life’s path from a career perspective. There are many amazing and comical situations reflecting the good, the bad and the ugly in my life of education and work.



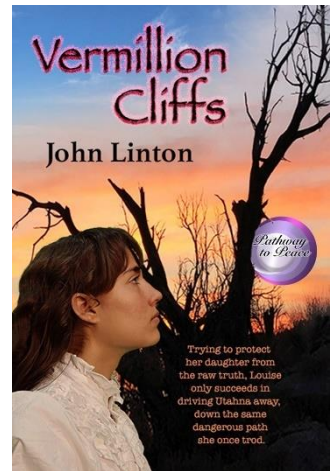
The book *Loving the Roosters In your Life* is an interesting and thoughtful explanation of why people do the things they do, often crazy and painful behaviors that make life difficult. This book asks the question, “What is your vision of relationship harmony?” It reflects on my work through many years of producing videos with some of the most highly renowned experts in psychiatry, psychology, education,

family relationships and researchers in the field of human behavior. Fascinating true stories of real people fill this book to give you understanding as to how you might better relate to other people in your life and how you can understand your own behavior as you interact with them. In the face of daily confrontations, confusion,

difficulty, or opportunity—do you behave like a rooster, a rabbit, a cat or a puppy?

The book *Vermillion Cliffs* is a novel I created as I crisscrossed the continent for many years while producing videos. With fictional characters, I tell the story that reflects much of the guilt and shame I have experienced and witnessed in others close to me. The novel is set in the beautiful red-rock country of Southern Utah.

From the prologue it reads:



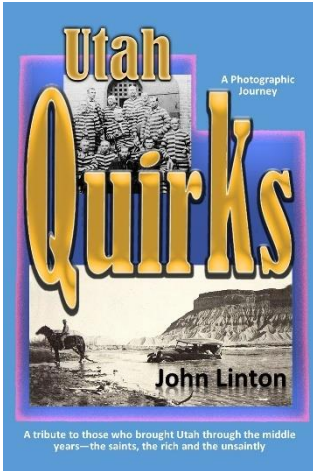
*On Utah statehood day, January 4, 1896, Louise gave birth to her illegitimate daughter. In honor of the day, the baby was named Utahna—a name the girl detests.*

*Trying to protect her daughter from the raw truth, Louise only succeeds in driving Utahna away—to the very path she herself once walked but has always denied. Crime, tragedy, and harrowing revelations reach life-threatening proportions as mother and daughter struggle to find mutual devotion in a sea of deception.*

In one of the many accolades praising this novel, one woman in the Midwest said this book could not have been written by a man. This is a powerful story of a mother and daughter’s struggle and reconciliation. A man she thought, could never write such an insightful story.

I was the only boy in a family with four sisters. Maybe that’s why I could do it.

*Utah Quirks* is a companion book to the novel, *Vermillion Cliffs*, telling the factual circumstances in which the fictional characters lived.



This colorful compilation is a fascinating, humorous, and uniquely informative photographic journey through Utah's middle years, paying tribute to the saints, the rich and the unsaintly. The photos and stories in this book bridge the cultural divide between pioneer days and the advancing technology of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

From a cultural perspective, polygamy laid the groundwork for much of the quirkiness of the era, set against the stunning and fractious geology of the Colorado Plateau, which fills much of the stunning panorama of present-day Utah.

The prehistoric geological epoch is itself one of the greatest quirks of all, shaping the landscape west of the Rockies. Vast as it is, this area is a small part of what Brigham Young laid claim to as the State of Deseret, an area that encompassed most of the western United States.



# Preface

## Follow Me in My Path to Bliss

In 2007 I began a five-week sojourn in Thailand. I was in the midst of a mid-life crisis and hoped that alone I would unwrap my true self in that far off land of Siam. Much of this book was written then. It remained hidden deep in the bowels of different hard drives—until now—revealing knowledge and practices that helped me on my journey to healing, peace and self-actualization.

As I look at my life now, 17 years later, I reflect on the fact that my religious affiliation has been at the core of my life, and a pillar in my later years. I was born into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We are often referred to as Mormons, Latter-day Saints, or simply LDS.

Much of what I reveal in these pages may appear to be critical of my religious moorings. In truth, difficulties I have had relate to the culture and assumptions that emerge from the religious bulwark in which I was raised. I believe and adhere to the basic doctrines and principles of the church. However, I have learned that people living in an institutionalized format such as what any church, school, or political party may provide, produce expectations where the belief prevails, one size fits all.

After I served a mission for the church, I searched for a partner to become my companion and mother of my children. I happily married Blanch Yardley from Beaver, Utah. She became an excellent mother and support of me. Later we became successful business partners, which unfortunately eroded our relationship as

marriage partners. During succeeding decades, I found myself at odds with much of what was expected of me, largely exacerbated by the strict cultural environment in which we lived. Over time I realized that one size does not fit all. I had to discover my true self and my authentic relationship with God.

My sojourn in Thailand brought me to that point. A few years after, Blanch and I were divorced. Anything written in this book should not be construed as criticism of her or of the church. Blanch is well grounded in her beliefs and commitments, as is the church well focused on its worldwide mission. I honor those anchorings, much as I have learned to honor the anchorings of my true self.

My divorce was difficult but amicable, and I honor my former wife for her uniqueness and talents and devotion to our children, recognizing that our incompatibilities were too much to overcome.

Several years later I re-married, finding my partner in Norma Huerta from Mexico. This book journeys me through these experiences, with much detail regarding my discovery of Norma, and the foundation upon which we have built our new relationship.

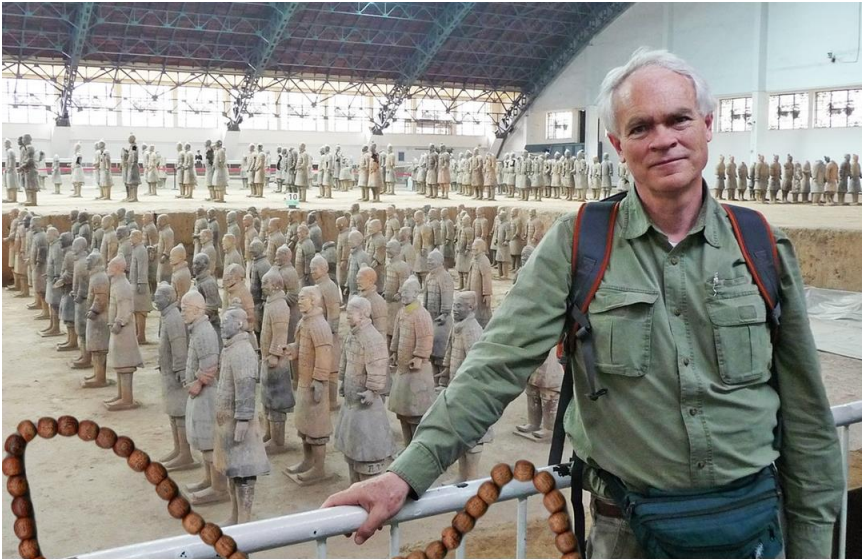
At the top of a mountain in Thailand I had the most freeing experience of my life, void of pressure, expectation, judgment or obligation. I began to learn the art of being me. In those moments, I started on the path to better understand myself, define my vision for personal fulfillment and discover self-determination.

With effective strategies I learned through my years of struggle, I began to let go of stifling expectations borne of well-meaning religion and people, and the guilt and shame that followed.

As you travel this journey with me, you will experience some of my painful drama, frustration, and misguidance. But you will also be lifted with me to a pinnacle of joy and peace that I now enjoy, these many years later. With me you will vicariously live the joy of letting go, sense the release of forgiving yourself and others, and see how you can chart your path to be free of angst, uncertainty and fear, as I have done.

The profound irony for me is that I came from a life of extrinsic expectations from others couched in religious culture, to one in which I place internally motivated intrinsic expectations on myself, many of a similar nature, but emerging from within and not from without.

I have internalized a commitment to religious doctrine along with the ability to place accompanying expectations in perspective. This has brought me peace and joy through commitment to love, trust and acceptance. Indeed, more than just following the teachings of Christ, I try to live the attributes of Christ.



It took 2000 years to discover the  
Terra-Cotta Warriors in China.

It took nearly a lifetime to begin discovering  
my true self in Thailand.

x Stunning and  
remarkable as it is to  
look at these soldiers, how rewarding  
it is to reflect on my own life.

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# Introduction

## A Little Deep Background About Me

In 1945 I was born just before the end of World War II. For the first two decades of my life, I was empowered by my parents to pursue my vision and passions—becoming quite talented in photography, art and writing—crafts that served me well for the next 60 years.



At age 19 I accepted the call to be a Mormon missionary. I then



discovered I was accountable to other individuals with a set of strict rules and expectations. On the whole, this was a wonderful and very rewarding experience, though difficult at times.

After two years of missionary service, it was college, marriage, five children, military service and

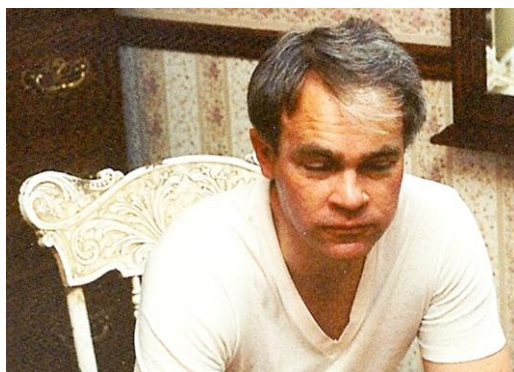
the launching of a career which brought forth new opportunities and challenges to the free-wheeling spirit of my youth. After many years of hard work, it was eventual separation from Blanch and divorce.

During the intervening years, I pursued many business ventures, often more painful than successful. I am happy for what I accomplished during that half-century, but through my middle years, I longed for the freedom I knew as a child and teenager. I was often overwhelmed with the unending demands of business, expectations of religion and the needs of family placed upon me.

## **I Had to Discover My True Self**

Without realizing it, I had the deep psychological need to rediscover the "Johnny," the little boy still within me.

As I began preparing this book for publication, I discovered that much of what I wrote many years ago in a tropical environment on a laptop is laced with a lot of anger and frustration at having allowed myself to be controlled by a tightly ruled society, primarily as a spin-off from strict religious norms. Within that construct, I felt valued for what I could do, not for who I was.



Throughout my career I have been a writer and a producer, and I always remember being filtered. I felt as if people were looking over my shoulder to make sure that what I wrote or produced was



acceptable and non-controversial to the larger society and church leaders in particular.

However, being the free spirit and highly creative person that I am, I was in fact on occasion criticized, corrected and putdown. These instances had a deep psychological impact on me.

## **I Had to Let Go of Anger**

Unedited, here is a portion of that original narrative I wrote so long ago. Laced with wrath and sarcasm, to some it may be controversial, and possibly inappropriate, but it is honest and reflective of my feelings at that time, 17 years ago.

*In Thailand they are called farangs—foreigners. As a farang, I am spilling my guts in the enchanted land known anciently as Siam.*

*Spilling my guts? Not in some fight to the death battle depicted on the walls of Asian temples and shrines, combatants of dragons and snakes tearing at each other voraciously, but rather a purging of my soul.*

*For years now I have lived with the dragons and snakes within my core, ripping at my psyche and sense of purpose and value. Onto the pages of this book, I feel compelled to unravel the years of imprisoned temper, pain and squelched creativity caused by a burdensome world of guilt and shame for finding it impossible to follow the perfect life script laid out before me.*

*As if the subject of a perfect story in a perfect time for a TV series like "Father Knows Best" or "Ozzie and Harriet," I*

*was born in a perfect white middle-class home in a perfect neighborhood. Or so it would seem.*

*The script is perfect, having been fine tuned for generations. Grow up, don't play dangerous sports but you can play little league baseball (I hated baseball, I always struck out and was relegated to right field where flies never went); don't ride a motorcycle; and remember that children are to be seen and not heard.*

*Say your prayers, read the scriptures and be at church meetings. (My dear friend and cousin used to "quote" the beatitudes by saying: Be-at church, be-at seminary, be-at school, be-on time...)*

*Be-at, be-at be-at! Do this, do this, do this! Don't do that, don't do that, don't do that!*

*What about me? What about what I want? "Best to follow counsel, and not let the devil take control of your thoughts." That would be the ready answer.*

*So where does the script go from there? Missionary service followed by marriage, children, a career, and an absolute obligation to accept any assignment in church service.*

*This is the perfect script for perfect happiness for perfect preparation for the perfect Heaven when death follows our perfect life.*

*(I fear the perfect possibility that I may be blackballed for writing this imperfect narrative.)*

*Wait a minute. What is perfection?*

*Well, America is perfect. We are proud of having the world's most powerful military, the most robust economic machine, and a pop culture that is the envy of the world. We have the perfect food, purified, pulverized, remanufactured, and packaged in perfect sanitation. Never mind that our food contains too much sugar, too much white flour, and not enough nutrients, all making us perfectly sick; for we have the world's best pharmaceutical companies to make perfect medicine to cure those terrible illnesses.*

*So why am I in Thailand alone, thousands of miles from all that perfection?*

*We in the west may think of Thailand as a third world country—suggesting that the United States is first world—but as I discovered, the reverse might be more accurate. Americans can learn much from the Asians. The Thais have already learned too much from us through the conduit of American movies, television dramas, flashy rock stars, and the overindulgent, over paid heroes of professional sports.*

*How ironic that in the United States we have one of the best healthcare systems in the world, yet have the highest rate of cancer, obesity, and diabetes of any nation. As to a sense of personal tranquility, in America we have murders in the streets, schools and churches rivaled only by slayings in the volatile Middle East and western European enclaves. In safe havens like the semi-arid desert communities of Utah, some of the highest rates of depression and prescription drug abuse occur.*

*These incongruities of the perfect world have convinced me that as a people, many of us have lost touch with our inner selves and connection to the divine on a very personal basis.*

*In remote Siam on the other side of the planet, I discovered that which I didn't know I was missing. I have found that perfection is a myth. I have learned that truth comes from within as we are imbued with the universal spirit of Godly goodness intrinsically, internally—and not from extrinsic or external sources.*

*Unscrambling the complexities of a perfect world, I began a journey searching for peace and tranquility, and a new vision of what life is really about.*

## **The Gift of the Japa Mala**

In Thailand, I lived in a Buddhist monastery for a week learning meditation. My senior teacher, Thanat Chindaporn, gave me a special gift

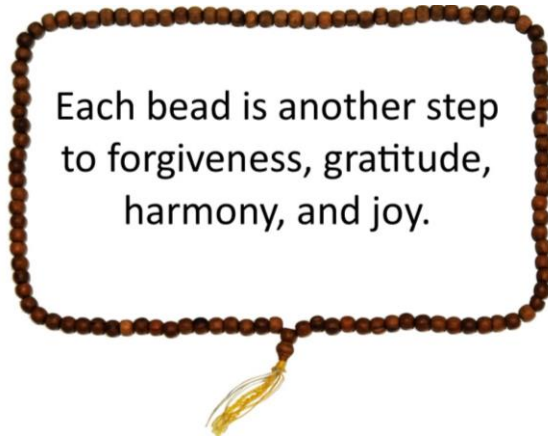


when I left. It is a japa mala, a necklace with 108 beads. Thanat is a native Thai who speaks fluent English. His wife Kathryn is from Everett, Washington, interestingly the first area I worked in as a missionary. The gift of the japa mala was blessed by the highest spiritual leader in the community.

The japa mala is worn around the neck and each of the 108 brown beads represents 108 good things that will happen in my life. It is up to me to discover what those 108 persons, events or

understandings might be. My only instructions were, “Don’t wear it when you are with your wife or your girlfriend.”

Since receiving the beaded necklace 17 years ago, I have kept it in plain sight within my office.

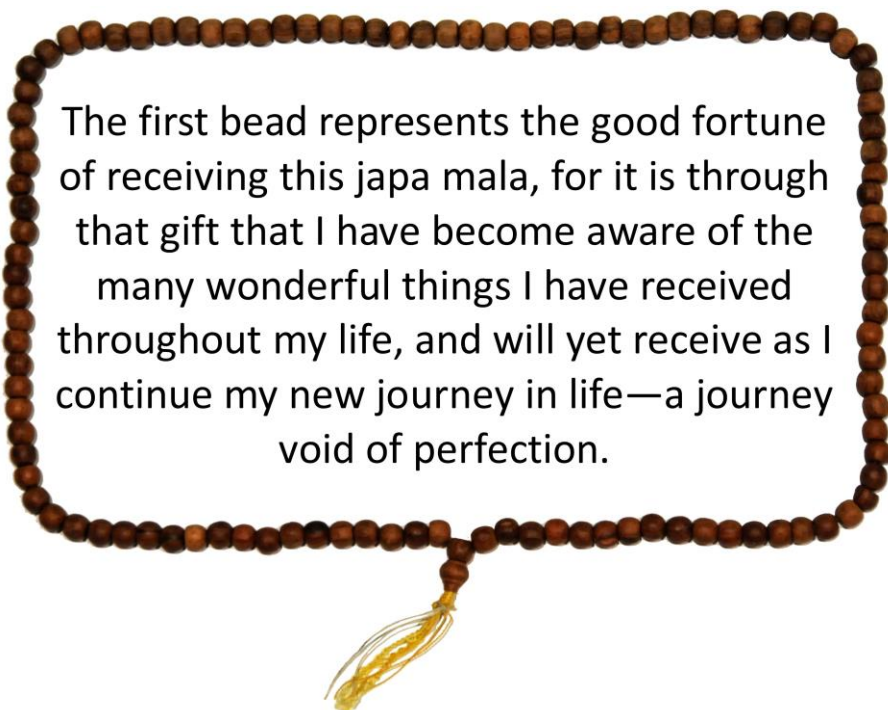


I have shared with many people the story of the uniqueness of the japa mala, and the profound impact it has had on me.

Freely I have spoken of my experience living in a monastery with monks, even in church meetings where some may potentially be critical of me doing such a thing.

However, because of the greater conviction of who I am, I have not been criticized but even complemented on my honesty, growth and present state of strength and goodness.

Since that time, I have accomplished many important things professionally, creatively, and spiritually. These achievements include, most noteworthy, marriage to a wonderful lady from Mexico, Norma Huerta.



The first bead represents the good fortune of receiving this japa mala, for it is through that gift that I have become aware of the many wonderful things I have received throughout my life, and will yet receive as I continue my new journey in life—a journey void of perfection.

When have you experienced tranquility in your life without a sense of obligation?

# Finding Peace at the Top of the Mountain

Imagine a place where no one is selling you anything, trying to convert you, or charging admission to be there.







# Reaching the Summit

## Chapter 1

It was a bone crunching ride in a sport utility vehicle. My sinews were twisted and pulled. With each bump my brain rattled like a tambourine. My driver Sinthu, a native Thai, had seated me in the back seat, which is customary showing respect to someone whom he finds it a privilege to serve. I would have much preferred the front seat, so I could see and anticipate the ruts and bumps ahead. But the front seat was given to Phra Julien, the Buddhist monk showing us the way. Monks are of very high status in Thailand and always accorded privilege—even privilege over a farang writer from America.

“Only a short distance, ten kilometers,” Julien said. The passage of each kilometer filled with hundreds of ups and downs and sideways coils seemed like the passage of a geologic epoch.

I was well prepared with snacks, water, jacket, camera, and laptop to write my impressions of the journey and our destination. What I wasn’t prepared for is something I couldn’t photograph and would find words hard to describe.

We were headed to Wat Doikeung. In the Thai language, Wat means temple. Our destination is the Buddhist temple complex at the top of the mountain, one summit in the Omgay Mountain range near Mae Ping National Park. It was home to about 30 people, one third monks, one third nuns, and the rest novices, Chinese immigrants who are monks in training. The complex of small buildings overlooks the Ping River below, wide and meandering as

it carves its way south through the central lowlands of Southeast Asia.



As we jostled along, I could only look out the side window at the tropical forest bouncing by. This was not good for my headaches, a malady I had suffered most of my adult life. (Could it be that headaches are caused from stress living the perfect life?) Medicine cures every headache and I had with me enough Excedrin, Imitrex, Fiorinol, codeine laced Tylenol, Esgic, caffeine laced Butalbital, Phrenilin and Skelaxin to cure a thousand elephant sized headaches. For good measure I had plenty of WellPatch Migraine Cooling Headache Pads. The entire bundle weighed over five pounds. This was not the perfect picture of an Asian trekker.

“During the rainy season there are many snakes, some poisonous,” chuckled Julien. “There are many scorpions, some four inches long. The big ones, their bite hurts bad.”

I did not have any medicine to deal with a poisonous bite—wait, I did have Cortisone.

I was glad it was past the rainy season. Walking with snakes and scorpions seemed unfathomable. Surely this steep road would have been impassable by even four-wheel drive during the rainy season, for the soil would have turned to slippery clay.



Phra Julien



Sinthu

We were in the tropical zone, only a few degrees north latitude of the equator. The rain there is abundant. It is hot and humid all year long, an ideal climate for jungle growth with huge green leaves and draping vines, not to mention millions of varieties of flying, crawling, enormous insects. At home in Utah the insects die when the snow accumulates during winter, one of four perfect seasons. In spring they come back, prosper in summer, and slowdown in the beautiful colors of autumn. In Thailand there are only two seasons, the rainy season and the dry season. Gargantuan insects are companions for 12 months of the year.

## **My True Friend Phra Julien**

Phra Julien was a Quebecer from Quebec, Canada. He was then about 30 years of age. Fluent in French and Thai, his English was limited but he was able to communicate with me effectively. He left home in 1999 for a peaceful life in Asia and had never been back. With white freckled skin and ginger colored hair, Julien looked unlike the other monks in Thailand, whose hair is black, closely shorn, and facial features oriental.

He was accommodating and friendly with a simple childlike gleam in his eye, completely joyful and at peace with himself. His mother had recently come to see him in his mountain retreat, and our meeting was made possible because he was down in the city to see her return home to Canada. No other members of his family had ever been to visit him in Thailand, and he did not seem interested in returning to Quebec.

Sinthu the driver spoke no English but was professionally dressed befitting the role of a chauffeur. His black hair was expertly

trimmed, and although he tried to mutter a little English, his smile was broad with flawless white teeth.

When asked a question in English, Sinthu always smiled as if he understood, but I learned it is a mistake to think any native Thai understands, even if they do speak a few words of English. Thais are very agreeable, even if they don't know what you're saying.

## **I Learned Love and Acceptance from the Thais**

A few days earlier, I explained to the maids where I had been housed that I couldn't find a drain stopper for the bathtub. I gestured the tub filling but draining away without a plug. While smiling, they nodded as if they understood. Later, when they took my laundry, I tried to explain through gesture that the clothes needed to be cleaned in cold water. I held the clothes in one hand, and turned on the hot water, shaking my head no, and then the cold water, shaking my head yes. They smiled as if they understood. A few hours later the plumber was on his way to fix the hot water heater and the bathtub which he thought wasn't draining.

My clothes were well cleaned—in hot water.

Normally, Sinthu drove me in a luxury Audi around the city of Chiang Mai which is about 50 kilometers north of Wat Doikeung. For this trip up the mountain, he was using the family Ford sport utility vehicle.

The family I refer to is Preecha and Waranan Pongcharoenkul and their sons Pai and Mai, Thais of Chinese descent who were highly influential and remarkably successful. I had known them for many years. They had been to our home twice in Utah, and I had been many times to their home in Chiang Mai.

Moving up the mountain, I saw a monk with his brown linens draped around his body, wearing only flip flops on his feet. With hand tools he was mixing cement to extend the paved part of the road. Intermittently, concrete sections relieved the grating movements, but pavement notwithstanding, it lacked the necessary engineering to assure a smooth ride.

## **My Diagnosis of Prostate Cancer**

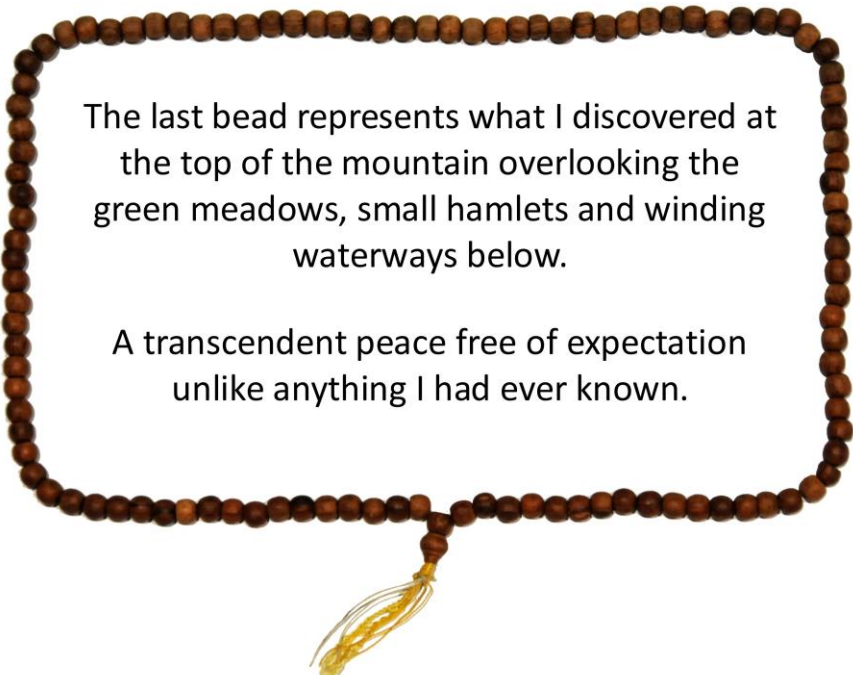
I reflected on my purpose for coming to Thailand alone.

In addition to my stress induced migraine headaches, I had lived with extended bouts of strep infections and ulcers. These were the natural result of living the American dream of struggling to accumulate wealth and prestige.

How tragic, that as I approached retirement, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. I am sure everyone dreads hearing such news, but sadly, more Americans per capita learn they have cancer than any other population on Earth. What a price to pay for the drive to success.

Amazingly, this news did not leave me in any state of alarm or panic. Others around me seemed much more concerned than I was. Everyone wanted to know what cancer treatment option I would follow. The doctor who diagnosed me wanted to surgically remove my prostate. He assured me that by doing so, I would have 20 years of life left, albeit likely incontinent with my bladder and an impotent sex life. Radiation was another option with still the risk of incontinence and impotence. In my heart I knew there had to be other alternatives.

For all of these reasons, I went to Thailand to renew, rediscover and heal spiritually and physically.



The last bead represents what I discovered at the top of the mountain overlooking the green meadows, small hamlets and winding waterways below.

A transcendent peace free of expectation unlike anything I had ever known.

What are the happiest moments of your  
childhood and youth?



# Taken Back to My Innocent Youth

## Chapter 2

Near the end of World War II I was born in Murray, Utah. Recollections of infancy are virtually nonexistent with most mortals. However, I distinctly remember looking up from a lying position surrounded by people cheering gleefully. The emotion of ecstatic joy had an impact on me as an infant little more than a month of age. The surrender of Japan was announced on the radio and the war was over.

### **Patriotism and Heroes Have Always Stirred My Emotions**



Perhaps this is why I have been so moved in recent years as I have visited the locations where advancing marines were slaughtered on the beaches of Saipan, Tinian, Guam and Peleliu. Perhaps in spirit I was helping those struggling forces before I was born.

During the Vietnam War I proudly served in the army, even though I was drafted. I'm thankful I never saw combat because I would have great difficulty shooting another person. My youngest son is a marine captain who has served twice in Iraq.

Amazing it is, this many years later, Vietnam is accepting of Americans, supporting the development of their resources for

tourism along the beautiful beaches of the South China Sea, only a few hundred miles southeast from where I was in Thailand. Perhaps many years from now, the terrorists in Syria, Iraq and Iran will welcome our people to the desert paradise along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

In my youth I was inspired by tales of heroism from those who served defending our country.

Equally proud was I of the pioneers who sacrificed so much to settle the American west. All of them were driven by the dream of a happy life free of conflict and filled with prosperity. Would it be that life was so simply predictable? We must thank them for the trails they blazed for us, but I wonder what they might think now about our priorities, pride and greed.

All of politics, business, religion and entertainment is skewed by the drive to get ahead, to be the best, to be right, to defeat competition, to prove others wrong.

In my youth, none of this spirited drive impacted me so I ambled forth, doing what I wanted to do, correcting myself when I was told to do differently.

As a youngster I was disciplined gently, but when my father was angry, he would start to unbuckle his belt, threatening a whipping with a deep-throated hiss. I would immediately step into line, fortunately never feeling his belt across my backside.

Terror gripped my soul once as a young child when I accidentally broke a delicate ceramic figurine. After gathering up the pieces, I hid in an upstairs closet, burying myself behind a pile of old clothes.

I was determined to stay there until dead, not wanting to suffer the wrath of my parents, particularly my dad's belt.

Eventually, I heard them calling for me, their voices raised at a level of alarm. I maintained silence and held my breath when they looked in the closet. They did not see me. After a time, I could tell they were in a state of panic, but I kept silent.

Finally, looking more deeply in the closet, they found me. They were so happy I was safe! They didn't even care about the broken figurine. They hugged me, grateful that I was alive and not hurt.

## **The Simple Life of the Monks Inspired Me**

On the mountain Phra Julien and his cohorts lived alone and in isolation. Maybe that's why I was drawn to the place. As a child, I was an only boy, and my nearest sister was five years my senior, my youngest seven years my junior. My mother taught school, and so consequently I spent numberless hours alone entertaining myself.

I would watch ants moving grains of sand many times their size and weight. Could the four-inch scorpions on the mountain accomplish such a feat?

The monks at the top of the mountain were inventive and resourceful. They survived on donations, and over time had built a generator system providing electricity for three hours every night. Solar panels had been installed giving limited power during the day. There was running water to each kuty, or small dwelling. Toilets didn't flush, but when quickly filled with enough water from a pan, the waste was carried away to a septic tank.

When I was small, a backhoe dug a large hole in our back yard for a septic tank. No central sewage system existed, but toilets did flush. How perfect is that?

## **I Loved Movies and Photography**

I was also very inventive and resourceful. From my earliest recollections I was fascinated with movies, as was my father. Years earlier he had purchased a 16mm projector and bought some black and white cartoons and news reels. I built a miniature outdoor theater with a screen, and places to park toy cars. Match sticks were placed to imitate speaker posts. I set up the projector at the back and invited my friends over for outdoor movies.

This spurred my interest in photography, which motivated my dad to buy a camera and film so I could make family movies. This also provided fodder for my miniature drive-in theater. So good were my movies that my parents invited all our relatives to come see my productions. There would be too many people for the drive-in theatre, with no comfortable place to sit. So, the large front lawn became the theater, with a portable screen for projection.

On the day of the party my curiosity about the inner workings of the projector got the best of me, so I took it apart. When my dad came home and saw the projector in pieces scattered about the lawn, he scowled and went into the house. He didn't yell at me, but I could tell he was angry. He told my mother, "Do something about that boy, he's got the projector scattered all over the lawn."

I had the projector back together again in timely fashion, working just fine.

Soon dad built a large screen with wood and painted it white for more professional movie experiences. With that inspiration, I have built several outdoor movie screens through the years.

Little could my dad say about taking things apart. His hobby was remodeling. Many were the times when I would come home and see a familiar wall torn away with only the remnants of wires and jagged plaster walls remaining. He was driven to make things better—an ever-improving house was his obsession.

Once I raced into the house and up the stairs only to be stopped by a new wall at the top of the staircase. Later, an entirely different access would be built to the rooms above.

When he passed away many years later, with my four sisters we buried our dad with a miniature hammer and saw in his casket.



Bead number three  
reminds me of my  
comical dad.

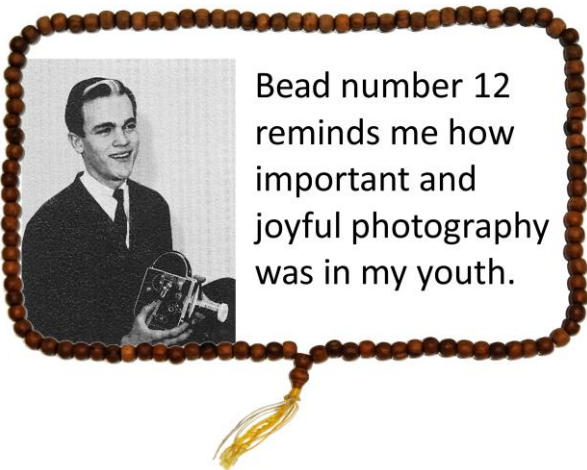
## I Appreciate Things That Work

Wires and pipes running underground on top of the mountain that intermittently popped to the surface would never pass code in the United States, but they worked just fine for the monks.

Overall, in Thailand much is done for utility with a lesser concern for safety or aesthetics.

On my first visit to Thailand, I was amazed that electrical wires were draped everywhere within easy reach, sometimes fallen onto sidewalks. Yet I never heard of anyone getting electrocuted. Fences and safety rails were often missing where I would expect them to be.

Liability laws are limited if at all existent in Thailand. If an injury occurs, it is "meant to be" and the operative phrase is "mai pen rai," it's okay. Phone books and billboards are not plastered with the faces of attorneys wanting to file personal injury claims. What a pleasant break from the greed of American litigation bringing about a perfect solution to every problem.



My obsession with photography created a social acceptance of sorts when I began high school. I never played football. My mother would assure me that, "Football is dangerous, you might get hurt." I wanted to

play the trumpet, or the drums. “They’re too noisy,” she would say. “We wouldn’t want to disturb the neighbors.”

I wanted to buy a small motor scooter, as one of my friends had one. “NO” my mother said, they are too dangerous. “We wouldn’t want you to get hurt.”

There was no danger in photography, so my parents supported me in that passion. In high school I became a yearbook photographer, photographing football games, concerts and dances, activities that were hardly at the top of the social strata but delightful and educational for me.

I came to like girls, but was terrified of my mother’s disapproval of any potential budding romance, and the chance of getting in trouble with a girl. I usually lied to her about dating. “I was going somewhere with my friends,” I would say. Nothing was indicated that some of the friends were girls.

In the mind of a monk, social standing is an attachment that will only bring suffering. It’s really true, for I did suffer at not having social status, and I knew many who suffered when they fell from high social graces. Painful were the experiences of losing elections for high school candidates for whom I had made posters and signs for their campaigns.

## **The Drive to Win Can Bring Suffering**

Winners and losers. Our world is full of winners and losers. Suffering comes when we want so badly to win, but we lose. In our perfect society, we pin our hopes on the future and look disparagingly on our past experiences that brought us pain. One great lesson I have learned in Thailand is that truly living in the

present brings the greatest joy, and that fretting over the past and worrying about the future can only cause anxiety and suffering.

Paradoxically, having no social standing as a monk actually brings them the highest status in Thailand. Special seats are reserved for them at airports, bus stops and train stations.

As humble as they may claim to be about their non-status, I know the Buddhist monks enjoy their clout in Thai society.

On top of the mountain the Abbot, or head monk, had the largest and finest kuty. His dwelling was shaped like a boat, complete with anchors on the front.

I thought I was approaching Noah's ark on top of the mountain. "He's not very humble," lamented Phra Julien.



The story is rather quietly told that the Abbot had a thing going with the head nun. Every once in a while, they would disappear off the mountain for a few days supposedly to buy supplies. When

they returned, they each went through purification.

How simple: They experienced pure joy with each other, unconcerned what others would think, then did what was necessary to realign themselves with their precepts.



In our western society such scandalous action would wreak havoc bringing down the condemnation and punishment of society, especially from groups steeped in religious beliefs.

Graduating from high school was an exciting time in 1963. The Cuban Missile Crises was over and nuclear war had been averted. Up to that time we had regular bomb drills, descending into the basement of the school to protect us from the big one. The fear of the day was nuclear holocaust. My dad fashioned a bomb shelter for us under a concrete porch behind our house. It was complete with a Geiger counter to detect radiation, and enough supplies to survive until the threat passed.



The tragedy of the John F. Kennedy assassination had not yet occurred, and rock and roll was in full swing. The girls screamed passionately at the sounds of Elvis and the Beatles. I found their gawking and

squeals disgusting. At dances when not using a camera, I was the champion at the Limbo in which the dancer arched his back low and inched under the bar.

“How low can you go?” would belch Chubby Checker.

No limbo on the mountain, no rock and roll, no music except the chanting of the monks. I have seen monks in the city with iPods.

Were they listening to music or chants? I couldn't tell, and I didn't dare ask.

## **Ingenuity of People in Third World Nations**

I have observed one thing about emerging nations—reflecting on the notion that the United States “has arrived.” Innovations in communication and transportation remain at a primitive level in third world countries until something really practical comes along.

Decades after the United States was covered with interstate highways, the Thais were still building two lane roads connecting some cities. Rail transportation worked just fine. The Thais are not as reliant on expensive automobiles as we are in the west. However, airports exist in most cities in Thailand, small cities that in America would never consider building an airport. Air travel is much faster than rail travel, and building runways is less expensive than building countless miles of superhighways and more railroads. So, the Thais fly everywhere.

Similarly, Thais have adopted cell phones in a big way. Everyone has one. Before the onset of cell phone technology, few Thais had access to telephones. Again, building cell phone towers is a lot cheaper than stretching wires for regular telephones from city to town to village.

## **Fun and Humor in My Youth**

Living in Thailand was sobering and insightful, but I can't help but reflect on the fun and comical times of my youth. Traveling has always been in my blood. When I was 16, my parents sister and I

picked up our maternal grandparents in Denver and drove to the east coast to experience the church/patriotic heritage tour.

When we crossed the Continental Divide, I wanted to urinate facing the west, then spin facing the east. My juvenile hope was that in the same gushing surge, my water would eventually flow to the Pacific, and then to the Atlantic. I'm as nutty as my dad.

When we passed a sign indicating *Woman's Road* he said, "That road must have soft shoulders and sharp curves."

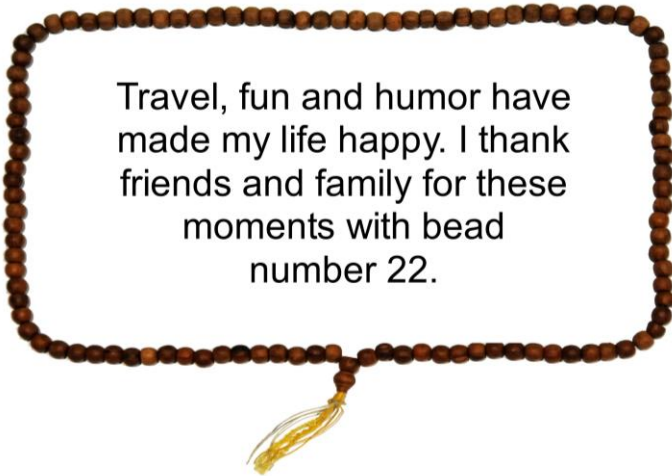


We loved to visit the red rock country of the Colorado Plateau, such as here in Monument Valley, which is actually in Arizona under the stewardship of the Navajo Nation.

I must have acquired some of my gross sense of humor from my Grandma Drury. Because of her advanced years, reaching a toilet frequently was essential. Pay toilets were common. Once she came back to the car complaining, "There I sat, broken hearted, paid a dime and only farted."

In Thailand they still have pay toilets, only one baht per use. The value of a baht was about 3 cents to a US dollar. Using a squatter in Thailand for one baht, or about three cents, is a lot cheaper than a dime in America of 62 years ago.

Grandpa Drury was equally comical. Once we were in a restaurant and he discovered a long hair on his mashed potatoes and gravy. All of us could not believe it, and our chortling turned to guffaws when he decided to stir the hair into the potatoes and gravy, and proceeded to eat them, hair and all.



Grandpa Drury once commented, "It's too bad we have to wear clothes. It would be so much easier if we were all naked, then we wouldn't have to wonder what others looked like underneath." This observation was far too provocative for a young teenage boy whose hormones raced at warp speed.

Grandpa Linton, my dad's father, was equally comical. He was always known to have a quick British wit. He was born in England and immigrated to the United States while a young man. He

worked to earn money to bring his sweetheart to America where he married her, my eventual paternal grandmother.

Once Grandpa Linton said to me, “They won’t bury when I die because they love me, but because I stink.” When he was in his mid-80’s, many years after grandma’s death, he moved into my dad’s nursing home. Living alone he could no longer care for himself. Said he, “I can’t live here with all these old people!”

Grandpa Linton loved to paint stunning scenics on canvas and by his own hand made beautiful frames for the pictures. I have one such painting hanging in my office, which is a real treasure. He had never been to Southern Utah, but he studied post cards of the red rock country to fashion scenes with brush and oils.

While living at the nursing home, Dad and I took Grandpa Linton on a long drive to Bryce Canyon in Southern Utah. He could barely walk, but stoutly refused a wheelchair or cane. We each held one arm, and slowly walked up the hill to the overlook of the myriad-colored spires below. Grandpa just stared in amazement for a few minutes, then wanted to go home.

When death was imminent, all his children gathered around his bed in the nursing home. He wanted to go outside to look one last time at the sky, clouds, trees and mountains. Then he said, “Let’s go in and get this over with.”

## **The Conflict of Reality vs. Purity**

The monks wear only robes the fabric of bed sheets, not very modest attire. One shoulder is always bare and their legs from the knees down. With certain contortions one can see their belly and back. The nuns are covered more completely, with no bare

shoulders. Additional draping covers their bosom so as not to create any distraction for the men. To a monk, feminine desires are taboo, and I am sure, a constant one to keep in check.

As a boy, modesty and virtue were enforced on my behavior. I was made to feel guilty for having the most minor of sexual thoughts. This is most problematic when research has revealed that adolescent boys have a sexually related thought once every few seconds. Furthermore, 100% of boys experience masturbation, a sin in theology with which I felt was overstated. I suppose monks work daily to avoid playing with themselves, as do Christian boys.

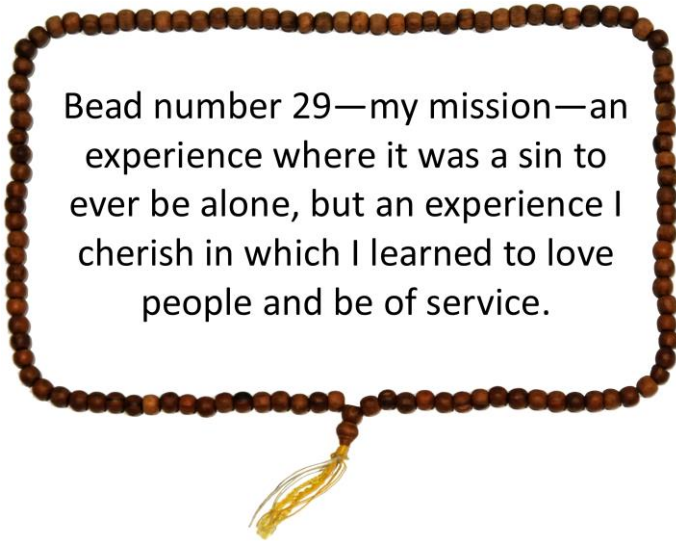
## **As a Missionary I Learned to Love People —And I Was Never Alone Again**

At age 19, I was considered ready to go on a mission. For two years I would live a celibate life in some place distant from Utah to teach people about my faith and provide service to the community in which I lived.

The rules are very strict for missionaries: No dating, no movies, no television, no calling home; only work and study of the scriptures. Some couldn't handle it. I grew from my missionary experience, and discovered qualities of leadership, love and communication that I did not know existed within me. Even though it was easy to complain, the strict rules force missionaries to concentrate on Christ, working to imbue those qualities for the enrichment of people they met. I had many experiences in which I was able to bless the lives of other people.

From the first day of my mission until this trip to Thailand, I have never been alone for an extended period of time. I have always

been accountable to somebody. Perhaps this sense of being owned or controlled is what drew me to the top of the mountain where people of their own choice live in the most isolated of worlds.



Bead number 29—my mission—an experience where it was a sin to ever be alone, but an experience I cherish in which I learned to love people and be of service.

Isolation was a choice one father made when my companion and I were teaching his family. He pretended to be uninterested in our message. Every few days we visited the family to teach another discussion. Early on I noticed the father hiding behind a corner where he could listen but not be seen.

After a few weeks the mother and children were baptized. I invited the father to attend the service, and he reluctantly accepted. During the baptism, tears were streaking down his face as he watched one person after another going into the water. After the service I insisted we come back and talk to him about our message. In only a few days he was also baptized.

Have you ever felt you didn't have  
control of your life?



# Struggling Between Freedom and Control

## Chapter 3

One of the fundamental truths I learned as a missionary is the reality of opposition in all things. The entire universe is governed by opposing forces. The centrifugal force of orbiting planets is held in check by the gravitational pull of the sun. Within every ecosystem there is a fight for survival. Some animals flee for their freedom and others control with their vice grip of death.

The very act of driving to the top of the mountain pitted the power of the engine and the friction of the tires against sliding rocks and the backward pull of the incline.

In human relationships one wants freedom from control, and another wants the power to control.



As I write, surrounded by lush tropical vegetation exuding vast quantities of refreshing oxygen, I watch a gecko lizard.

He is standing on his hind legs looking straight up at the top of a sharply pointed leaf of a plant. On the tip is a furry dragonfly munching away. In a split second with its tongue extended, the gecko captures the insect and has him in the death clutch of his jaw. It takes two or three minutes for the dragonfly to be swallowed.

Freedom lost, but life sustained. The balance of nature is as near perfection as possible, a perfection being dismantled in our materialistic world.

Every temple complex in Thailand is overrun with dogs and cats. Monks do not believe in killing anything and would grant to any creature the right to survive.

Similarly, my grandpa Drury would never kill an insect. If he found a spider in the house, he would carefully scoop it up with a piece of paper, take it outside and shake it off into the garden.

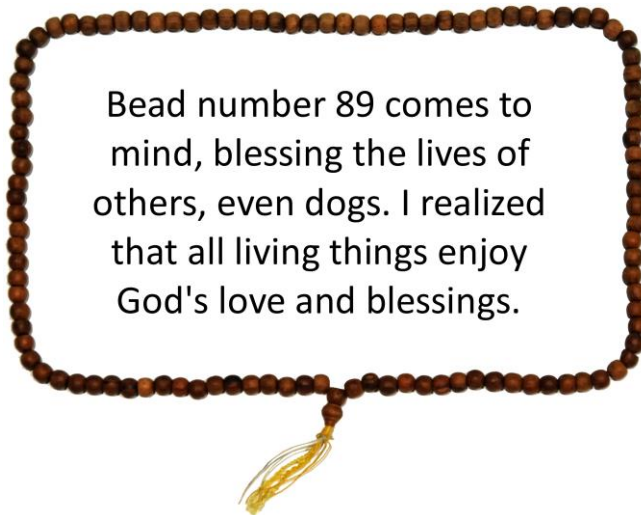
In Thailand, if someone wants to get rid of a pet, they drop it off at the nearest temple and it will be cared for. The struggle between freedom and control is played out constantly with the dogs that



relentlessly fight over food and turf. Many is the dog with terrible injuries that are treated with balm by the monks. I saw gaping wounds, fur torn from faces, and crippled limbs.

One such dog dragging his hind leg growled at me. I could see he was in terrible pain. From within my heart, I gave him a blessing that his agony would be released. The dog stopped growling, moved away from me, but kept looking back as I watched him with compassionate eyes, offering a prayer for his recovery and release from pain. Eventually he disappeared, always looking back at me every few paces.

Throughout my life there are many times I have given blessings, utilizing the priesthood I was given before I went on my mission. This is the first time I gave an animal a blessing.



Bead number 89 comes to mind, blessing the lives of others, even dogs. I realized that all living things enjoy God's love and blessings.

With humans, conflicts are usually less brutal physically than between animals, but more horrendous psychologically.

The survival of the fittest plays out in social circles and position, such as fighting for good grades in school or posturing for advancement to a leadership position as a missionary.

Irrespective, I believe that as we approach the divine in sublime humiliation, we can feel a benediction as we struggle through these conflicts and that we can personally bless the lives of others without the need for competition.

Sometimes I felt envy of those who had more money, higher position and the appearance of greater overall success. Why do we punish ourselves with the prideful drive to get ahead—not always to better ourselves, but to get ahead of those around us?

I have been startled to learn that others have envy of me and my family and all that we have. How incongruous, covetousness from others irrespective of our own tension, disease, and troubled relationships.

## **Understand People Through Control Theory**

I like the teachings of William Glasser who years ago defined Control Theory. I made a series of educational videos on his concepts. At the core, Control Theory states that all human beings have four basic psychological needs:



How ironic, that a person who is driven to have power may in fact rob another of his or her freedom. A parent in control may limit the fun of a child, only to eventually give the child the sense that they do not belong.

Wise is the parent or leader who provides enough space for those within their charge to feel freedom, power, fun and belonging. When kept in balance, the child is sure to grow to adulthood well adjusted. When a youngster has a problem, a diagnosis could well suggest a serious lack in one of these four areas.

The innocence of my youth allowed me to glide through conflicts with a minimum of psychological scars. I felt that I had a reasonably good balance of freedom, power, fun and belonging—albeit I did feel controlled by my mother. But with advancing years, I began to see that many subtle conflicts that had been accumulating in my youth and adulthood were collectively taking a toll on my psyche and self-esteem.

## **I Was Misunderstood as a Highly Creative Person**

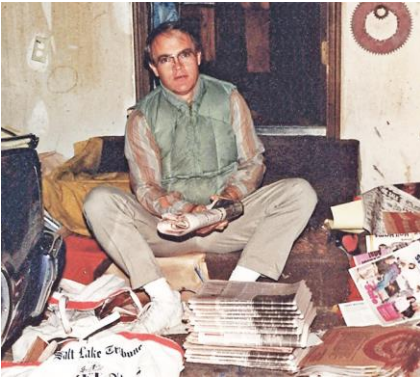
I have no skills at running a business, for my creativity and abstract nature gets in the way. I have never known a highly creative person to be very successful at business. That's why they have agents and managers to control the business relationship, granting the artist the freedom to create.

Ignorant of this fact, I began and tried to run a business which failed miserably. The overwhelming power of bad debt and taxes robbed me of my financial freedom for several years. On top of this misery,

my creative endeavors were given public ridicule. I was made to feel that I did not belong.

## **Public Humiliation Devastated my Faith**

Under very difficult circumstances I made a movie that ran in local theaters for a few weeks. At the time I was a Mormon bishop, the equivalent of a pastor over a congregation of about 500 people.



Feeling deserving of God's blessing, I produced the film with limited funds.

In the church owned newspaper the local movie critic took particular exception of my work, ridiculing the story, the acting, and me as the writer and director. Humiliating enough, I had to help my children deliver newspapers throughout the neighborhood with this banner of painful criticism in plain view.

On top of this, my financial woes worsened. Even so, I made another movie about the Mormon handcart pioneers, which was blackballed by the church for historical inaccuracies. These failures were personally devastating, embarrassing, financially distressing, and made me reevaluate the roll of God in my life. Details of these difficult but growing experiences are unfolded in the book *Picking Tomatoes in a World Full of Apples*.

The monks devote a lifetime to be free from suffering. I lived much of my life suffering at my losses, not only financial losses but

embarrassment publicly and disappointment and setback for my family.

What was so tragic for me personally was that I approached my endeavors with full faith in the Divine that I would be blessed. I sadly came to realize that God does not always intervene in our behalf. Much of our disappointment in life is because of bad choices. Many who are successful credit God with their success. Others who suffer blame Him for their losses. Either way, I have come to believe that God does not control us, but grants us freedom to control ourselves, at the risk of making serious mistakes.

## I Believe in God

I attribute Bead number 86 to the belief that God as a good parent allows us a full measure of freedom, power, fun, and belonging.



*God the Father*  
by Giovanni Battista Cima da Conegliano

Nonetheless, my faith was severely tested, and to this day, remains couched in caution, not for a lack of belief in God, but rather people's use of their faith to dominate. I have a fundamental belief that God has power and does not always bless us in time of need, but most often allows us to struggle on our own. In fact, God is really a good parent.

Many in the world have not learned this lesson. Often, I have seen people do stupid things in the name of God, believing that God guided their steps. Murders have been committed, wars launched, business and political decisions made that harm and even destroy people—all done with the belief that God was at the helm.

How horrible must God feel to be credited with such atrocities.

At the heart of today's battles in the Middle East is the struggle between religious fanatics and patriots trying to espouse their ways. They are in a power struggle for freedom and control, hoping and believing that God is on their side.

I am reminded of a story told by a good friend of mine several years ago, in which her personal struggle brought her close to God. She was a life coach who helped me gain insight during trying times in my life.

Several years after she was married, she had an affair. From that affair she became pregnant. In secrecy she had an abortion. With the discovery of her affair, her husband and in-laws were furious and very cruel to her. The tension eventually led to a divorce.

Devastated on so many levels, she questioned the existence of God, but through supplication and humility began to discover His divine love. Through this process she developed tremendous sorrow at having aborted her baby, but nonetheless she felt God's tenderness, forgiveness, and acceptance.

She now is completely devoted to her faith, a faith not couched in any religious doctrine or practice, but rather her personal loving relationship with God.



As a bishop I worked with a woman who lost her house because of a bad investment. She was assured that the venture was inspired, and that the fortune promised would enable her to do much good by financially supporting missionaries. She wept at the loss, not only of her home, but her unfounded faith in God.

My lesson was the same. Living a perfect life guarantees nothing. One must find God, imploring Him for guidance without abdicating responsibility for one's own actions.

Many make the mistake of thinking that God will solve their problems, and others blame God for not curing the ills of the world or the tragedies people suffer.

A fundamental tenant of Buddhism is that God does not exist but is rather a mythical entity that cannot be justified because of the wars, chaos and calamities that inflict the world. Little wonder they see it that way considering the misguided belief that God directs the aggressors in war, or that an unkind God punishes those who innocently die in earthquakes or tsunamis.

Their hope is for Nibbana, an everlasting state of peace without suffering. Interesting it is that the monks in their blessed state of freedom feel no real belonging to anyone—except each other, a relationship they nurture with daily group chanting and adulations to Buddha.

My daughter's husband many years ago was a DEA agent in Thailand. He was involved in some skirmishes near the northern border in the Golden Triangle of Asia, an area known for international drug trafficking. A firefight left one of his native Thai compatriots severely wounded. A tough fighter, this man was a

Buddhist. From his hospital bed, he told my son-in-law, “I saw your God when I thought I was dying.”

## **Societies and People Always Struggle Between Freedom and Control**

The conflict between freedom and control can appear in very subtle ways with the onset of commercialism. The king of Thailand has done much to improve farming, promote industry and otherwise bring prosperity to Thailand in a world driven by commerce. He promotes freedom and growth.

As I have traveled about, it has been tragically fascinating to note the impact of American pop culture on the world—all fed by profit motive from American businessmen. This love to wear clothes with American logos. The Dallas Cowboys, the Los Angeles Lakers and every other franchise putting out product for commercial gain can be found there. Is this freedom, or subtle control driven by financial greed? I doubt most wearers of these clothes hold those teams as favorites. It's the colors and patterns they are drawn to.

At home in America, I sit down to watch my new high-definition television. On comes a high budget advertisement in surround sound. It's glitzy, clever, and powerful in its persuasion of a new drug. There are so many new drugs to cure the latest ailment affecting Americans. The next commercial is from a large legal firm offering their services to make a settlement against a drug company whose new drug went awry.

Who has freedom? Who has control?

Buddhist faith holds close to traditional values, values sustained in their most conservative element at the top of the mountain. What a struggle between the supposed freedoms of the commercial west against the control of state religion. Or could it be the reverse, the preservation of freedom offered by the ideals of Buddhism opposing the psychological control of popular enticement?

A very revealing tale was shared with me by a young woman who is safely confined to a temple retreat studying meditation. This is a girl who desperately wants freedom from any control, and in the process of trafficking drugs and sex in the United States, she avoided legal authorities and stashed her money into hiding places to avoid paying taxes. Fleeing to Thailand to avoid arrest, she tried to dodge the Thai rules for establishing a business as a farang, and now is hiding from Thai immigration officials in a monastery. Through this succession of poor choices, she has developed an intense dislike and mistrust of men whom she views as robbing her of freedom, freedom she robbed from herself by not belonging in a sensible way to the community at large.

Everyone experiences the struggle between freedom and control.

For myself, reaching a point of crisis, it was suggested by some therapists that I break clear of the cycle of controls from business, family and religion that were causing my maladies, allowing for more control of my own life. Rather than totally breaking clear of those controls, I began to refashion my relationship to those entities, bringing about personal control of my life free of guilt.

My potholed ride to the top of the mountain was to provide a big turning point that would help me bring back into balance the four conditions of freedom, power, fun and belonging.

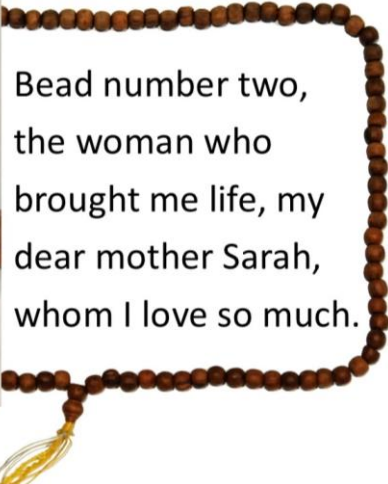
Could illnesses you have suffered be stress induced by conflict?

# Business/Family/Conflicts and Miracles

## Chapter 4

My mother was a worry wart. If she didn't have anything to worry about, she worried about that. She didn't like medicine. When she did have to take a pill, she would hit it with a hammer and swallow the smallest piece. Never did she have a serious life-threatening illness, but believed one to be inevitable, influenced by what she saw on television. In her 40's she suffered a nervous collapse—brought on by worry. She doubled her life span and died a few days short of 90, really very healthy for her age.

As the AIDS epidemic gained headlines many years ago, my mother was sure she had acquired the HIV infection. My father had been dead for about ten years when she asked, "Do you think I have AIDS?" The rejoinder, "I don't know mom, who have you been seeing?"



Bead number two,  
the woman who  
brought me life, my  
dear mother Sarah,  
whom I love so much.

On another occasion she was suffering some stomach pains and thought she might be pregnant. Clearly my mother suffered from some dementia.

She was comical, frustrating at times in her advanced years, but always there to remind me of what to do and not do.

Guidance is good if it comes with logical consequences for poor choices. What became problematic for me were the mixture of guilt and the potential punishment from God if I did not obey.

In such a world of black and white thinking, a highly creative person like me was bound to run off the rails. Every highly creative person I know has difficulty with polarized thinking, because the very essence of creativity is to find a new way, a new shade of gray in the expanse between the extremes. In a culture that prizes labeling all things as good or bad, I became a foreigner or farang in the inexplicable shades between.

Yet, irrespective of this, through all my business failings I expected that the Lord would bless me with success. It didn't always happen, yet miracles of a different nature did happen throughout my life.

I am reminded of a line from a movie about Brigham Young released many years ago. Supposedly, he was standing on a hill overlooking a growing and prosperous Salt Lake City. Said his companion, "Look what you, Brother Brigham, have created with the Lord's help."

Brigham replied, "You should have seen this place when the Lord had it alone."

In the early years of child rearing, youngsters need guidelines, and find security in knowing what is right and wrong, clearly understanding the rewards and punishments that come as natural consequences, hopefully without corporal punishment. As they grow, they begin to find relevance or incongruity in what they are expected to be or do. To be successful, parents must grow with their children, expanding in flexibility.

No parent succeeds at raising children as if they were donkeys, needing a carrot and a stick to keep them in line through to adulthood. I personally think that many of the problems with youth today are the direct result of promises or punishments based on issues of low significance to the youngster.

I knew a father whose middle son was always getting in trouble with the law and flaunted his determination to follow his own will, irrespective of what any authority counseled. I was the boy's leader in the Aaronic Priesthood, responsible for teaching correct principles. But more important to me than teaching was the interaction I had with the youth, the kindness I could show and the love they could feel from me. I was greatly respected in this role by the parents and other leaders in the church.

With such respect, the boy's father came to me once and said, "I don't know what's the matter with him, that boy never listens to a thing I say."

I knew at that moment it was the father that needed to do the listening, not the boy. I didn't dare suggest my observation, because—like his son—he was unwilling to abdicate his control or admit to his folly.

## **I Learned So Much from Raising the Family that I Dearly Love**

Raising a family through three decades of time, I learned many things such as patience, love, and the gift of service. I also experienced the challenge of meeting their financial, emotional, personal, and intellectual needs. Furthermore, I knew early on that I had to give them their agency, their freedom of choice. The outcome is five highly productive and self-sufficient children, who now as adults are successfully raising their own families.

I give bounteous credit to their mother Blanch for their successes, for she was a good balance to me as a parent.

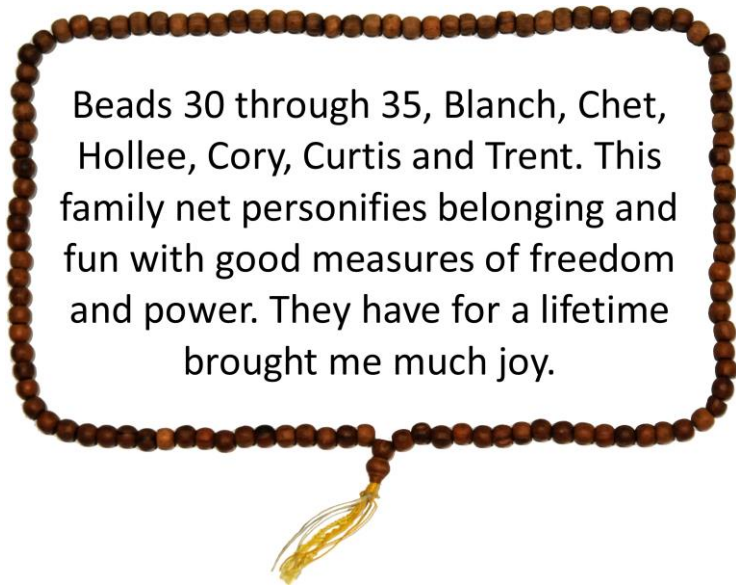
As a father I sought every opportunity to travel with them and their mother. On different occasions we went as far south as Mexico, as far east as New York, and certainly we had to go to Disneyland.





Bouncing along in our Buick station wagon on a dirt trail near the Goose Necks of the San Juan in Southeastern Utah, I looked in the rearview mirror to see our small black dog Nibs racing behind trying to catch up. His fur was shiny black like his namesake licorice candy. Stopping to rescue him, Nibs was a dusty white mess from his race for survival. The freedom to wander from the family car had nearly cost Nibs his life. He was saved by the miracle of my glance in the rearview mirror.

In the picture on the previous page, Nibs can barely be seen as held by my oldest son Chet. Our youngest son Trent was not yet born.



Beads 30 through 35, Blanch, Chet, Hollee, Cory, Curtis and Trent. This family net personifies belonging and fun with good measures of freedom and power. They have for a lifetime brought me much joy.

Many little miracles occurred along the way while raising our children.

We were part owners of a small water-skiing boat that we took to Lake Powell. The water held back by Glen Canyon Dam covers many hidden rocks that can be a hazard in shallow waters. We were in a hurry to get back to the Marina as it was getting dark. Our son Cory

was driving the boat as fast as he could when we hit one such rock under the surface. The boat jumped, and the outboard motor flipped over into the boat with its menacing blade spinning. Our other children were sitting near the edge of the boat as the rotating propeller barely missed them.

Fortunately, the motor flipped back into the water, but the hull was damaged, and the boat began to fill with water. With a damaged engine and everyone bailing water out of the boat, we slowly made our way back to the Marina.

Later, pulling the boat in its trailer with our old motorhome up the hill from Lake Powell, another disaster struck.

The motorhome rolled to a stop, failing to go any further. Stepping outside I saw a huge puddle of transmission fluid on the pavement. Not knowing what to do, I pondered and prayed in my heart for an answer. Soon a motorcycle pulled up, and the young man asked if he could help. I asked if he could drive ahead, find us a couple quarts of transmission fluid, and bring it back.

He said he was happy to do it. I gave him \$20, and he drove off. I thought to myself, I may have just given away twenty bucks. But after an hour or so, he returned with the fluid. He was so kind and gracious, a Godsend.

With enough fluid we began to move and stopped at every town to put in more fluid. We made it home about 400 miles later.

Now, so many years later, I look at my children who now as parents have their own children and are progressing in their individual pursuits. As adults, they have all faced challenges that are to be expected for anyone navigating life.

With my children now on their own, I realize that one of my great difficulties in life has been my creativity. I read some research several years ago about highly creative children in school. They are the last to get started on a project, and the last to finish. But their work is at the level of masterpiece. The reason they are slow getting started is because they engage in deep subconscious inputting. When the inspiration comes, the juices pour forth, and driven by their work, they abuse their bodies to exhaustion. This tendency carries into adulthood.

With this propensity as an adult, I was always late getting started on a script, or other project related to the business.

## **The Risks of Marriage Partners as Business Partners**

Unfortunately, but of necessity, my former wife was my business partner.

We built a very successful business—under her gifted leadership, not mine—which took us into schools throughout the world. We produced hundreds of video tapes on highly effective school practices.

There was a sad consequence for this success, however. Of necessity, partners in marriage must pull together, must be equally yoked. Partners in business must also share responsibility and work in harmony. There is a fundamental difference in motive and consequences, however, between the two variations of a relationship. A family partnership must be built on endearment and sacrifice, with the integrity of love and forgiveness as the bond that keeps them together. In business, the motive is for profit and

worldly gain, with the bond of deadlines and the pressure of productivity keeping them hustling. Asking a car designed for pleasure to do the work of hauling rocks is only going to damage and potentially destroy the vehicle. Likewise, expecting a loving couple to perform in harmony the unending task of commercial labor is to potentially damage or destroy the relationship.

Few families survive working together in business. The risks are enormous. But unfortunately, at the outset, our financial needs were too crushing, and our talents too abundant to not make the attempt.

My creative proclivity frustrated my wife endlessly because I was always missing deadlines, which she had to account for. But my finished work was worthy of awards—and we received many national awards for what we produced.



Adding to her aggravation were the other projects I would launch, unrelated to the business. These projects—like writing a novel or

building a model railroad—although highly creative in nature, got in the way of time needed for the business.

I wrote the novel *Vermillion Cliffs*, now featured as an important element in a *Pathway to Peace*. Filled with the challenges of family drama, the book in some ways reflects my own personal experiences in life.

A highly creative person like me always needs a project—a project of personal choice. Our kind are never satisfied. There is always a new idea, or a better way to do something.

These stresses and conflicts created a slow build-up to illness. Sadly, many highly creative people become sick because in the abuse of their bodies to complete their projects, they may smoke, drink too much coffee, lose sleep, indulge in promiscuity, and otherwise push themselves. Somehow, they must find that strength from within to keep going. I suffered some of these problems.

## **I Struggled Within a Culture of Idealism**

One of the great anxieties that took a continuing toll on my former wife was my complaining about idealistic religious culture. Again, it was the perfect life—the scripted life—that for me didn't always work. Unending church assignments became an annoyance. Further complicating the matter is the notion of needing to be "worthy" for acceptance and participation in the church community. I saw men and boys ostracized and publicly shamed for their unworthiness over simple every-day follies. Because of the strict code, I resigned myself to the belief that I was generally

unworthy and would deal with it by lying and covering up my contemptible acts.

Amidst this I was often told by various people of influence how good I was and what great things I would accomplish in religious leadership roles. It is very risky psychologically to predict to a young person all the great things they are going to achieve in the name of God. Believing such things, whether they come to pass or not, can become a millstone that drags them down into the depths of self-deprecation and feelings of worthless shortfall.

As a missionary I was told of the great expectations of me, a lifetime leader of influence. For the first few years of my married life this came to pass, as I was a bishop for five years. But during this time, I had some of my most severe headaches. Although I was considered an outstanding inspiring bishop as I related to people, the management side of high expectations was not the real me.

A highly creative person has no business leading a large group of people in anything. They need to be working on projects of their choice if they are to be truly happy. When I was made to feel guilty for not wanting to follow the perfect script, I unraveled psychologically.

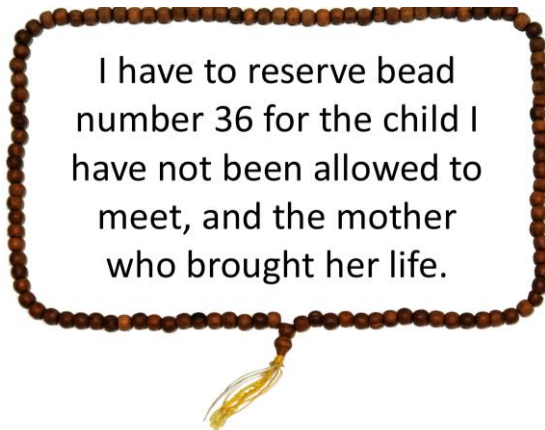
Through these trying years I suffered numerous strep infections. They never cleared up. Many were the days when I could not swallow because my throat was swollen. In desperation, the doctor gave me the strongest antibiotic on the market. The infection cleared, but I have always had a fear of becoming too reliant on such heavy medications. I also developed stomach ulcers.

## **Even Through Serious Mistakes, I Honor Life and Love all People**

In such a state of vulnerability, I had an affair, and a child was born out of wedlock from that affair. Not a pretty place for a former bishop. As taxing as this was on our marriage, the church's response was not to help but only compound the problem by excommunicating me.

Now my private scandal became a public scandal, and for the rest of my life I wear a scarlet letter within the society for which I was predicted to be a hero.

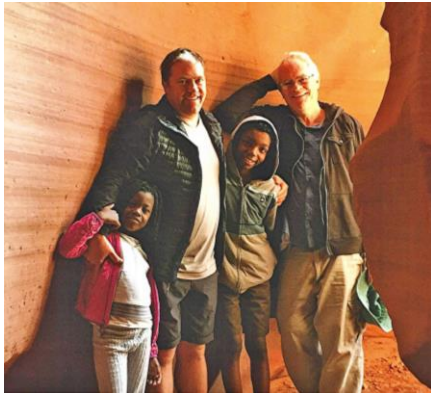
For me the excommunication did nothing to heal but was a stimulus-response action that made of me a Pavlov's dog. I suppose the notion exists that capital punishment of a religious nature will serve notice to others not to do the same thing. What it really does is create better liars of those who might stray.



I have to reserve bead  
number 36 for the child I  
have not been allowed to  
meet, and the mother  
who brought her life.

Irrespective of this tragedy, I honor life, and have respect and love for all people, no matter what circumstances brought them into this world.

My oldest son was born to my former wife when she was previously married. I love him fully as if he was my genetic offspring. I have two African American adopted grandchildren whom I adore.



I love them as much as those genetically descended from me. How can I not love a child with whom I have either a familial or genetic connection, or even children in the neighborhood I have bonded with? And of course, the love I have for an ever-growing number of grandchildren and great-grandchildren, whether through my genetic lineage or that of my present wife Norma, I love them all.

The affair created only more stress; more potential for illness; more revealing that the perfect life is most imperfect. My sense of alienation was complete, a foreigner or farang in my own land.

And I was later diagnosed with prostate cancer.

As I near the top of the mountain with my monk friend Phra Julien, I am impressed with the fact that they seldom suffer illness—nothing like I have experienced. I know my illnesses were the result of stress from the suffering brought about by my failures. The monks learn to eliminate stress and the subsequent suffering it



creates, because they have no expectations of magnanimous achievement.

With the expectations placed upon me, I had continuing migraine headaches. Daily did my head throb, sometimes so severe that I couldn't function. I buried myself in a dark and quiet room, lost in the pain of my misery. Due to the headaches, a battery of pain killers had become my lot. I never went anywhere without a pain killer to mask a headache that would flair up unexpectedly.

## **Wellness Accelerated for Me on Top of the Mountain**

For the first time in decades, alone in Thailand, I was free of debilitating headaches. I could go two or three days without feeling even the shadow of a headache. The hundreds of pills I took with me remained unused.

Even with cancer, which I know is reversing itself in my body, I feel better than I have in many years. I even stand up straighter. As I look in the mirror, my head is more erect as the muscles in my upper torso, back and neck have learned to relax.

In this land of the third world, in far off Asia on top of the mountain or in the valleys below, where time is flip-flopped from that in Utah, I ate only fresh food, most of it very spicy. I gagged at the thought of eating overly processed and packaged American fast food. The food that I ate grown in Thailand increased my physical wellness.

I now believe God's greatest expectation of me is to love without expectation or judgment of others, and to forge a path forward of kindness and empathy. In this book I share many strategies and

insights that have come from many places, and help me find peace when I am disheartened, joy when I am sad, and capable when I feel lost.



To the reader I would say, search for your truth. You will find it, and you will find that others are on the same path.

## **We Are on a Path of Collective Consciousness**

Collective consciousness is a phenomenon in which certain levels of knowledge and understanding occur with people in divergent places without communicating with each other. The *Law of Attraction* (explained in Chapter 14) is a good example of this. Many seekers of truth have articulated the *Law of Attraction*, discovering the principles on their own or through miraculous divine intervention, only to discover that others have come to the same understanding.

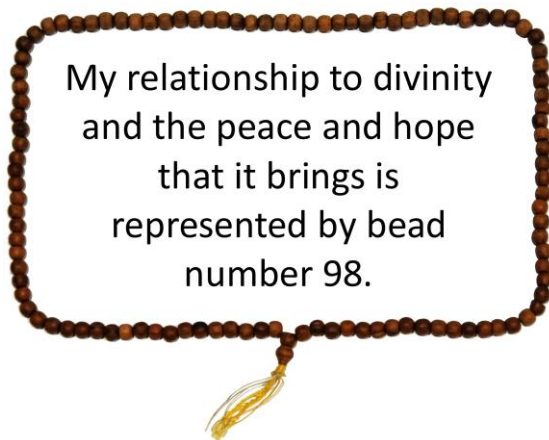
While living alone in a Kutu in the meditation retreat, tiny sugar ants came into my bungalow. I left an empty bowl of oatmeal on

top of the refrigerator. Within a short time, hundreds of ants were enjoying the remnants of that sweet feast. I don't know where they came from but was amazed that within a few minutes so many climbed to the top of the refrigerator. It must have been through some divine act of nature that the ants communicate in a collective consciousness, leading each other to a gourmet feast.

I believe that I am part of a collective conscientiousness that is sweeping the world as it relates to man's spirit and his relationship to divinity, a godliness that is imbued with love and acceptance, not harsh rules and judgment.

As I have been developing the elements to a *Pathway to Peace*, including books, dozens of videos and live training events, I keep discovering new gems of information.

People around the world are searching for truth, for peace, and are willing to share with humanity what they have discovered. Ours is an unending collective consciousness.



What rules in life have you found  
burdensome and unnecessary?

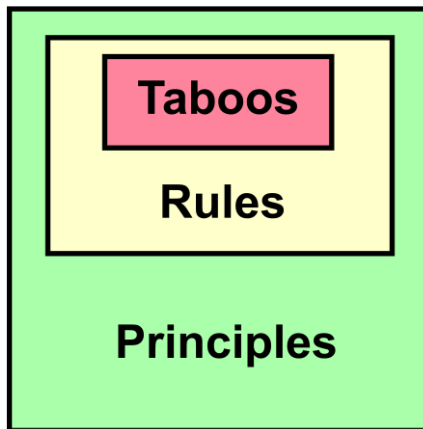
# Redefining Taboos and Rules

## Chapter 5

Every society has taboos, those forbidden, outlawed, unthinkable, inviolable, sacrosanct mandates that keep us in check.

Every society also has rules, differentiated from taboos as more reasonable guidelines to assist people as they function in society.

Principles are natural and obvious realities that may or may not include rules or taboos. Principles are few in number but should undergird all rules and taboos.



Civilized people believe in the fundamental principle of not killing other people. Such a principle may be considered taboo from a religious perspective, invoking God's eternal wrath for committing murder. From a rules perspective, various laws—or rules—have been established to protect the rights of people to life, such as traffic rules of the road.

But many rules covering virtually every aspect of life spread like weeds, invented, and enforced by different people or institutions motivated to control societies. Most such rules not founded in good principles may be angrily interpreted as unnecessary taboos.

Rules, rules, rules. Life is like the tax code, one rule upon another. A person either doesn't understand all the rules, and screams to be free from them, or tries too carefully to live them all, creating guilt when rules aren't kept with precision.

From childhood, I was constantly reminded of rules, and had no concept of governing principles that would have provided a much better environment for a creative person such as myself.

## **I Was Blameworthy**

In my growing crisis, I adopted an adjective describing myself as "blameworthy." It means that I am responsible for wrongdoing, particularly that which negatively affects others, and leaves me deserving of censure or blame.

Beyond a healthy recognition of mistakes I made that would be principle based, I surrounded myself with an aura of constant blameworthiness because of the many rules I could not keep and taboos I committed.

Furthermore, I began to feel responsible for the suffering of others around me because of my weaknesses in not being able to live in perfection. I was often filled with guilt and shame because I couldn't keep up with every rule and taboo.

In truth, children and teenagers want and need structure, structure that must be based on rules that follow good principles. Youngsters may deny such a need, but they flounder helplessly insecure without an organized predictable environment that makes them

feel safe. If that setting is imbued with rules that embrace love and forgiveness—foundational principles—the child will thrive. But when punishments descend, and fear cripples the heart because of overbearing taboos and rules, then self-esteem diminishes, and a depressing life of blameworthiness is the result.

A shattered self-esteem occurs in large measure because the expectations and seemingly irrelevant rules and taboos of adults appear to be more important than the individual and his or her ability to think and make choices based on good principles.

## **Rules Can be Helpful or Harmful**

Many individuals experience a great sense of power when they enforce rules on others. Some professions nurture this need.

Unfulfilled are some people who are drawn to law enforcement, the military or government service just to feel the exhilaration of having power over other people, rather than being drawn for the pure act of service they can provide. Unfortunately, many such power people have no concept of the principles that should imbue the rules they enforce.

I always chuckle at the gloating authority I sense in anyone who wears a uniform driven by the motive of power. The excitement is the same for the security guard at a gas station as it is for a general.

I have observed an interesting phenomenon in regard to rules and laws. Attorneys rely on the importance of precedence. Any court judgment is largely affected by a similar judgment from the past. This is precedent. Whether the judgment is fair or right, it is affected by what happened previously, perhaps even many years back.

Great judges and effective juries will look for guiding principles of fairness and justice that would hopefully supersede precedent from a previous era. Hopefully they would look to current

circumstances and realities of the time to pass their judgments without overlooking established rules and norms based on good principles. They must look deeply at governing principles where miscreants may have been confused or angered by taboos and rules.

Within any organization, rules and precedents become institutionalized or permanent ways of doing things, whether the rules or precedents make sense or have become outmoded. Power driven controlling people want to hang on to rules and taboos, finding great satisfaction when enforcing them.

In the world today many rules, precedents and taboos exist to govern our lives. In the office, on the street, in the church or the school and even within the family, individuals must navigate their way through a mine field of expectations and ways of doing things.

Some rules are necessary for people to function together in society. Without logical and purposeful procedures, anarchy would reign. But often behind the rules, there are more deeply held beliefs that I label as institutionalized taboos.

Free thinking people may consider simple rules as overbearing and may label them as unfair taboos. Some forbidding rules or taboos may be as simple as not watching television on Sunday, or feeling guilty when wearing clothes that look expensive or revealing.

The rule of not swearing or wearing prescribed clothing may be rules of religion or families, and their value held accordingly. Many such decrees could be sighted and rightfully examined as rules of worth to some, or unnecessary taboos to others.

## **The Monastic Rules or Precepts**

Those learning meditation in Thailand are expected to practice the five principle precepts, or rules:



**Pāṇā—**

Not Killing Living Beings

**Adinnā—**

Not Taking what is Not Given

**Kāme—**

No Sexual Misconduct

**Musā—**

Not Using False Speech

**Surā—**

Not Taking Intoxicants

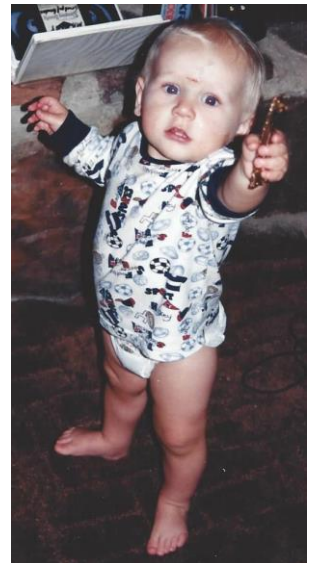


Monks have over 270 additional precepts. I couldn't hope to know what all those rules are. To my western mind, many would probably appear as excessive taboos.

## **I Have Learned to Lead with Safe Reasonable Rules and Expectations**

I have a grandson who when a toddler loved to run. It would be a correct principle articulated as a good rule to not run wildly in a large store, making him vulnerable to kidnapping. Yet in the mind of this child, not being allowed to run anywhere at any time was unfair and mean. What are the parents to do? The child viewed this as an unnecessary taboo, yet the parents needed to protect the youngster.

The answer was to give the child as much freedom as necessary in *safe* areas. A safe area might be a child's bedroom. If a child wants a messy bed and is allowed to manage his or her own domain, then the



child is more likely to follow reasonable rules in an unsafe realm, internalizing the rule as a good and needed principle.

Several years ago, I was asked to videotape a presentation in the home of a wealthy influential businessman and high church authority. He and his wife had several beautiful daughters. As I was setting up lights in the foyer, I asked the woman of the house where additional electrical outlets might be. Without hesitation, she directed me to the bedroom of one of her daughters. When I stepped into the room, I was astonished to see an unmade bed, drawers open with clothes hanging out, with shoes and underwear strewn about. I had to push her personal things aside to find the outlet. The mother was not the least embarrassed. Clearly, this child had freedom in a safe area, and years later, is a very successful adult.

I believe that as children grow up, and they have mounting rules or taboos that seem irrelevant, they will develop neuroses relative to their self-esteem and are at high risk for serious problems as young adults.

I would challenge anyone to examine the rules that they live and govern by, and make sure they are based on true principles. They would be wise to eliminate unnecessary rules which could be interpreted as taboos. Are they good rules that provide safety, or are they arbitrary taboos that cause frustration? It would be healthy to separate the good rules from the unnecessary rules, not only as it relates to one's world, but the world of the family and fellow workers.

## **I Have Learned to Let Go of Judgment**

A bigger challenge would be to forgive others who ignore taboos. You might be inclined to cling to rules that are deemed important, but of little consequence to another. Let go of the judgment and

the tendency to control others with your rules. Recognize that to them, your rules may be unnecessary and controlling taboos.

A dear friend of mine traveled widely as a young adult, much to the chagrin of her sister, who from an ultra-conservative religious base, felt that she was tempting the devil, putting herself in danger. Her sister was further derisive of the fact that my friend was neglecting her more important duties of getting married and having children. The money she was spending was a further disappointment to her sister.

Years later, when my friend couldn't get pregnant, her sister intimated that perhaps it was the Lord's punishment for her earlier frivolities, a notion that I find disheartening.

Ironically, the sister's children years later are refusing to be submissive any more to the rules or taboos imposed by their mother. She is systematically driving her children away.

## **I Am No Longer Controlled by Taboos**

What are the taboos I have eliminated, or rules I have redefined?

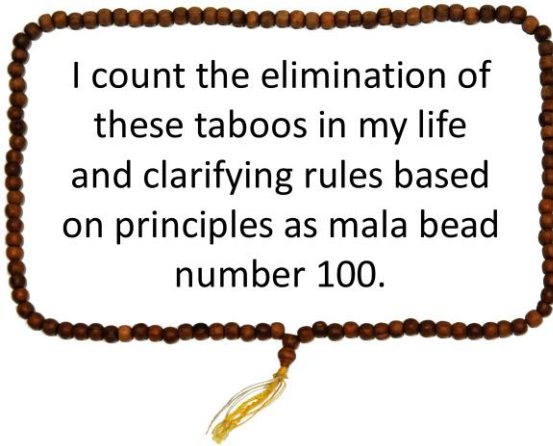
Not being intimidated has to be number one. Through the years I have been easily intimidated by those in authority, those who think they are in authority, and those whom I would not want to offend.

Second, without wanting to hurt other people, I now put my own needs first. In the past I have been too quick to cater to the needs and expectations of others. Blameworthiness dominated my thinking. This has systematically dismantled my self-esteem.

Next, I choose to continue my journey of understanding myself, my relationship to God and the universe, and I do it without guilt from those who would impose their rule driven beliefs on me.

Lastly, I refuse to be controlled by other people, institutions, or ideologies. Demanding freedom from suffering, I will fight for my individuality. However, I will cautiously avoid harming others. If they are supposedly harmed, it is because of their disappointment in not being able to control me.

I really believe that as a strong individual, I have greater the ability to bless the lives of others and love them, and if they love me unconditionally, I will love them all the more.



Have you ever been criticized unfairly for an idea or action?

# Judgment and Condemnation

## Chapter 6

Said Jesus Christ:

*Judge not, that ye be not judged.*

Continuing in His Sermon on the Mount He taught:

*For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*

*And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?*

*Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?*

*Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*

*St. Matthew 7:2-5*

Many followers of Jesus proclaim themselves to understand the truth while condemning others as awash in false beliefs. Such people may have beams in their own eyes. Some believe that others will suffer a lesser heaven after death, or the sure handed punishment of God's damnation upon them forever if they don't convert to their beliefs.

Through this judgment, such thinking is an attempt to remove the mote out of the eye of another while not seeing the beam in their own eye.



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It doesn't look to me like they're following the admonition of the Holy One very well.



Buddhists do not believe in God the same way Christians do. However, they accept Jesus along with many others as great prophets.

As committed as Phra Julien is to the acceptance of others, and as kind and helpful though he is, he believes nonetheless that

Buddhism is the true religion, implying that others fall short. Even those who would never judge, still judge.

Perhaps I am judging. Oh well. I just see it as I see it.

We are like worms squirming our way through tall blades of grass, unable to see the big picture from above. "We worms are true, and other miniature creatures like caterpillars, maggots and ants are false."

We all live in the world together and when we overcome our prejudice, we will love as Jesus loved, or as Buddha accepted.

To many people, strict religious adherence is a badge of authority, giving them the right to condemn and judge others in their behavior and beliefs they deem inappropriate. To me it appears to be prideful condescension.

## **There are Foundational Truths Inherent in All Societies and Religions**

Stepping back, I have observed that all people, whether religious or not, have fundamental beliefs that are common to everyone. The principles of love, kindness, and devotion to doing good deeds are at the heart of their righteousness. This is certainly true of my religious affiliation as a Latter-day Saint.

I have talked to many who decry religion in general as nothing more than control exercised on the masses. Yet they generally live good lives with divine characteristics of compassion and goodness.

From youth, I was taught that all people are born with the spirit of Christ, a basic tenet of Mormonism. Unfortunately, with time that

spirit can be smothered, dulling our natural inclination to the Divine.

When I have seen people freely choose religion without judgment, irrespective of the denomination, I see tranquility and peace within them. This transcends until they are challenged in their beliefs, judged by others, or unfairly condemned. At this point they become defensive or judgmental themselves.

I have spoken to individuals of different faiths that believe their church is the only true church, and will sometimes defend that belief with scriptural quotations, sometimes arrogance and even anger.

The world's religions provide a basis for many people to journey, finding comfort in the various rituals and dogmas they adhere to. However, I believe that at some point in time, nearly everyone must discover and define for themselves what truth is as it relates to themselves, and place the structure of religion into a supportive, not controlling category. Religion must serve us, not become our taskmaster.

Religions bless the masses, but for many people, well defined and structured faith falls short of meeting unique individual needs.

## **The Fear of Being Judged Has Affected My Behavior**

My psychological undoing came at the untenable adherence to beliefs regarding my destiny in life, a destiny largely charted by the perfect script written by others through generations of doctrinal interpretations and teachings. In not following that script, guilt and a sense of condemnation became my legacy.



I have had to let go of that sticky glue. But as I let go, my fingers were still sticky, and the adhesive got on my pants and shirt. I washed my hands, but the residue of the glue remained.

It reminds me of the sticky process of mounting pictures with spray-on glue. Once the project begins, it never really gets cleaned up.

The project of my life has been constantly touched by those with sticky messy fingers, always pasting pictures and phrases on my being.

Have I been afraid of being judged? Certainly. Judgment from religious authority has been difficult enough, but when it came from those whom I have loved and served, it became most painful and adversely affected my behavior.

## **Why People Do the Things They Do**

Understanding why people do and say the things they do, irrespective of religion or any other factor, has helped me to cope with those who judge. A study of personality styles is very helpful.

Educational research has revealed that people fall into one of four learning or personality styles, quadrants that affect their ability to interact in and feel connected to an institution, whether it be a school, a church, or a family.

Although there are more technical terms for these styles, I choose the more fun designations of beach ball, clipboard, puppy, or microscope. These ideas were introduced to us many years ago at an educational conference by Gayle Gregory from Burlington, Ontario.

## Personality Styles



They are ***creating and acting***.  
They look for usefulness  
in the application of learning.



They think and do. These  
people are ***active, practical,***  
and make things work.



Those who feel and ponder.  
They create and ***reflect on  
an experience.***



They examine and think.  
They are observers who  
appreciate ***lecture methods.***

Of the four types, only microscopes respond well to lectures, which is the biggest part of teaching, religion and sometimes that of parenting.

Little wonder that large numbers of students drop out of school or church, or struggle to leave the tutelage of their parents. The other three types of people are reflective, practical, and creative. If they don't find relevance in their institutions, they eventually give up, and look elsewhere for a sense of belonging.

Ignorant of this knowledge, many teachers, religionists, and other leaders find reason to be questionable of those who don't fall into line. Such persons of authority are likely microscopes or clipboards by nature, prone to lecture.

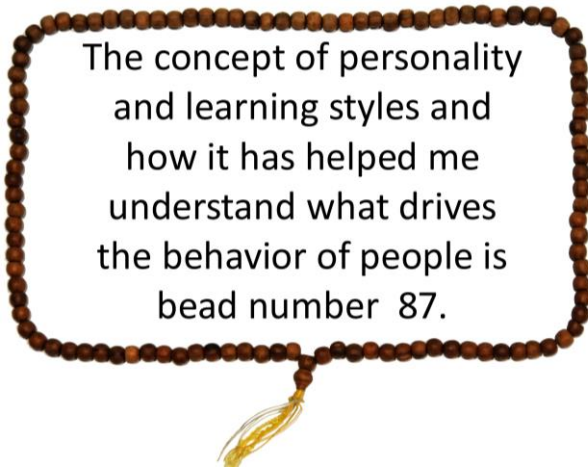
I like to think of beach balls as bouncing around, always having fun. They bounce back, even when abused—unless they are totally deflated.

Clipboards typically like to have an agenda, or a plan. If someone disrupts their plan, they become frustrated. A well-organized person as a clipboard—although productive—may have a different agenda from what others give them.

Puppies need to be stroked and loved. The amazing thing about puppies in real life is that they are always there to give love, even if their master has a bad day. Puppies as people must never be abused.

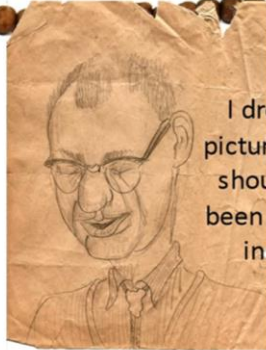
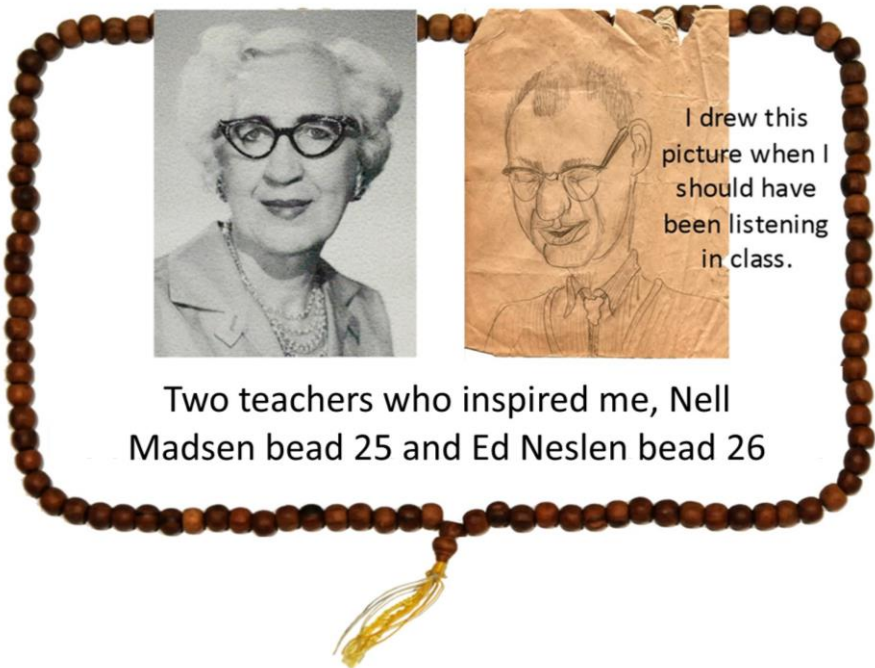
Puppies pee a lot. Maybe that's why I had to pee on the continental divide to imagine whether it would flow to the Pacific or the Atlantic, or with my boys when they peed off the Glen Canyon Bridge into the Colorado River in Arizona. Several collective streams of urine dissipated to a fine mist 700 feet below.

As a puppy, I'm creating and acting. I never dropped out of school, but if I was subject to irrelevance, I paid little attention and consequently got poor grades. Frankly, I didn't care. In those classes I enjoyed, such as art and photography, I got A's. In English and math, I got D's. I was satisfied with a C average. It's amazing I got into college, where, unpredictably, I graduated in journalism. Entrance requirements were less stringent in the early '60's.



The concept of personality and learning styles and how it has helped me understand what drives the behavior of people is bead number 87.

Credit goes to Miss Madsen, my high school senior English teacher at Granite High School in Salt Lake City for my flip-flop to a love of writing. She was called “Moose” Madsen, and like a moose, she plowed into the hearts of her students. A gray-haired spinster, she found in me potential.



I drew this picture when I should have been listening in class.

Two teachers who inspired me, Nell Madsen bead 25 and Ed Neslen bead 26

I also credit Ed Neslen, an award-winning art teacher at Granite who was charmed by my artistic potential. "If I you do not become famous someday," he said, "I will come and haunt you." From him I learned so many skills.

Like a sponge, I reluctantly absorbed nasty vinegar—classes I never liked, but soaked up the sweet nectar of classes I loved. Art and photography were native sweet nectars I desired, a yearning that came with me from the womb.

My sisters warned me that English and algebra were very hard. Consequently, I got D's in English and algebra. I never discovered a love for algebra. I sat in the back of the room and drew pictures when I was bored. It's amazing I got a passing grade.

There was an incident when one of our sons came home with a C on his report card. My former wife was furious. (She is a blend of a clipboard and a microscope and was perfectly made to succeed in school.) I said to my son, "That's not so bad. I got a D- in that class." She scolded me for gloating with such a bad example.

I taught high school for five years at Alta High School in Sandy, Utah. Oddly, I taught science, but I made it fun. The youngsters thrived in my classroom. Frequently, parents would request that their children be transferred to my science class.

Even today, so many years later, I may see a former student packing their own children in tow, recognizing me as their former teacher, happy to see me.

Once I made an illegal U-turn and was pulled over by a police officer, obviously a clipboard. He looked at my driver's license, then bent low to look at me through the window. "Are you Mr. Linton?"

“Yes I am.”

“Well, I can’t give a ticket to my old science teacher!” We laughed, and as he let me drive away, in a cheerful authoritarian tone he cautioned, “Be more careful next time.”

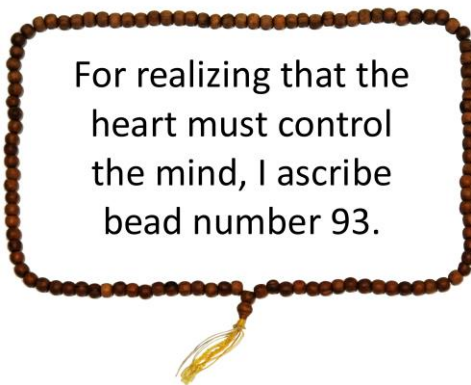
## Three Stages of the Mind

Thanat, my senior meditation teacher, shared with me a profound concept about intellect. Said he, there are three stages of our mind.

First, MEMORY, which is acquired from childhood when our parents and teachers directed us.

Second, KNOWLEDGE, which is the learning we acquire as individuals when solving our own problems.

Third, WISDOM, which comes from meditation when the mind is placed under control of the heart.



The "shoulds" and "should nots" we live with come from memory. These are important learnings to guide children safely to adulthood.

However, the "shoulds" and "should nots" must be laced with love and kindness, else childhood memories will be scarred for a lifetime.

As parents and teachers provide opportunities for children to experiment, take risks and grow in directions they choose, then they will acquire powerful knowledge that will serve them forever.

When we learn to meditate, setting aside preconceived notions that create guilt and judgment, then wisdom becomes our lot.

I feel comfortable about my memories from home and school, but my young adult years were laced with too much of "shoulds" and "should nots" fostered by dogma that tripped me up later in life. I was made to feel guilty for thinking outside of the box, or for having feelings of fantasy, particularly sexual fantasy.

## **Properly Grounded, Religious Affiliation Gives Me Peace and the Opportunity to Serve Others**

I now feel great joy in being able to let go of the pains I suffered through the middle years of my life, recognizing my membership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for the positive things it gives me. I highly value my religious affiliation as it creates an environment of peace amidst service to others.

Since those days I sojourned in Thailand, I have lived in four different homes in four different neighborhoods placing me in four different wards or congregations. Within the LDS faith, people are expected to attend the ward whose boundaries encircle their home. In each ward I have been given opportunities to work either with boy scouts, teaching young people in Sunday School, and for

several years teaching Gospel Doctrine to the adult Sunday School classes.

In those adult classes in particular, I was loved and praised for my teaching. Certainly, my skills gave me an advantage, teaching skills honed by training other teachers for many years throughout the United States and Canada. But more importantly, my spirituality couched in honesty and humor has endeared those adult students to me.

How would you define your true inner soul,  
motivations and personality?



# The Need to Find My True Self

Everyone needs to extract themselves from  
the weeds of expectations to the blossom  
of who they really are.



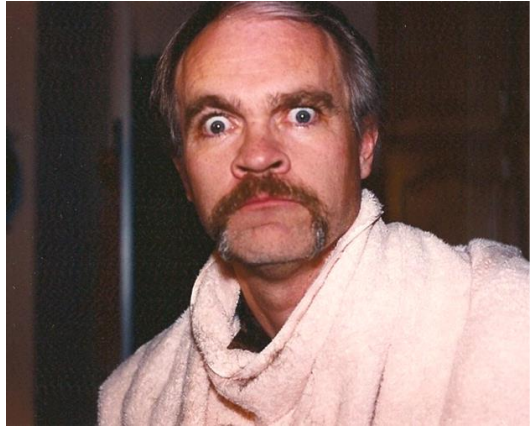


# Freedom from Psychological Enslavement

## Chapter 7

At some point many years ago, I realized my life had been put in a blender and I was crushed, pulverized and made into purée of a nasty flavor and texture. My own blameworthiness, foolish mistakes, failed business ventures and burdensome guilt helped make it so.

I was in crisis, needing new knowledge that had deep meaning. I sought therapists and read many books that would give me answers to questions I could not articulate.



I voraciously consumed many ideas and philosophies searching for my own personal truth. I was no longer willing to just be told what truth is, what was wrong with me and the mandate that I be obedient. My subservience did not bring lasting peace.

My spirit spoke loudly to me of the incongruity under which I lived. I was made to feel wrong in getting massage therapy, psychological therapy, and therapy of any kind, particularly if it was administered by a woman.

I read many books, written by writers of a persuasion not necessarily akin to traditional creed. Religion had been the center

of my life. The core of my religious trunk had been bored out by the larvae of uncertainty, shame, and guilt. I didn't realize it, but I needed freedom from psychological enslavement and reassurance of the value of myself. I was willing to sacrifice to gain that freedom.

## **We Must Sacrifice in Order to Grow**

I have read with admiration the great sacrifices made by patriots of ages past who forfeited everything for freedom from tyranny. Some of my favorite movies follow this theme, such as *Braveheart* and *Glory*.

To the patriots fighting for freedom, I pay my greatest homage. But I was in a fight for my own freedom, not freedom from tyrants or imprisonment, but freedom from the enslavement of the mind, of the spirit, of the psyche that is smothered by the cloud of incongruity, desperately seeking the light of my own truth.

On top of the mountain, I did not see what has been an ubiquitous occurrence throughout the Kingdom of Thailand—older Caucasian men with cute Thai girls clinging to them. What have the men run away from? Where have they run from? Am I one such runaway? I did not have any girls hanging onto me, but there were many Thai girls who were willing to do so. It seems that Thai women adore older American—or at least Caucasian men. But this isn't the only place where I have seen runaway people, of both sexes.

I have visited attractions such as the San Juan Islands in Puget Sound, the Florida Keys 90 miles north of Cuba, the Red Rock Country of the Colorado Plateau and the Redwood Forests in northern California. Attractions like these are crowded with people from throughout the land looking for peace and a connection to nature. Many of them come from very wealthy backgrounds. They include attorneys, businessmen, and people with little but the

packs they carry on their backs. What are they looking for? What are they running from?



On the island of Peleliu in Micronesia I met Frank. In his mid-thirties he had left Australia, frustrated with rejection and the high pace of that westernized country. On Peleliu where the blood of marines had long washed away,

Frank's heart bled for a native girl. He is happy flying airplanes for tourists and eating betel nut to the point where his teeth are now blackish red.

In Asia, Europe and the islands of the sea, I have met people with a similar motive. Their stories differ in detail, but they are all looking for something. Wealth, fame, success and—sadly—often family did not fulfill their needs.

## **True Joy is What We All Seek**

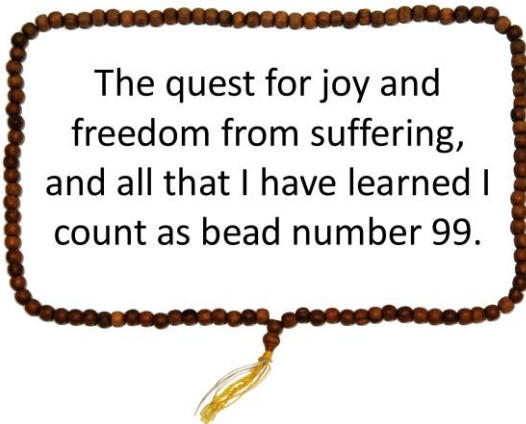
I think of a doctor who worked hard and planned to retire in his forties. His bankroll and his passport were ready. Then he was diagnosed with colon cancer and died two years later. I spent a lot of time with him in the last few months of his life. His family became the most important possession he had. His lost health was a regret at first, but when he found peace and tranquility, he discovered for the first time an abundance of joy, something he would have never recognized otherwise. He died a happy man.

What he found in his bed of illness he didn't have to search for in a distant land.

My joy in family and other associations began to unfold on top of the mountain where I discovered remarkable tranquility, above the weeds of expectation. I know from time to time, others found similar escape at the top of a different mountain, finding peace and solace through meditation.

Many people run, seeking for escape from emotional pain they cannot endure such as Phra Julien who ran from Quebec. I did not run but was looking for knowledge and truth. Abhorrent is the thought of me being a runaway. Before I left for Thailand, one of my sons asked me, "Are you going to come back?" He actually feared that I would run away and abandon his family.

I assured him I would come home for I love my family so much. My plan was to be there for only a month. Sadly, I did miss Thanksgiving at home with the family. There was no turkey dinner for me in Thailand.



The quest for joy and  
freedom from suffering,  
and all that I have learned I  
count as bead number 99.

My work is not complete as a father. I have many things to teach my children and grandchildren, things that I learned during this crisis, and things I am learning now and will yet learn.

A major turning point in my quest for freedom from psychological enslavement came when I was diagnosed with prostate cancer.

I had been visiting a medical clinic that believed in alternative methodologies, advocating healthy lifestyles and proper nutrition. Blood was drawn for lab testing, and it was determined that my cholesterol and blood pressure were high, and that my PSA—prostate numbers—were high enough to be of concern. I was referred to a urologist who discovered the cancer. He recommended radical surgery, but I believed in the advice to continue seeking help to relieve the stress in my life and work to actualize the real John Linton.

## **I Discovered the Key to Healing from Illness**

Freedom to be and honor who I really am was the key to my healing and future well-being. I was helped to identify those areas in my life that needed attention—not only physical but psychological—needs that became a catalyst for me to articulate my feelings and wants and contributed to my going to Asia alone.

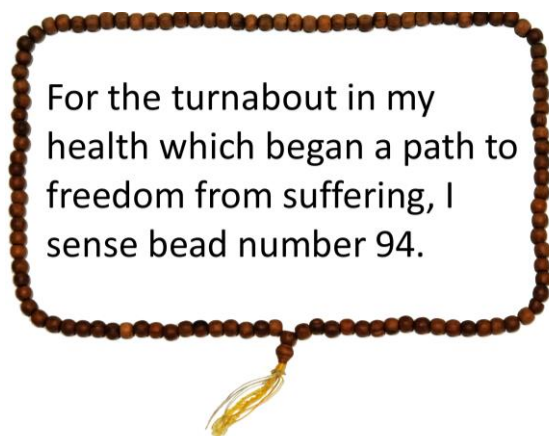
Analogous to my life journey is a science lab experiment I did with my 9<sup>th</sup> grade students. In a lab, I would remove a piece of pure sodium metal from a container of kerosene and immerse it in a flask of water. Immediately it began to fizzle violently in a state of burning. Sparks and smoke followed. In the reaction, the sodium combined with hydrogen in the water, separating it into hydrogen gas that dissipated into the air.

My life was the sodium, captured permanently in solid form and stored in kerosene to protect it from making contact with water. The rules I lived with of expectations and judgments were Kerosene, smothering me from the life-giving water of truth that I needed.



When finally, I was exposed to the water, the acceptance of who I am, the sodium fizzled wildly, creating concern and anxiety within everyone who knew me. Sadly, my breakthrough for them was anguish toward me that only brought what I felt was further judgment.

But as my pain, anxieties and bad memories dissipated into nothingness, like the hydrogen gas into the air, I discovered true freedom and loving acceptance from my family.



For the turnabout in my health which began a path to freedom from suffering, I sense bead number 94.

Have you ever experienced being alone to contemplate your life?



# The Chom Thong Monastery Experience

## Chapter 8

### In a Remote Buddhist Complex in Thailand



### I Grew from Being Alone

I would have never had my remarkable experience on the mountain had I not spent several days down in the valley of the city of Chom Thong, learning and practicing meditation.

When I was diagnosed with prostate cancer, I contacted Preecha and Waranan Pongcharoenkul in Chiang Mai and asked if they could direct me to some training in meditation that would help with not only my physical healing, but my spiritual rejuvenation as well. They graciously took me to Wat Phra, the Buddhist temple complex in Chom Thong.

Chom Thong is a small city southwest of Chiang Mai in the northern lowlands. As part of the temple complex there is a meditation

retreat for devout followers of Buddhism and others like me interested in learning meditation.

In addition to native Thais, there are people from many lands. Visiting is discouraged amongst the participants, but I did meet a young lady from Italy, a young man from Israel and another from Australia, a woman from Mexico and another woman from Germany. I may well have been the only one from the United States.

I was apprehensive about committing myself to a week of meditation, particularly in a rigid environment with strict rules. However, I felt within my heart that it would be beneficial.



I was to be housed in a small bungalow room called a kuty, of which there were many. As a trainee in meditation, I would be a yogi.

The kuty is very bland with a tile floor, a small refrigerator, a fan, a chair, a small nightstand and a low-lying table that was to be my

bed. It had no mattress or springs. Fortunately, Waranan, Preecha's wife, brought along a thin mattress and quilt which made the idea for slumber on the table more tolerable.

For personal hygiene each kuty is equipped with a non-flushing toilet, a bucket and a ladle, most incomplete by western standards. When needed, the ladles were used to pour a large amount of water into the toilet to



effectuate a flush. At least this toilet wasn't a squatter. The other toilets I have used in Thailand have spray hoses that function as a bidet. One must artfully aim the hose with finger action to complete the post bowel evacuation duty. In this case, the pouring of a ladle between the butt cheeks had to suffice.

At the other corner of the room was a door to a small balcony that has a regular sink for washing hands and dishes. No shower anywhere. The ladles for the toilet must do for washing the body, as the only a drain was in the toilet room. No hot water either.

In the compound I was expected to wear white garb, very loose-fitting pants and shirt that gives one the appearance of a beginning martial arts student. I was always to wear sandals that can be easily removed when entering a building.

As I arrived, I was to be greeted by a Buddhist monk fluent in English. Regrettably, that monk had gone to Bangkok. There was no

one to translate for me. As Waranan and I walked along with the head nun, Maechee Gate ("chee" is a nun in Thai) we happened upon a Caucasian monk who, as serendipity would have it, was to become my teacher and lifetime friend, Phra Julien (Phra is a title for monk).

Born in Quebec, Canada, Julien became a Buddhist monk and lives in the mountains north of Chom Thong in the Wat Doikeung temple complex at the top of the mountain, a summit in the Omgay Mountain range. He was very accommodating of my needs. Julien warned me of the routine.

Every morning at 4am large bells were clanked repeatedly to wake up the monks—and everyone else trying to sleep. At this cue, dozens of dogs in the compound began to howl and growl like a pack of wolves during the clanging of the bells. If one's slumber was not already interrupted, the canine chorus would surely make the disruption complete.

The meals were provided in a dining hall twice a day. Breakfast at 6am and lunch at 11am. After lunch, no food was to be chewed until the following morning at breakfast. One could drink fluids of various sorts. During the evening, I was brought different drinks, strange in flavor but filling, nonetheless. One was a soy drink with sesame seed. Another was an unusual tasting dairy drink with chocolate. The meals always consisted of rice and various concoctions of vegetables and some type of meat. Fruit was provided for dessert. Some of the dishes were very good, others quite strange. Often, I wondered what I was eating, horrified at the thought that the fighting and barking dogs overrunning the campus presented a steady supply of fresh meat on the paw.

In the evening of the first complete day, I was invited to an opening ceremony. With other yogis we knelt in front of a senior monk and listened to him chant for several minutes in the Bali language. We repeated certain chants, and I mumbled along having no idea what I was saying. At one point I was given a bowl of flowers to give to the monk. To the devout Buddhist, this was undoubtedly a rich religious experience. To me it was a lesson in acceptance, feeling a deep spiritual desire to erase all prejudice and judgment.

As a Mormon prostrating to a high-ranking Buddhist monk, I was reminded of a strangely similar experience when I was in the army.

I had the assignment of being a chaplain's assistant in the base hospital at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri. Each day before noon I had to prepare for Catholic mass by setting out the wafers and the wine, strange duty for a Latter-day Saint high priest, a status I had for serving in a Bishopric in a student ward at Brigham Young University. In the military, denomination lines are blurry, not in divisive focus as they might be in civilian society.

## **A Buddhist Blessing**

Following is an English translation made by a Thai from a monk's blessing spoken in Bali. It is similar to what was said during the opening ceremony. I did not correct the grammar and punctuation.

*Verses of Appreciation for Alms Giving*

*The Wise who give out long life, strength, beauty,*

*Merits and happiness, will be crowned with happiness.*

*Those who give long life, merits food physical care to other,  
happiness and wisdom,*

*Will be blessed long life, dignity and prestige  
where ever they go.*

Some years before, when I first visited Thailand, I was exposed to Buddhist culture and religion, and for me, I felt quite smug in my tightly held Christian beliefs that they were far from understanding gospel truth. With such reproach it becomes easy to judge them as ignorant and worshipful of false gods.

They have their beliefs, and I will declare without hesitation that amongst them I have felt only love, goodness and a worshipful respect for the divine that would rival anyone I have ever met, no matter what their faith.

## **Religion that Enlarges the Soul Must be Free of Judgment and Prejudice**

Many in the Christian world proclaim to have the truth about God and religion. Sadly, what they sometimes have is arrogance, judgment, and prejudice. What the Buddhists have is a remarkable philosophy of life that fosters peace and tranquility.

They too, however, believe they are right in their religious beliefs and that everyone else is in error.

The monks, nuns or yogis that surrounded me represented a wide variety of people in all age brackets. Some of the monks and nuns were aged. One lady was very tiny and hunched over with a badly deformed back. Irrespective of her handicap, she moved about briskly, not shy about crowding her way to the front of the food line. All the nuns had shaved heads, very unfeminine, but

deliberately done to eradicate any desires of beauty for themselves or distraction for the monks.

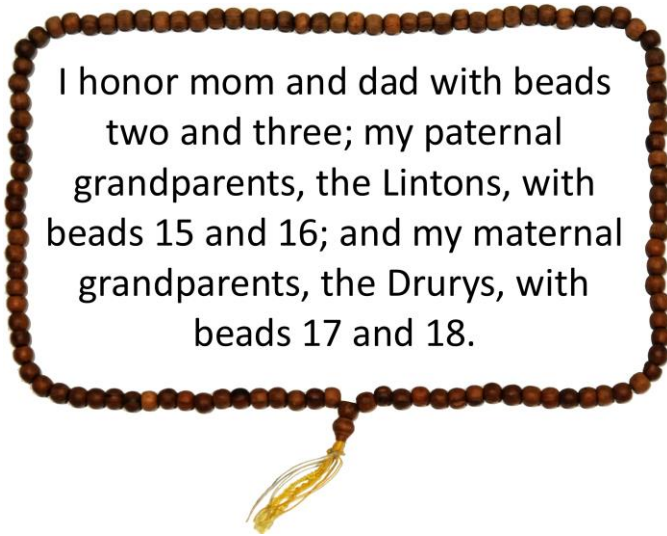
## **Devotion Must Always be Given to Our Ancestors**

I met Hubert who was born in France but has lived his life in Australia. For several months he had been backpacking around Thailand. I would guess he was about 30 years old. He had a dark complexion with rugged good looks, and his thick curly hair was pulled back into a ponytail.

One morning I attended a ceremony in which everyone gave alms food to the monks after a series of chants. To conclude the ritual, we poured water into a tray, and then poured the water from the tray into the base of a tree of our choice. This was all done to honor our ancestors who had passed away.

Before the ceremony, Hubert walked by the gathering not wearing his white clothes but donned with a backpack, ready to go to his next destination in this Southeast Asian land. He was done with the Monastery, and evidently did not feel the desire to honor his ancestry.

Latter-day Saints have a great affection for their ancestry. In fact, the numerous temples they have built throughout the world are designed for personal purification and to perform ordinances in behalf of their loved ones who have passed away. I thought of my parents and grandparents, long since gone, ancestors who loved me and still influence my life.



I honor mom and dad with beads two and three; my paternal grandparents, the Lintons, with beads 15 and 16; and my maternal grandparents, the Drurys, with beads 17 and 18.



Because Phra Julien was leaving to go back to the mountain where he lived, the head nun Maechee Gate introduced me to Sandra from Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, who spoke English, Spanish, and enough Thai to understand the Monks. She would help me if needed. A woman of about 35, Sandra had been at this retreat for about three months and planned to stay for another four months.



I was having difficulty staying for a week. Sandra was not a Buddhist, nor was she Catholic as would be expected from Mexico. She did not believe in God but is wholeheartedly committed to the philosophy of meditation as practiced by the Buddhists. Sandra was very serene and happy. She had no family at home, but a boyfriend from whom she liked to be separated for long periods of time.

As I moved about the compound, I saw many people alone. I couldn't help but wonder what their back story might have been. Perhaps they left abusive environments. Perhaps career success eluded them. Perhaps they had lost loved ones suddenly and tragically. Whatever their story, they were there finding peace and tranquility.

Each day I received instruction in meditation and was challenged to practice throughout the day. It was a remarkable experience that brought me new insight, peace and healing. It also released a lot of new pain from sleeping on such a hard bed.



On my last day I participated in a closing ceremony in which we had audience with the highest-ranking monk, the Venerable Achan Thong Sirimangalo. He is a bald rotund man in his advanced years. A series of blessings were given regarding health, happiness and an admonition to live a good life.

I close this chapter with the “Reflection on Food” which is to be read before each meal. It is here presented in the literal Thai

translation to English, a feeble attempt at best, but conveying the spirit of intent.

*Before eating one should contemplate on the use of the Almsfood as a requisite. One should maintain Mindfulness and Awareness while eating refrain from socializing and overeating.*

*Wisely Reflecting, I use the alms food.  
Not for Entertainment, nor Intoxication  
Not for Eattening, nor Beautification,  
Only for the Continuation and Nourishment  
of this Body, For Ending its Afflictions,  
And for Supporting the Holy Life.*

*Contemplating, thus I will destroy the old feeling (of hunger),  
And not create a new feeling (of Over-Eating)  
Thus there will be for me freedom from illness be blameless and (I  
will) live in ease.*

#### **SABBA ROGA**

*May you be free from all diseases,  
May all anxiety and worry avoid you.  
May you overcome all enmity and may you be peaceful.*

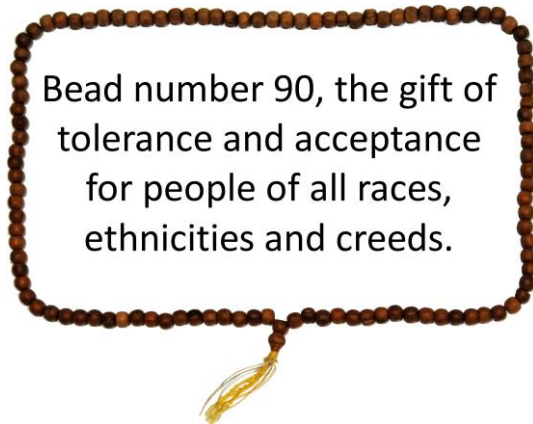
*May all calamities avoid you, May all diseases be destroyed.  
May there be no dangers to you, May you have happiness and a  
long life.*

*For the one of respectful habit, Who always honors the Elders,  
These four qualities increase:*

*Long-life, Beauty, Happiness and Strength.*

After this experience at Chom Thong, I was reminded again of the basic goodness of all people, irrespective of their religious beliefs. I have found that we all have much more in common than differences when it comes to the basic fundamental interactions we have within our common humanity.

Irrespective of this fact, different sects often cling voraciously to certain doctrines, scriptures, or sayings spoken by their influencers and leaders from the past or present.



Bead number 90, the gift of  
tolerance and acceptance  
for people of all races,  
ethnicities and creeds.

When you try to relax and meditate, is your mind constantly abuzz with numerous thoughts?

# The Tenacious Grip of the Mind

## Chapter 9

If there is hope that emerges from the belief systems of Buddhism, it is that individuals will be able to let go of the past, not be anxious about the future and live joyously in the moment. As explained in the previous chapters, the



great effort by monks is to be free of suffering. Through their forms of ritual and meditation they attempt to abandon previous relationships and avoid contemporary associations that would cause suffering.

However, as I learned from Phra Julien, they still live a life of reality, for they have minds that hold a grip on the past. Even though he left behind unhappy experiences in Quebec, Phra Julien reflected on them often in his conversations. And the Abbot and head nun at Wat Doikeung at the top of the mountain continued their escapades to have fun with each other—then follow their jaunt by renewing their precepts.

Some may find the monastic lifestyle to be the answer to life's problems. That seems to be the case with Sandra from Mexico who found the monastery to be a great escape from her boyfriend for long periods of time. Maybe he was abusive and controlling, and even though he could not have access to her at Wat Phra in Chom

Thong, still her mind had its grip on her, for she was helpless to permanently leave her boyfriend from her thoughts.

I have known of many people who grew up in abusive relationships as children, and throughout their lives always found themselves again in abusive relationships as adults. It's almost as if their mind forces them into such situations because that is where they have always been and find a sort of sick comfort in staying there. Any attempt to leave such a connection leaves them insecure. Similarly, people who were raised in poverty often continue to live in poverty as adults.

Many years ago my family was on the shore of the Gulf of California in Mexico.



We witnessed the actuality of the folklore, *Crabs in a Bucket*. Off a pier we dropped a rope tied around a decaying dead fish into the water until it had touched the bottom.

Soon a crab clawed onto the bait. Slowly, we pulled the rope to the surface and before reaching the top, we placed a fishing net under the crab before he let go, falling into the net. Then into a large bucket he went. Almost immediately the crab tried to crawl out. Screaming and laughing, the children kept pushing the crab back into the bucket until I could drop in a second crab. Then neither

crab could escape, because with each attempt the other crab would pull it back to the bottom of the bucket.

## **The Mind Will Always Pull Us Back**

Such is the status of many relationships. The mind is like a crab, pulling the individual back into the bucket of abuse and suffering or poverty.

Living a monastic lifestyle in a protected retreat may have lifted an individual from a bucket. As simple and purifying as these beliefs and lifestyle may be, I find it sad that these people are missing out on the greater joys of life that can come through associations of family and friends who strengthen each other without judgment or control—the crab like tendencies of some to lord over others.

## **I Learned How to be Free of the Mind's Control**

My hope is that those who read this book may find clues as to how they can be relieved of the clutches of such control—control mastered by the mind—and find happiness and peace in supportive and building associations.

The tenacious grip of the mind is such a powerful phenomenon. Without realizing it, many unwittingly use their minds to rationalize the things they suffer, overriding the more tender, soothing and forgiving feelings of the heart.

A friend of mine was sharing his consternation over a family conflict that he couldn't come to grips with. He said, "I can't get my mind wrapped around this problem."

In another situation, a woman was struggling that her husband's love for her was waning. In every way she tried to arrive at a rational reason why this was happening. In both situations, the individuals were allowing their minds to try and solve problems of the heart. It will never work.

## **Let the Heart Control the Mind**

The mind is like a computer. It has inputs, processing, storage and outputs. And much like a computer, it has no heart.

The mind is a problem-solving machine, but problems of the heart it cannot fix, for the heart functions on levels of feeling and awareness, rooted deeply in compassion and love. God's greatest gift to mankind is a heart, for the heart of God permeates the universe.

In our quest to find answers, we cogitate with our minds. Some answers only come by allowing the vibrations of the heart to pull sway.

In many respects the mind is like a monster. It dominates, it controls, it frightens, and it punishes.

A few years ago, I was a guest in a family's farm home in southern China. They had chickens that roamed freely around the house. A very big rooster had complete control of







the hens and would chase them at will or force them into particular places.

Worse yet, some of the hens had no feathers on their back because the rooster had plucked them away. The hens were completely submissive, allowing themselves to

be ruled by the king of the chickens.

Crabs and chickens do not have a human heart, but they do have brains that are conditioned for survival, a survival that often requires control of their specie associations.

The entire motivation of those who live high on the mountain, or anyone who practices meditation, is to control the mind.

Christ told the woman caught in adultery to go her way and sin no more. The Savior set the example for all of us to be forgiving.

Unfortunately, from throughout history, the minds of man under the guise of religion have concocted all types of brutality to deal with adulterers, particularly women. Chastity belts, grotesque surgeries, scarlet letters, banishments, excommunications, and other means have been practiced through the ages to punish and create fear in the souls of those who would dare to transgress.

But Christ as the exemplar had a loving, patient, forgiving heart. Sadly, many through the ages have been driven to control others who would stray or disobey through the tenacious grip of their

minds, showing no more compassion than the animals below them on the evolutionary scale.

## **Change the Movie That Continuously Plays in Your Mind**

Our minds are like a movie that plays non-stop. Most scenes depict the terrible things we have done. In dramatic fashion, the episodes are played out again and again. Other scenes depict what we should be doing, and how incapable we are of achieving those things. The movie is a tragedy with no happy ending. Other scenes in the movie nourish our unfulfilled greed. They depict the achievements of the world that leave us feeling unworthy or as failures.

Those who find escape into the monastic life try daily to delete the movie from their minds. I would advocate creating a new movie, a happy movie based upon the positive strategies presented in this book.

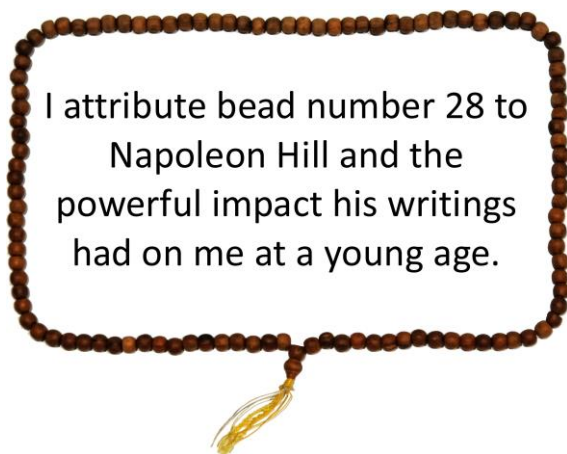
As an exercise, sit down and let your mind wander. Make note of the scenes it is depicting for you. I would advise that you not do this too long, because you will become depressed. Next, take control by writing a new script of the movie you want your life to be. Is it filled with a loving supporting relationship? Is it filled with financial security? Is it filled with hope and not fear?

Be strong, for it would be easy to slip back into depression if you allow the old movie to dominate. With despair and hopelessness, your mind has complete control over you and extinguishes the flame of your heart. Until you take control with the new movie, you are victim to the tenacious grip of your mind.



I love the writings of Napoleon Hill, who in 1937 in his landmark book *Think and Grow Rich*, said, "Whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve."

This book had a tremendous impact on me as a young adult, causing me to think big and write plans of success for the future, a good movie of achievement. Many of those plans were grandiose, but they did chart a path that helped me through many difficult times that lay ahead.



I attribute bead number 28 to Napoleon Hill and the powerful impact his writings had on me at a young age.

When fed positive thoughts and hopes, the mind can devise plans to gain achievements in the world. But be careful, for sometimes those plans are driven by greed and pride, and if fulfilled can be to the detriment of others. This is hardly an action of the heart. With balance and control from the heart, such achievements will be noble and beneficial to mankind, and rewarding to the creator.

The great leaders, scientists, inventors, and artists of the world had powerful minds—but minds that were controlled by their hearts.

Contrast the difference between Hitler whose mind was driven by power and revenge, as opposed to Lincoln who desired only to save the union. Hitler had no heart, whereas Lincoln did. They both also had powerful minds.

Allowing the heart and its compassion to flourish and take priority in your life will cause secondary anxieties and worries to disappear. Consider what Christ said in the Sermon on the Mount:

*Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?*

*Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?*

*And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:*

*And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*

*Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?*

*St Matthew 6:25-26; 28-30*

## **Faith is the Key**

Faith is the means to personal empowerment, faith in God, the universe, Christ, and faith in your heart.

I have often watched with curiosity mammals that may be pets, beasts of burden or free wanderers in the wilderness. Next to humans, they have the most highly evolved brains. But they lack the minds that bedevil us as homo sapiens. Animals sun themselves when they have the opportunity or seek shelter during a storm. When attacked, they nurture their wounds. Their learning comes from a cycle of stimulus-response, but generally they lounge about worry free. My theory is that they do not have active minds like we do, constantly rehearsing mistakes and reminding us of all that we should be doing.

Like the fowls of the air or the lilies of the field, they survive and fulfill the measure of their creation.

Harnessing the mind is a great task for anyone, and probably the hardest thing anyone will ever do.

Consider the process of metacognition. In my work in education, I came to understand this term as a process whereby we understand how we think. Rather than just being victims to a wandering controlling mind, we have the capacity to step back and take charge. With a firmness of heart and resolve, consider asking these important questions every time you feel your mind wandering, particularly when it takes you to places that create guilt, regret, or excessive desire.

## **The Questions of Metacognition**

1. What thought did I just have?
2. Where did that thought come from?
3. Does that thought serve me well?
4. How can I dismiss that thought?

After reviewing the four questions, as you evaluate your wandering thought, take action. Dismiss the thought. Cast it away to vaporize in the vastness of space. You may need to repeat this process several times, but it will eventually fade away to nothingness.

I may be driving down the road, and I suddenly remember a humiliating experience. I was publicly criticized for something I had written.

1. What thought did I just have?

*I remember a story in the newspaper criticizing my work.*

2. Where did that thought come from?

*I have suffered much over the years regarding this incident. Almost anytime I am relaxed, the memory comes back. It is a movie programmed in my mind to play over and over again. My tenacious mind never wants me to forget how I felt.*

3. Does that thought serve me well?

*Of course not. It bedevils me and punishes me over and over. It only causes pain and embarrassing recollections.*

4. How can I dismiss that thought?

*I choose to allow my heart to take charge of my mind. I am a good person, and do not deserve to be punished this way. Those who criticized me have long since moved on and forgotten the incident. I am creating a new movie in my mind. And like the fowls and lilies, I am at peace.*

*I forthrightly and deliberately choose to dismiss that thought, and should my mind play it again, I will dismiss it again immediately.*

After having read this, you may have recalled something painful in your life. Ask yourself these four questions of metacognition:

1. What thought did I just have?
2. Where did that thought come from?
3. Does that thought serve me well?
4. How can I dismiss that thought?

Take action appropriately. Your sense of relief will be exhilarating.

## **You Can Tame the Monkey in Your Mind**

Always remember that the mind is like a monkey out of a cage. It jumps non-stop from tree to tree, moving so fast you can't catch it. The monkey looks back at you chattering in laughter.

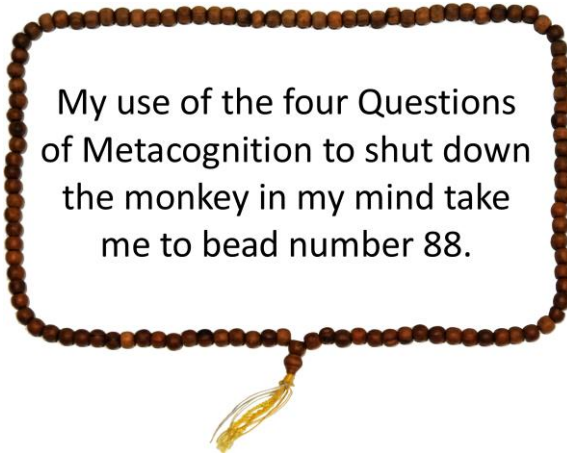
Do not be victim to the monkey anymore. The monkey will be difficult to catch, but with your heart and the pure love of God that flows therefrom, you will wear the monkey down until it falls asleep under a tree.

When you awaken the monkey of your mind, it will be to solve a problem for you, for the monkey of your mind is a remarkable cognitive problem-solving machine, but it is a machine meant to serve you, not control you.

When I am burdened with many responsibilities, I visualize that there are actually several monkeys in my mind chattering for my attention, telling me what to do.

*“Do this!” “No, do that!” “The other thing is more important!”*

In these moments of chaos, I will close my eyes to meditate. I visualize in my mind the chief of monkeys, who I ask to control and calm down the other monkeys. Like a military commander, the chief of monkeys orders the others to retreat and be quiet. I then let my heart take over and relax. Often I may fall asleep for a few minutes. When I awaken, I am calm, and know what to do next without frenzied panic.



What have you learned about formal and informal mediation?



# The Art and Science of Meditation

## Chapter 10

As explained in the previous chapter, the mind is constantly abuzz with thoughts, often of a negative nature that hold us captive. Meditation is a powerful method that clears the mind of such clutter. At the root of meditation as practiced by the Buddhists in Thailand is the belief that all people suffer, and by clearing the mind of thoughts and regrets of the past, and fears and hopes for the future, suffering can vanish.

Test yourself. Have someone observe you sitting silently. Think only of the present moment, concentrating on your breathing. Raise your hand as soon as a thought comes into your mind that happened in the past or a need for the future. This thought may only be minutes before, or minutes after the now, or in the far distant past or future. Raise your hand if you have such a thought.

You would be particularly adept if you could last more than a few seconds without raising your hand.

Test yourself again. Raise your hand each time a stray thought comes in, and have your partner keep score. After a minute there would probably be a dozen or more such instances. This is not living in the moment.

The discipline of meditation is to think only of what is happening now, in the instant. It may be only your breathing, your stomach rising and falling, your heartbeat, or the steps you take one after

another. Often it helps to hold your breath and tighten your stomach, effectively pushing the life force from your heart into your brain.

Many people approach meditation artfully in a variety of ways, settling into a pattern such as simply relaxing in a favorite chair and listening to soothing music. Prayer can clear the mind and for many people is the most powerful and long-lasting form of meditation. As beneficial as these practices may be, I doubt they help the practitioner completely silence the chattering monkeys and their variant thoughts.

A more formal practice of meditation with a set of disciplined rituals like that practiced by the Buddhist monks has for them a scientific basis. Through the years I have tried various forms of meditation gleaned from books and different therapists, but in Thailand I learned the more disciplined form of meditation.

Like anyone, I have suffered over various issues throughout my life, and the monkeys in my mind would never let me forget. During those adult years I found relief from the tenacious grip of the mind in various ways, sometimes by escaping through travel to distant lands such as Egypt or India, engaging in time consuming creative



projects, prayer and religious service or meditation.

I have had the good fortune of traveling to many lands and countries throughout the Earth.

In these travels I have seen many sacred and historical sites, where battles and victories took place, where people struggled, and where prophets spoke with Deity. Traveling great distances, or even short distances can clear the mind and renew the soul.

In Thailand, at the top of the mountain in Wat Doikeung my distress miraculously vanished for the period of time I was there. Why? No one was trying to take advantage of me, ask me for money, convert me to anything or have any expectation of me whatsoever.

Even though as a white-haired American looking very different from everyone else, I was completely accepted unconditionally for whatever or whoever I was. No one asked questions or looked at me askance. I was just simply allowed to exist like any of the trees growing from the ground, animals walking the premises or monks, nuns or novices going about their work.

My hope was that I would never lose this freeing feeling.

## **Meditation Can Be Experienced Any Time it Is Needed**

As I had learned at Wat Phra in the valley below, meditation can bring about such freedom and can occur anywhere at any time. Meditation facilitates release by letting go of defilements as they are called, which include anger, hatred, desire, attachment, impurity of mind and thoughts of the self or ego. When an individual can let go of those defilements, he or she no longer suffers.

Attachment in any kind of negative context does not suggest a complete detachment from love, family or career. It does,

however, propose that in the thought processes one must not feel impeded in growth, controlled, or coerced to the point of causing mental anguish and undue stress. Regardless, the strictest meditation teachers say these attachments will always eventually cause suffering.

The death of loved ones, aging, the loss of a job or fortune, or the separation from anything important will cause pain. Buddhist monks and nuns choose to have none of these attachments so that they will never suffer. They seem happy with their lot, living very simply and relying on the donations of others for support.

Their peace and happiness cannot be denied, but I personally believe that they are forfeiting greater growth by not meeting the challenges that cause suffering, to rise above those difficulties and triumph with an enlarged soul.

I am reminded of two profound experiences I had which emphasize the joy that can come to our lives when we are willing to risk suffering.

When as a bishop in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I was asked to give a blessing to a very sick child in the hospital with a life-threatening illness. I didn't know the family, but friends of theirs knew me and believed I had a gift for bestowing priesthood blessings.

In the hospital, I anointed the boy with consecrated oil and then pronounced a blessing. I do not remember the exact words I spoke, feeling the inspiration of the Almighty, but I know I blessed him that he would recover if it was the Lord's will. I really believed he would get better.

A few days later the family contacted me, telling me that their son had passed away. I was surprised and saddened, but doubly surprised when they thanked me for the wonderful blessing. In it, they recalled me saying that he would not survive, and would be welcomed into the next life.

That knowledge gave them great joy!

I did not remember saying any such thing, but clearly that is what they heard. Having faith in a blessing from the priesthood, even though it was a message they did not want to hear, gave them great comfort in their grieving. To them it was not suffering but grieving with a blessed assurance of life everlasting.

When I was doing a book tour with my novel *Vermillion Cliffs*, I was approached by a woman who had a near-death experience.

She gave me a folder of notes she wrote after she had the experience. The woman held onto those notes for a few years until she felt impressed to share them with someone, she did not know who.

Standing near copies of *Vermillion Cliffs*, the woman felt impressed to give the notes to me. She told me what happened, gave me the folder, and told me to use her writings in whatever I felt was appropriate.

Her experience is really one of forgiveness and acceptance. During her near-death experience, she looked down on her dying body in a hospital bed. Then she saw her brother who had died many years before. As a youngster, she was molested and abused by this brother, and loathed him throughout her life.

In this transcendental moment, she saw and felt the real soul and spirit of her brother and understood that his actions were driven by horrible insecurity and abuse by others in his young life. Instead of feeling anger toward him, she felt sorrow and sympathy for what he had suffered.

She experienced a Christ-like love.

Next in her near-death experience, she realized she could complete death and live in felicity or return to her ailing body. Considering this, she was taken to witness her young daughter, crying in the arms of a caretaker, weeping for her mother, pained at the potential loss she might suffer.

At that moment, the decision was easy. She chose to recover and live the rest of her life in peace and tranquility, without anger or judgment, particularly toward her brother who had passed on.

In a similar situation, I heard the story shared by one of the therapists I met with during my years of crisis.

As a young lady, her father was an alcoholic and verbally abusive. He was particularly cruel to his own daughter. Yet in her adult years, when her father was incapacitated from old age, which was aggravated by a lifetime of alcohol and abuse, she took him into her own home. She cared for him until his death. This was a show of true compassion and forgiveness, Christlike attributes which erased justifiable anger and neglect toward her father.

Clearly, this woman was able to do this through her years of meditation and supplication.

## **Suffering is Harmful for Which Meditation Can Bring Healing**

Excessive suffering is detrimental and decays the health of spirit and body. But doing nothing to correct it is even more harmful, stymieing the possibilities of achievement.

Great accomplishments in art, literature, science, medicine and many other fields were achieved by those who rose above negative energies of fear and defilements. No doubt many practiced some form of mediation.

With meditation comes calm and control of the mind, which then prepares one for greater success in all areas of life.

Pursuing an understanding of meditation creates the discipline to bridle anger, hatred, uncontrolled desire, and impurity of mind. The complete empowerment from meditation would include a certain amount of detachment because change is inevitable.

There are two types of meditation, tranquility and insight.

### **Tranquility Meditation Sharpens Awareness and Helps Solve Problems**

Tranquility meditation [samatha] results in a serene, peaceful mind. It is a meditation of high energy that can create healing power, psychic awareness and the flow of energy within the spirit and body. The practitioner must concentrate only on one thing at a time, which is limited to aspects of the present moment. In the beginning, it is the nose, breathing, and the rising and falling of the abdomen associated with breathing.

After much practice I found that I could concentrate on a particular need or problem during tranquility meditation. It was essential that I control my mind to not think of anything else. The happy result was that I developed peace and assurance regarding the problem, even though I did not have a solution. What I felt was assurance that when the problem in real life presented itself, I would have clarity of thought and the blessing of knowledge as to how it would be solved.

Tranquility meditation opens the powers of the universe and godliness to us, drawing in the law of attraction. I have successfully used tranquility meditation to find articles that I had lost. Recently I misplaced a small expensive camera. After meditation, I felt confident I would find it and went directly to where I thought I had left it. The camera wasn't there. Having no worry but only confidence in the power of unseen forces, I happened upon it within minutes, finding it where I was certain I had looked earlier.

## **Insight Meditation Frees the Person from Suffering**

Insight meditation [vipassana] frees the person from suffering and the defilements of anger, hatred, desire, attachment, impurity of mind and ideas of self or ego. During practice, one must concentrate on breathing. Body and mind feelings can be considered as they exist in the "now." One must acknowledge pain if they feel it, or pleasantness, and then dismiss those feelings and go back to breathing. As to the mind, it is always actively bouncing from here to there, from past to future. Meditation must always bring it to the present. That is why focusing on breathing and



immediate sensations are so important, because that is the only thing that exists in the “now.”

There are five hindrances that sidetrack insight meditation and keep the person from the truth of the now. They are craving, dislike, doubt, restlessness, and drowsiness. If one is impatient while meditating, it would be best to take a walk. If one is drowsy, it would be best to take a nap.

In life, there are fundamentally four body positions: sitting, lying, standing, and walking. Insight meditation can occur in any of these positions, but in the basic method which I learned in Thailand it is deliberately practiced for a set block of time in the sitting, walking and then lying positions. Ten minutes for each meditation is a good starting place. Therefore, a beginner would need to invest a half hour of time to begin meditation. This is a small price to pay for tranquility, which is the sure result.

During insight meditation as foreign thoughts enter, acknowledge the thought, analyze where it came from, then invite it to leave and refocus on the breathing. This is nothing more than metacognition explained in the previous chapter in which one analyzes his or her own thinking.

The meditator can beneficially think of their solar plexus, or belly area as a ball of light that consumes wayward thoughts.

When feeling pain, don't try to adjust to the pain, just say “pain, pain pain” and acknowledge it, then move and change position to relieve the pain. Visualize energy from within the body going to the pain, and then moving out of the body. Or one may imagine the energy from the cosmos coming into the body creating healing.

One must ask, “Is it my body that has the pain or is it my mind that has the pain?”

If the practitioner has a vision of sorts, or sees things, they may say “Seeing, seeing, seeing,” and then let it go and go back to sensing the belly rising and falling. The same would apply if one heard or smelled things. Sometimes music replays in the mind and must be dealt with in the same way.

When any of the five hindrances of craving, dislike, doubt, restlessness and drowsiness occur, acknowledge them, and then go back to the belly rising and falling.

All of this is meant to clear the mind, create peace, and open one’s energy channels for greater insight and healing. Meditation of this type is not easy and requires a lot of practice. As I have done it repeatedly, I have discovered the efficacy of this noble and worthwhile practice.

## **Meditation Begins With Mindful Prostration**

Strictly practiced meditation as demonstrated by Phra Julien begins with mindful prostration. The movement begins kneeling, raising the hands to the heart and then the forehead, then bowing in prostration with the face to the floor.



Mindful prostration or any other form of preparation that clears the mind and demonstrates humility is a beneficial precursor to any form of meditation such as those that follow.

## **Sitting Meditation**



With the legs crossed, or in another sitting position more suitable for one's physical condition, the hands are folded palms up, the right hand on top and thumbs touching.

With the eyes closed or half closed, begin meditation concentrating only on the rising and falling of the belly. With each mental distraction, refocus on the rising and falling of the belly.

I use this meditation as an opportunity to generate high energy focused on a particular need or problem. I am not looking for an answer, but rather sending energy to the universe for an answer when I need it.

I occasionally utilize the colors of the chakras in the sitting meditation. With a simple power point on my computer, I organized the seven basic chakra colors of brown, red, yellow, green, blue, violet and gold. I face the computer screen as the colors change every few seconds. Keeping my eyes closed, I feel the energy of the various colors aligning my chakras as I meditate. The remarkable and powerful use of chakras is explained in chapter 12.

## Walking Meditation



In the standing position, with the hands at the front or back to provide the most comfortable balance, the meditator begins walking. Again, he or she must focus on the now. This time it is the movement of the feet.

The stride should be deliberate and slow. I find this type of meditation beneficial because I can keep my eyes open, and yet must constantly concentrate on the slow movement of my feet. It really clears the mind.

## Lying Meditation

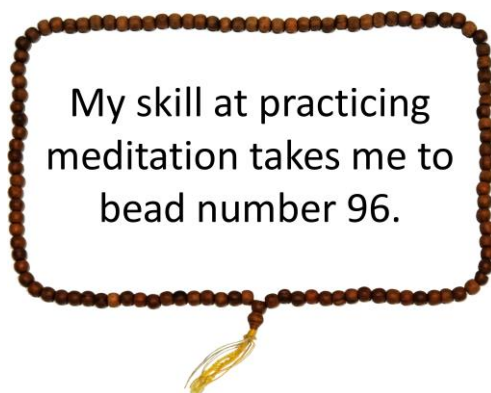


It is best to lie on a comfortable flat surface with a small pillow or towel under the lower back, and a regular pillow under the knees. This removes strain on the body. Breathe in through the nose, and out through the mouth.

It is very easy to fall asleep during this meditation, so I suggest on the exhale to sing *ahaum* with the mouth open. (The details of the *ahaum* sound are found on page 173.)

Lying meditation brings healing to the body. The resonance created from the *ahaum* sound along with its vibrations sends soothing energy throughout the body. I feel the energy flowing directly to my prostate, slowly reversing the cancer.

I will often begin my meditation in a reclining chair in my theater.



Would you like to be free from the memory of  
negative experiences of the past?

# Untangling Myself from What Went Before

Imagine how it would feel every day to be  
free of pain, anguish and suffering.







# The Remarkable Power of Letting Go

## Chapter 11

In the previous chapter, meditation was presented as a powerful way to find relief from the defilements of anger, hatred, desire, attachment, impurity of mind and thoughts of the self or ego.

But as a deep thinker, I needed to know more.

### **Unfulfilled Expectations**

For several years before and after my divorce, I met with Marriage and Family Therapist Dee Hadley, a wonderful gentleman who passed away in 2022 at age 88.

One of his primary teachings is that the source of greatest unhappiness in relationships is unfulfilled expectations. It is interesting to note that the Buddhist Monks work to avoid expectations.

When a couple is married, they each have expectations that over time may not come to pass. In the bliss of a Temple marriage for time and eternity, it can be particularly difficult if love, values or actions over time deteriorate, leaving a partner wondering what happened to the Lord's blessings and commitments that were meant to assure a lifetime of eternal bliss.

In many family relationships, parental or child expectations can emerge that are problematic.

I think of a neighbor of mine many years ago who had several boys. He was sure they would be stars in the NBA. Consequently, he built a basketball court and drilled his boys every day to perfect their skills of dribbling and shooting. They came to detest the pressure placed upon them, and none of the boys even played basketball in high school, even though they were very good ball players. This resulted in unfulfilled expectations for their father.

Not too long after this, I met a young man who had moved to Utah from Southern California. He had been recently baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. His father was one of the powerful Hollywood moguls who produced theatrical motion pictures.

The father had raised his son in the arts of wheeling, dealing and womanizing to make deals for movies. The boy was so fed up with the dog-eat-dog rat race of Hollywood that he accepted the teachings of the Mormon missionaries.

His father was furious and kicked him out of the home, the family, his inheritance, and his future opportunities in Hollywood. The father's unrealistic expectations were unfulfilled, and the young man's expectations for the opportunity to follow his own path were fulfilled, irrespective of the trauma at home.

There is a happy ending to this story, for the father did later accept his son into the fold of his family. He dropped his earlier expectations of his son and willingly accepted the young man's new chosen path.

I learned a sad story about my own father. He grew up in poverty in a large family. He was the oldest child and was expected to help with family expenses, which he willingly did.

My dad had one hope, an expectation. He had long wished he could have a BB gun.

A few days before Christmas one year, he was snooping around in a closet and discovered a hidden BB gun. He was so excited! Christmas morning came and there was no BB gun for him.

He inquired and was devastated to learn that the gun was hidden for some neighbors, such that their boy would be fully surprised at Christmas. Both boys had a surprise, but my dad had a very sad unfilled hope or expectation.

The story is told of a family who had a son that had reached the age to go on a mission and would likely not ever live at home again. For several years the family had been saving money to remodel a bathroom. However, after deep thought, they decided to take that money and go on a vacation with their son.

In the months that followed, letters from their son referred to how much fun they had on their vacation, and what it meant to him to have bonded so with his parents and siblings.

It's hard to imagine the boy writing home and saying how happy it made him that they had remodeled their bathroom.

## **What I Learned as a High School Teacher**

Young people have numerous expectations, largely centered around social interactions. But they often feel pressure from the expectations of their parents. The issue of grades on report cards is a big one. Some feel pressure to get perfect marks, others feel pressure not to bungle, fail and get in trouble.

Whenever I had to give grades to my 9<sup>th</sup> grade science students, I always invited them up one at a time to look at my roll book and their final grade. With almost every youngster, they approached me with fear and trembling. One youngster would hold his breath—look at the roll book--and sigh with relief, “I got the A!”

The next youngster would come up with the same trepidation and anxiety, and withheld breath would look at the roll book and see that they got a D-. “Whew, they mumbled, I didn’t fail.” Entirely different expectations, hopes, and fears.

For five years I taught science to 9<sup>th</sup> graders. I gave many lessons in simple physics. The verities of gases, inertia and friction create a remarkable analogy that helped me to experience the power of letting go.

We are all familiar with the three stages of matter: solids, liquids, and gases. Water in its natural state is a liquid, when frozen becomes a solid, and when heated to boiling it becomes a gas.

When water is brought to boil in a tea kettle, the gas exits the lid which begins to whistle. The expanding gas is searching for a place to escape. In a steam locomotive, water is heated to such a high temperature that the expanding gas produces tremendous pressure, and when contained in the engine cylinder can push the piston to make the wheels turn. The same principle applies in a steam powered turbine to make electricity.

Many gases are not hot, such as the oxygen and nitrogen which we breath into our lungs. When a person blows up a balloon, they are taking a certain volume of air and forcing it into a smaller space, thus making the balloon expand. An air tank used for inflating tires

operates on the same principle, only the metal tank doesn't expand.

## **Gases, as Does Pain, Fills All Available Space**

The interesting phenomenon about gases is that they will fill all available space. If there is a small amount of air in a tank, the molecules will fill the space, though there may not be much pressure. The more molecules forced in, the pressure increases.

The pain we suffer internally is like air in a tank. The pain fills all available space within our mind. Additional pain can be added, creating only more pressure—pressure of pain, anguish, regret and anger.

So, if the intrinsic source of suffering is expanding pain, or gas within our psyche, then healing comes by releasing that pressure and entirely extricating it from within us. Meditation helps in this regard.

## **Bad Experiences Attach Like Velcro**

Velcro is a remarkable invention born of necessity in the space age. Astronauts needed to place things in an orderly way, knowing that without the pull of gravity things would drift about. Velcro could make things stick anywhere, creating the inertia of non-movement held in check by the friction of tiny threads entangling themselves in tiny loops. So simple in its design of thousands of curly threads, the combined power of Velcro can secure things of much greater mass. Each thread in isolation would be of no value. Likewise, each thread of our experience, particularly that which has caused pain,

collects in our consciousness, clustering together like Velcro, holding onto our psyche, never letting go.

Anyone who has tried to free two clinging objects held by Velcro knows how difficult the task can be. Overcoming inertia requires a greater force than what is held in check by the grasp of Velcro. Yet if one thread at a time could be released, then the job would be simple, but would require more time.

Our minds welcome every thread of experience allowing the Velcro to stick to us. Letting go requires great effort, one thread at a time. A simple hurtful comment is only one thread in the Velcro. But over time, the accumulation of many threads creates a binding wound that is very difficult to extricate.

But after the effort, letting go is freeing.

I had to wear a cast on my arm when I was a teenager. At first the cast felt good, relieving the pain from my injury. But then it became very annoying, and the relief I felt when it was finally removed after several weeks was a joyous moment. I had been allowed to let go.

## **We Often Nourish Pain and Will Not Let It Go**

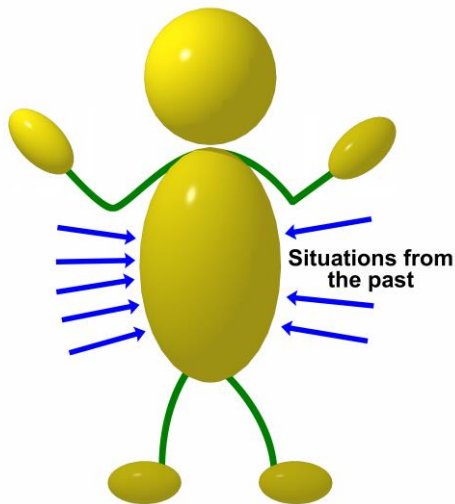
Sometimes we find comfort in nourishing our wounds, as if pressing the Velcro tightly to our skin. Why is it that when experiencing an aching tooth, we like to push against it? For some reason, increasing the pain in the tooth makes it feel better. Likewise, we like to push against our emotional pain, relishing it, embellishing it, making it feel better for a while. But then like the aching tooth, the original misery returns. Not until the tooth is repaired does complete relief come.

Ultimately, eventually, we must all let go. It is difficult, but only then do we become free.

And likewise, if the attachment of Velcro laid upon us from extrinsic sources is to be removed, then we must identify those sources from which the Velcro came, eliminate them from our lives and peel away the hurt from our skin. It is like peeling away a band-aid from a flesh wound.

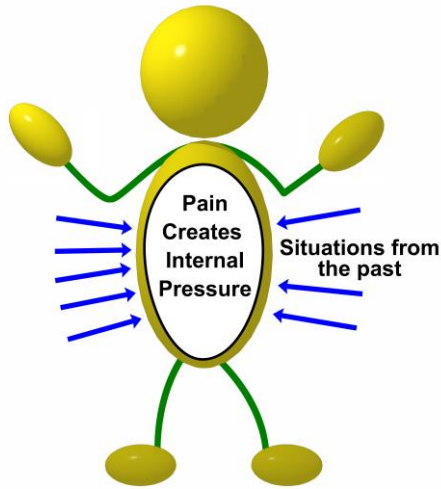
## **Pain Accumulates Over Time**

Letting go of pain is facilitated when one considers how pain accumulates over time.



Situations from the past as far back as childhood and even genetically from generations past, attacks the psyche of an individual.

As life progresses, more painful experiences occur, adding to those of the past.



The accumulation of painful experiences creates internal pressure.

Such encumbrances not only sustain emotional pain, but can manifest themselves in illnesses such as cancer, depression and diabetes.

## **Pressures of Pain Cause Illness**

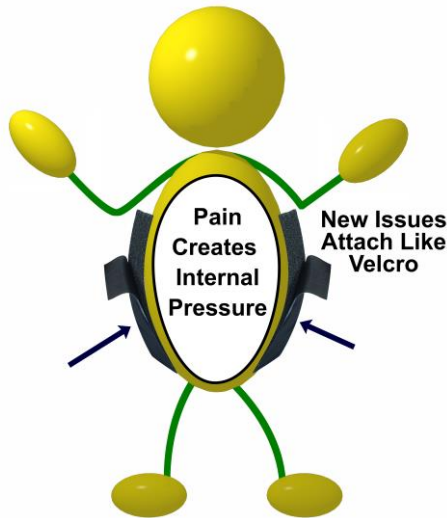
My prostate cancer diagnosis was the catalyst that prompted me to go to Thailand on a personal sojourn retreat, for I knew that cancer comes from holding onto things that we cannot let go.

For me, the build-up of expanding gas required release lest a psychological explosion occur.

Everyone has these kinds of impediments and sadly for some, they last a lifetime and only compound with intensity over time. This build-up of emotional pain is intrinsic, internally owned by the individual and cemented to their aura and psyche, affecting their

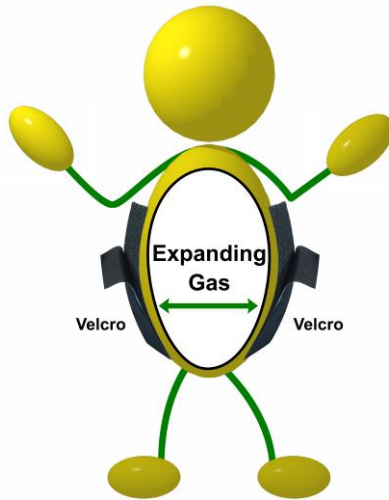


wellness, personality, self-esteem, and ability to positively interact with others.



As bad as the intrinsic, interior build-up of pain over time might be, all individuals are constantly attacked extrinsically from the outside by new issues that stick like Velcro to the psyche. If someone is burdened with intrinsic pain from situations past, they are very weak at being able to fend off new issues from external sources.

Everyone faces criticism, may have misunderstandings or failing experiences. Healthy individuals without the build-up of internal pain have the capacity to deflect such frequent trials. But unfortunately, individuals who are weakened by intrinsic pain suffer all the more. Velcro attachments can come in the form of expectations heaped upon us by family, business, religion, and society in general.



With the constant expanding gas of emotional pain, and the extrinsic forces attaching like Velcro, it is little wonder that so many people suffer in a variety of ways. I had suffered that weakness myself for many years.

I have known individuals who with the slightest negative glance or comment will sink in pain, or perhaps become outlandishly defensive.

Reflecting on past experiences, I remember times when in a conversation with a group of people, somebody suddenly explodes with rage and marches off, as if rejecting the group and what they were talking about. Everyone is left stunned, wondering what just happened. I have heard the comment, "He wears his emotions on his shirt sleeve."

In reality, he or she was suffering the expanding—then exploding gas of pain as illustrated in the characterizations above.

## **Intrinsic Effort Enabled Me to Let Go**

It is the combination of study, meditation and prayer along with the application of the strategies in this book that empowered me to experience the remarkable relief of letting go.

Pain must be removed intrinsically from within one's self. Outside sources certainly help. Prayer can be of remarkable assistance, but again, the final act must be done individually, within one's core, intrinsically, alone, driven by sheer will.

## **The Heart Must Take Control of the Mind**

All the therapies and strategies I've suggested help build the will, the inner drive within the solar plexus, the fire in the belly to win over oneself. It can happen, but finally, it is the soul acting alone, where the heart takes over the mind, and says, I will be free, I will tear away the Velcro of my pain. Meditation as practiced by the ancients is one of the most powerful ways to do this.

Wisdom is the result, a claim made by the sages of meditation. Not focused on problem solving or the collection of information, wisdom comes from having cleared the mind, opening it to higher knowledge from within, intrinsically, and from beyond oneself, from the universe or from God.

As wonderful as acquiring this wisdom may sound, it is very difficult to achieve. People are born thinking machines. It is a natural gift that can well serve individuals. The mind is a remarkable tool capable of performing amazing feats of cognition. However, for some reason, the mind *thinks* it controls your body, heart and spirit.

The great challenge in life is to learn this fact and find ways to harness the power of the mind and place it under control of the heart and spirit. Meditation I learned in Thailand is an effective way to accomplish this.

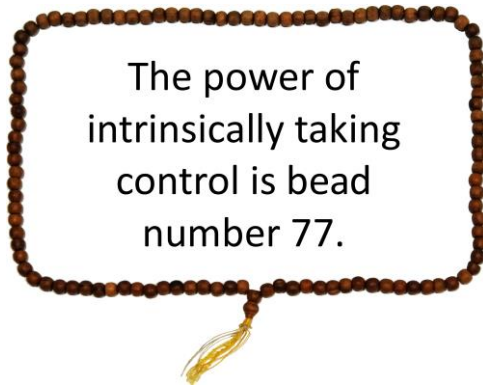
At its core, meditation can occur during various physical activities, the performance of which gives the mind something to focus on. Unless there is this focus, one's mind runs amuck in every imaginable direction—remembering past events or perturbing in anxiety about the future. The mind is like a high-powered engine unharnessed to any productive activity. It roars at high octane speed going nowhere. Without direction, the mind only makes noise and consumes vast amounts of energy. The result is pressure building up like gases in a tank that create stress, anxiety, uncertainty and fear, all of which contribute to ill health.

Amazingly, the out-of-control mind roars on even when an individual is busily engaged in some type of activity. How many times have you been reading a book, only to pause and ask, "What did I just read?" Your mind was out of control processing some idea unrelated to the reading.

The same may occur when people drive, ride as passengers, perform menial tasks, garden, wash dishes or any one of hundreds of activities.

The process goes on after falling asleep. Sometimes dreams give important information, but most often they are a litany of unrelated thoughts, transformed by the mind into surrealistic images.

The dreaming, the thinking, the business of our lives does not have to be a tank that fills to explosion, nor a skin weakened and unresisting to Velcro attacks.



The power of  
intrinsically taking  
control is bead  
number 77.

Are you aware of energy centers in your body that affect activities and emotion?

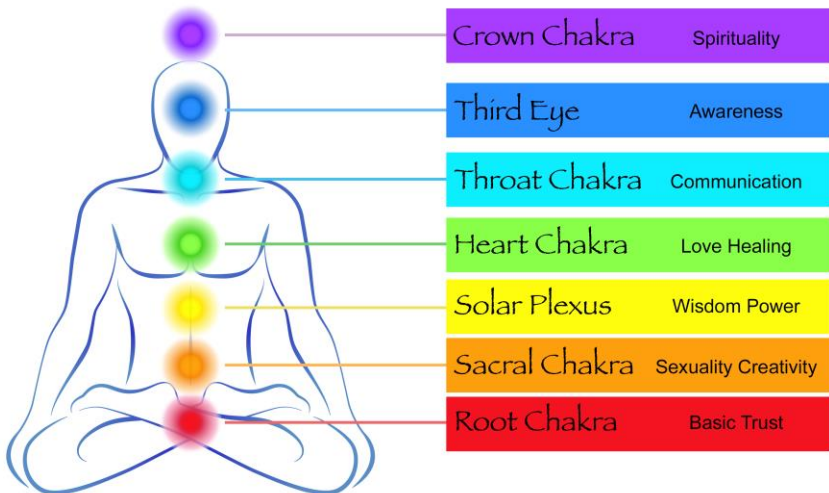
# Chakras

## Chapter 12

### The Power of Energy Flow in the Body

From India—a nation across the Bay of Bengal from Thailand—comes the understanding of chakras. I find the concept fascinating and most healing. Various therapists have done chakra work on me.

The theory of chakras suggests that there are seven energy centers, or chakras, running along the central corridor of the body from base to crown. The chakras are thought of as spinning energy vortices, represented by symbols and names from ancient India.



Various activities throughout our lives—whether beneficial or destructive—get hard wired into our energy system, throwing it out of balance. Chakra therapy realigns these energy vortices bringing about a change in behavior and patterning within the individual.

The seven chakras are like windows to the soul that when open, allow the flow of energy, becoming a conduit of healing and renewal. From chakra theory, the word heal is to make whole. Spirit, matter, mind and body—indeed heaven and earth come together to create wholeness within the individual.

## **The Base Chakra Connects You to the Energy of the Earth**



The first chakra at the base is muladhara, which means root. For therapy work it is located at the perineum, between the genitals and anus. Besides basic trust, emotions include security, grounding and survival instinct.

The root chakra deals with the element earth, everything that is physical, practical and required for surviving. Much like the root of a tree, this chakra draws its energy from the earth to eventually nourish the entire system. It is symbolized by a red lotus flower of four petals, overlaid with a square containing a downward pointing triangle. This suggests that the divine energy of the body begins in the earth and rises up into consciousness, expanding as it goes.

At this chakra we identify with our physical body, when it is tired, hungry, needs exercise or needs to be touched. The root chakra is



the grounding of our being, descending into the earth, providing a firm foundation.

I have found great comfort in walking barefoot on moist earth, grass or dead leaves. Through my base chakra I absorb the energy of the earth. Who hasn't experienced great joy in walking along a sandy beach near the ocean, especially barefoot.

## **The Pelvic Chakra is the Center of Your Emotions and Sexuality**



Moving up, the second chakra is the swadhisthana—meaning “one’s own place.” For therapy work it is located two fingers width above the Base Chakra which is the sacral, or pelvic region of the body. The element is water. This is the center of emotions, sexuality and intimacy.

Sensations such as desire become gateways between the inner and outer worlds, opening consciousness. As consciousness expands, it takes the body from the earth-bound place of the first chakra.

We start to yield and flow with the element of water.

The symbol is a lotus with six petals, in the center of which is a crescent moon positioned like a smile, the smile of the energy body when there's pleasure. Its color is a warm glowing orange.

Energizing this chakra enables us to come into contact with our emotional identity, understanding when we are angry, happy, excited, sad or fearful. In the second chakra we open to the flow of feeling. Ultimately, we take these qualities to sexuality, where we connect with another person.

In one of my early chakra therapy sessions, the therapist passed her hands over my body, a few inches above the surface. She kept stopping over my pelvic chakra. She kept hovering over that region, more to the side, as if there were a tumor hanging to the side of my pelvis. She asked what sexuality meant to me. I described it as an appendage that always got me in trouble. I was taught from childhood that thoughts of sex are evil. Consequently, I had a huge energy block in my chakra system.

As I reflect on that experience, I am disappointed that throughout my life I saw my sexuality as a bad attachment—something outside of my body that was ugly, like a big wart or cyst. When I came to accept my sexuality as being normal, recognizing that it is not evil, I began the energy healing process.

I have since come to believe that much wickedness in the world such as sexual or other forms of physical abuse, rape, and harmful perverted sexual gratification is caused by an energy block in the sacral chakra, overcharging it with perverse sensuality. Much pain could be alleviated if people could understand this, and move their energy upward in a healthy fashion, harnessing the power of this chakra in productive and worthwhile pursuits.

## The Solar Plexus Chakra is the Center of Your Personal Drive



The third chakra is manipura , the solar plexus. For therapy work it is located between the navel and the sternum. It is the center of wisdom and personal power, oriented to the ego identity and self-definition.

Its element is fire, and its color is a golden yellow. From this "fire in the belly" comes energy, vitality and desire. This chakra provides vigor, get up and go, the will to perform. The symbol is a lotus of ten petals—like ten fingers—with a downward pointing triangle which roots itself through the lower chakras into the earth, then expanding upwards into the spirit.

The goal of the solar plexus chakra is to create mastery of the energy body in order to achieve purpose and goals. Emotion and consciousness coming from below empowers the body to achieve, to accomplish the will.

Who could deny having at times felt great surges of energy and determination, literally feeling a fire from within—the fire in the belly—the solar plexus.

Regarding sexual misconduct, particularly as it may affect teenage boys, many have suggested that they need much physical activity to force the sex drive into submission. This is essentially true, moving the powerful energy from the pelvic or sacral chakra upward, converting it to fire in the belly. This is good counsel, if it is not laced with the creation of shame and guilt.

## **The Heart Chakra is the Source of Love and Connection**



The fourth chakra, *anahata*, is the chakra of the heart. It nurtures love, hope, compassion and healing. The element is air, allowing for expansion and growth. We enter this chakra when we are no longer hurting ourselves or others—past the pain of guilt, the negative emotion that begins in the pelvic region.

The heart chakra opens to the divine realm of love, of relationship, of understanding both the self and others at the same time. This chakra includes the lungs, the chest, and the inside of the arms and the hands with which we reach out to touch and hug others.

By expanding the chest and breath, we control the ego of the third chakra, to get beyond ourselves enough to embrace another. It is a green lotus of 12 petals within which is two intersecting triangles,

one pointing down, and the other pointing up. This creates a six-pointed star that suggests spirit and matter are in perfect balance at this center point of the chakra system.

The heart chakra connects the inner world and the outer world, masculine and feminine, mind and body, light and shadow, all coming into balance enabling one to experience a deep sense of peace. This is the social chakra, allowing for relationships with other people. To open the heart chakra is to come into acceptance of our authentic self, enabling us to relate to others in the outside world.

## **The Throat Chakra Empowers Your Communication with Others**



The fifth chakra, vishudda, means purification. This is the throat chakra, encompassing the neck, throat, shoulders, and back of the arms. It is the realm of sound, vibration, the creative entity, the source of self-expression. Center of communication, the throat chakra also supports creativity and healing. The neck is the narrowest part of the body, so it is the great distiller and translator. The symbol of the throat chakra is 16 lotus petals, representing the

16 vowels of the Sanskrit alphabet. The petals of the lower chakras represent the consonants.

Here one enters the spirit world, the world of communication. The thoughts that go into the mind are distilled, then spoken and acted upon.

One of my great healings came with the opening of my throat chakra. So much was I driven by expectations foreign to my true self, that it became impossible for me to share my feelings with others. My entire family maintained high religious standards, part of which was to never criticize or challenge dogma or leaders within the church. All of my neighbors and extended family were likewise religiously committed.

So pained was I at not knowing anyone to truly communicate with, in desperation I sought therapists of a different ilk. Their work in rechanneling my energy and helping me to see how to accept myself was most healing.

I remember well one morning meditating in my green Lazy Boy recliner. The lights were off, and I was thinking about the throat chakra. It was constricted. It was choking. I couldn't speak my heart. I was suffocating. I couldn't breathe.

Always feeling condemned by everyone around me, I knew I couldn't survive without opening my throat chakra. Mustering all the will and mental strength I had, I said to myself that never again would my throat chakra be choked by the beliefs, expectations, and judgments of others. It was very healing, but regrettably began a slow building cascade of reproach against me for my "wanderings of thought."

This experience occurred after my return from Thailand. Since that time, I have developed my own belief system which ironically centers on the teachings of the church in which I was raised.

I believe in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His church, but it is a choice I make, not one that is forced upon me.

I have no concern for the expectations of others, for I have my own path and expectations which nourish my soul and give me a sense of closeness to God.

## **The Third Eye Chakra Enables You to See What You Can't See with Your Physical Eyes**



Awareness occurs because of the sixth chakra, ajna, which means to perceive and command. It functions on the element of light, light which illuminates the inner and outer worlds. Often known as the third eye, this is the physical place between the two natural eyes. It is where we dream and see visions, the place from which spring forth imaginings and intuition.

People who are clairvoyant, perceiving things not normally seen, have a powerful third eye. The symbol is a lotus with two petals, overlaid with a downward pointing triangle. The two petals

represent the physical eyes, the center of which makes meaning out of what the eyes see. Referred to as the psychic chakra, it produces self-reflection, showing us the bigger picture of where we're going, and the mythic meaning of our journey.

I believe that meditation focuses energy on the third eye. In the process, by controlling all other cluttering thoughts, we develop the skill to focus on divine will and that which is most important to us as unique individuals. This moves us then into the grand realm of the highest chakra.

## **The Crown Chakra Connects You to the Divine and Inspiration**



The crown chakra is at the top of the head. Sahasrara means the thousand pedaled lotus which is suggestive of unlimited expansiveness, enlightenment and understanding. The element is thought or consciousness creating awareness of the operation of all the chakras.

It relates to intelligence and the functions of the mind. It provides the inner witness that is behind everything we say, do or feel. Cosmic consciousness at this highest level is removed from



mundane aspects, removed from what we are relating to and doing.

Opening the crown chakra is to open to the divine, to experience the limitless expanse of the heavens, true spirituality. One discovers universal identity, a spark of the divine, a oneness with God, a universal awakening of who one really is.

My personal spiritual journey and faith in my religious affiliation was effectuated by utilizing the power of all the chakras, culminating in this the Crown Chakra.

## **Colors and Crystals Energize Chakras**

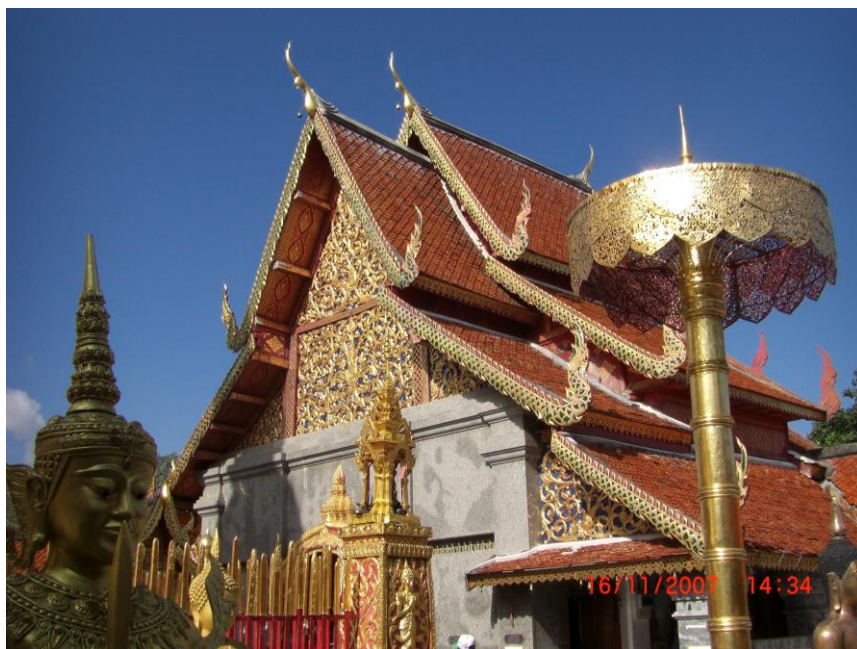


The use of crystals and colors stimulates the work that can be done with chakras.

Why crystals? The lattice work of crystal molecules is a constant, with energy in mass at rest constantly available to stimulate the soul. The early inventions of radios and telephones utilized crystals in their natural forms. Many therapists include the placement of crystals next to the body in healing work.

Throughout Thailand there are many temples, shrines, and statues emblazoned with crystals and gold. The ancients knew of their powerful effect on the mind and heart of individuals.

As beautiful as these structures are, there is real spiritual purpose in their creation.



All temples, shrines, cathedrals, mosques, and other buildings throughout the world are marvels of architecture. They are designed for divine adulation and worship with finely crafted

paintings, sculptures, and writings reflective of devotion. I have found inspiration in visiting many of these structures.

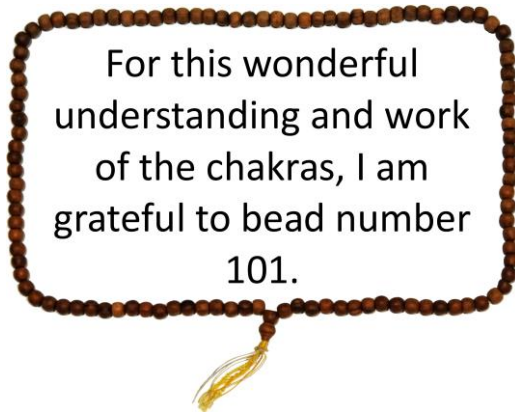


Who hasn't been positively stimulated when walking through a flower garden as they look at the beautiful colors in array? The colors of flowers are also the colors of chakras, and accordingly stimulate the chakras in their various functions.

Even walking on dead leaves, the earth colors of ochre and umbra strengthen one's connection to the earth.

The fiery colors of red, orange, purple and yellow, evident in flowers found throughout the world stimulate the lower chakras. Green is the perfect color for the heart, and is found everywhere that plants grow, even in the harshest tundra of the arctic regions of the earth. Deep violet, gold and white are all reflected in flowers, stimulating the upper chakras.

One only needs to look at the sky to see blue or to watch sunsets to be stimulated with a variety of colors, all of which energize the chakras. I believe the colors of the earth, the plants and the heavens are God's gifts to man to energize the soul.



How can you benefit from the healing power of the sun, prayer and touch?

# Energy for Healing

## Chapter 13

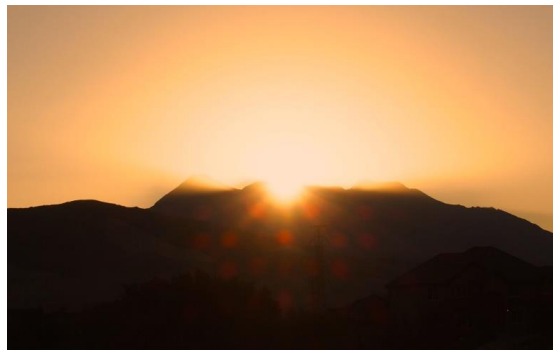
### All Energy Begins with the Sun



The sun shone brightly as I rode to the top of the mountain arriving at the temple Wat Doikeung in the Omgay Mountains of Thailand. The shadows from the many trees that flew by reminded

me of the tremendous energy emitted by the sun.

Many times I have marveled as I watched the sun rise above the Wasatch Mountains in Utah.



The sun is a constant meltdown of nuclear energy. Sometimes I felt like a nuclear reactor about to suffer a meltdown.

Energy unharnessed is dangerous, and so my journey of the last many years was to learn how to harness that energy productively,

such as channeling the energy through the chakras. Perhaps like the sun, my energy will shed upon those I love—and many years later it is happening as I have opened my crown chakra.

How miraculous that the sun’s energy is absorbed by plants and with the catalyst of chlorophyll is converted to stored energy through the process of photosynthesis. That stored energy sustains the plant’s life and the life of those who eat it, carrying energy right up the food chain to the largest carnivore.

Along the way, we as humans consume and benefit from that energy.

In Thailand, much of fresh fruit and vegetables are consumed. How nice to bypass the processes that neutralize the value of most food



consumed today by high achievers of the western world.

Nourishment may come initially from the sun, but within the body various forms of energy can be rechanneled for spiritual and physical healing. My journey was a long journey destined for spiritual healing.

For years I have been trying to understand and sort that energy, grounding to eliminate the bad and cleaning my circuits to invigorate the good. In Thailand I made a lot of progress, and to this day I continue to grow.

## Our Own Bodies are Sources of Energy

I am no physicist, but I understand enough about Einstein's theory of relativity represented by his  $E=mc^2$  mass-energy equivalence formula to recognize that all mass at rest is potential energy and all energy is potential mass at rest.

Our bodies are matter, or mass. But they are also energy. Ancient therapies rely on energy, even potentially converting accumulated mass in the body into healing energy.

The simple act of prayer, no matter how it may be practiced, calls upon the energy of the universe to bless our lives. No one will deny the power of such personal experiences if they have submitted to supplication.

## Sound Frequencies Can Heal

A few years ago I was given a tape called *The Silent Language of Peace* by Heather Macauley. She introduces the concept of using the vibrations of sound to find peace and healing. The universal sound of attraction is *ah* as in God, Allah, or Jehovah. The universal sound of gratitude is *ohm*. These sounds are sung in one note, which is called toning or chanting. She has combined these sounds into a vocalization sounding like *ahaum*, an open mouth humming.

As a singer she added a wonderful performance of this to an excerpt from the movie *The Deep* of about 10 minutes in length. As I listen to her "singing meditation" and hum the *ahaum* along with her, I have a most peaceful experience.

There are other profound practices for healing that come from ancient Asia and India.



Acupuncture releases the flow of energy to create natural healing. This is accomplished by stimulating nerves with needles. The theory and process is simple, but must be administered by someone well trained with an intuitive sense. Headaches may be cured by stimulating nerve endings in the feet and hands. The entire body is interconnected with nerves that need the flow of energy to sustain life and assure wellness.

## **Properly Administered Massage Can Align Energy**

In a similar way, traditional Thai massage therapy is a wonderful practice that opens energy meridians within the body.



It is accomplished through stretching of the body, and vigorous massaging of the muscle tissues. Again, it is most effectively practiced by those trained in Thailand where special schools teach the art and science of this type of massage therapy. Lying on a mat, the therapist uses his or her body to create maximum leverage in stretching the legs, arms and back. While slowly moving up the body, they squeeze and massage various muscle groups with their hands and feet.

In Thailand I got treatments daily, costing the equivalent of about nine dollars for a one-hour session. It's amazing that so much can

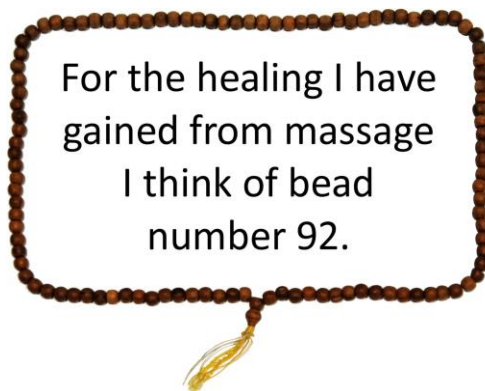


be gained from such little investment. In the United States a Thai massage would cost anywhere from 60 to 100 dollars.

In Thailand, people live simply but happily. Consequently, it costs much less to acquire services and products—unless those services and products are managed by westerners.

In American owned hotels a Thai massage will cost as much as it would in the states. It is interesting to note that the therapists get only a pittance, while the hotel collects the rest. The same therapist will go home at night and give an identical massage for nine dollars.

Other types of massage are also beneficial for the relaxation they bring and the stimulation of blood circulation.

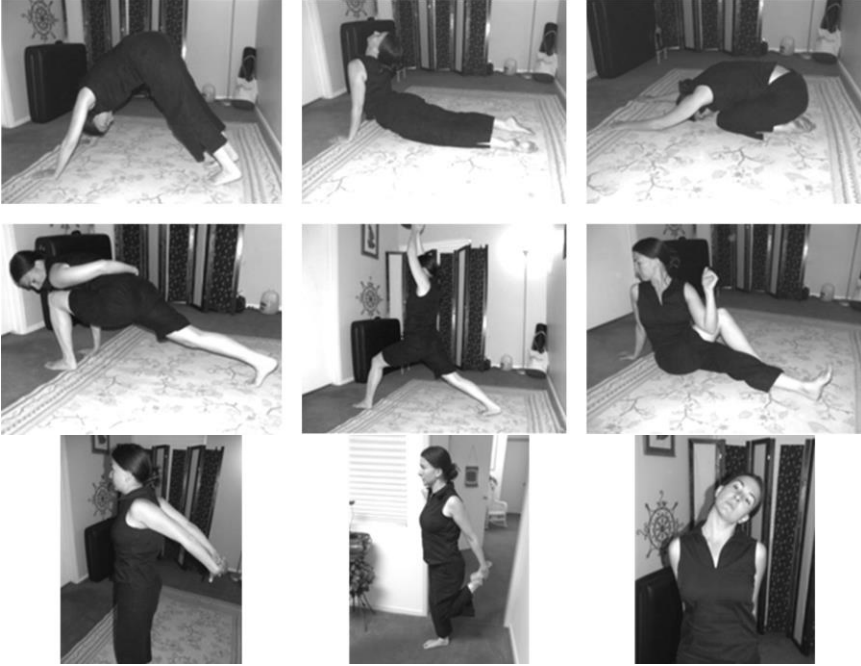


## **Yoga Stretches Have Kept My Body Young**

From a wonderful therapist in Utah, I learned yoga stretches, which is like Thai massage self-administered. With yoga stretches, leverage is used to stretch various muscle groups, with the goal being to work opposing muscle groups at the same time.

Each day for about a half hour I do yoga stretches, and together with Thai massage I can find tremendous relief from tension and headaches.

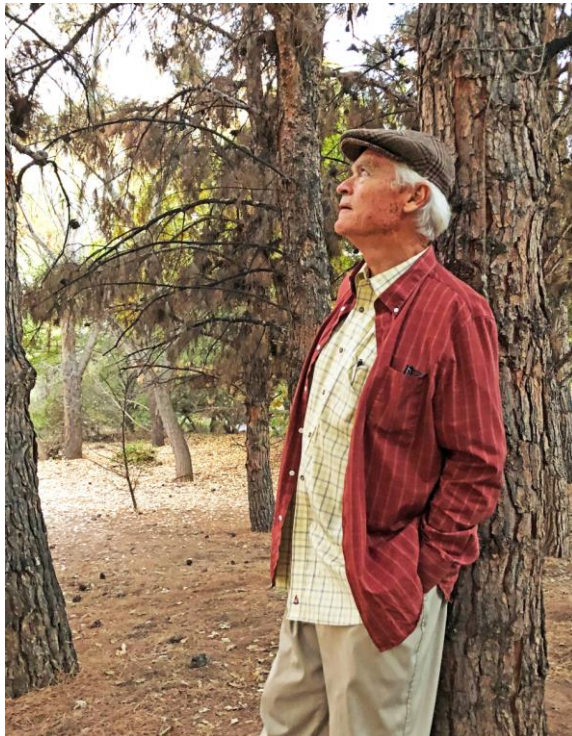
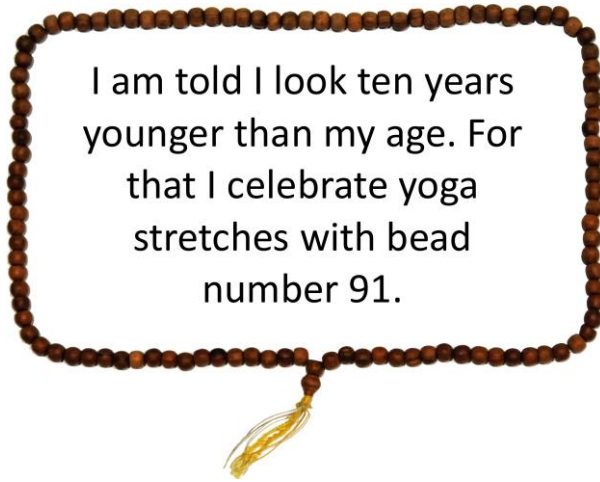
These are some of the effective poses for stretching.



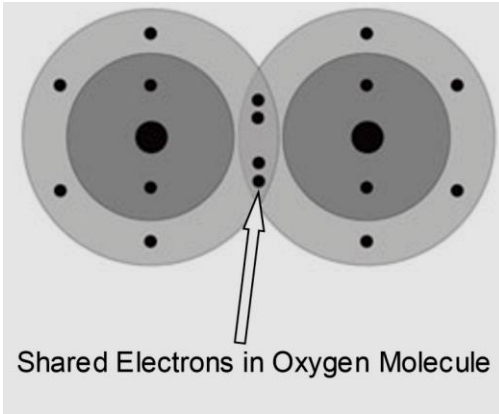
With increasing age, vigorous stretching and walking in fresh air are probably the most beneficial forms of exercise to maintain flexibility and cardiovascular health.

The air in Thailand is rich with abundant oxygen, as it would be in any climate and season where plants grow profusely. But even at high elevations, the oxygen is more than sufficient and available to those who exercise.

Plants that produce oxygen grow in every climate, and as air circulates around the Earth in the troposphere, life-sustaining oxygen is available to all.



# Joy and Stability in a Relationship is Like a Covalent Bond



The nature of atoms has always fascinated me.

For five years I taught ninth graders introducing them to the concepts of chemistry and physics.

Oxygen atoms show a togetherness touching on the romantic, a notion

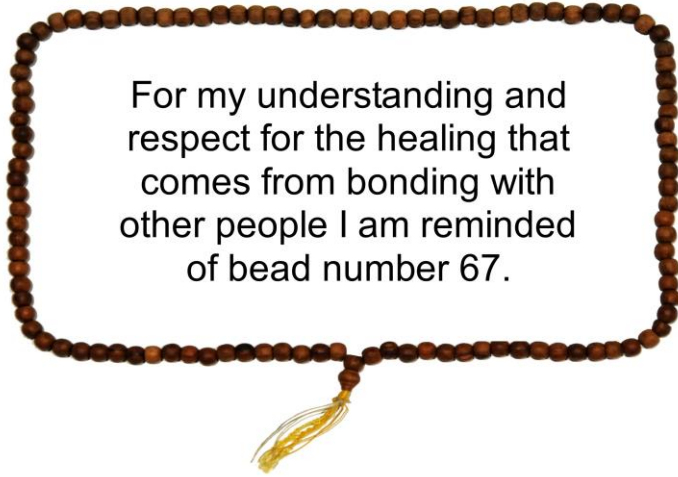
very exciting to teenagers, a reality that grabs and holds their attention.

By so doing, the oxygen atoms store and share electrons which sustains all living things.

This connection is a covalent bond, in which the outer electron shell of a particular oxygen atom is shared with another oxygen atom. The two atoms are thus conjoined and never separate unless they become part of a potent chemical reaction.

One of the most powerful forms of healing is the sharing of energy in human connection that much like the oxygen atoms, creates a covalent bond that energizes and stimulates. The connection can be as simple as shaking hands or sharing sincere and affirmative sentiments. The highest form of such connection would be intimate communion in which two people completely surrender to each other in a bond of physical, emotional and spiritual energy.

These bonds are very healing, unless they are accompanied by, deceit, force or manipulation.



For my understanding and respect for the healing that comes from bonding with other people I am reminded of bead number 67.

How can you change your life experiences with the power of emotion?

# Unseen Powers and Divinity

## Chapter 14

### **Guiding You to Intelligent and Beneficial Decisions**

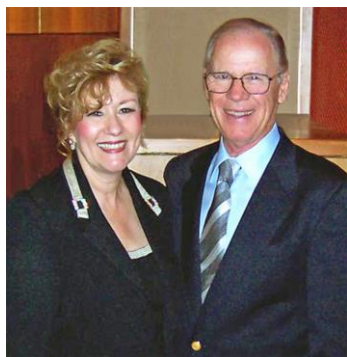
#### **The Law of Attraction**

A popular concept is *The Law of Attraction*. Many books and videos exist on the subject. I sincerely believe in the power of attraction, which simply stated means, *what we think about manifests itself in our life*.

Novices trying to explain *The Law of Attraction* assume that by repeating positive phrases regarding say, "I want wealth, I want happiness," will automatically bring to pass desired results. What they must learn—and many never do—is that positive affirmations never work if deep within one's mind there is the fear that they will not work, or the belief that maybe they are unworthy or incapable of achieving what they want.

The challenge really gets to the simple purpose of meditation, to control the mind and idle wandering thoughts. *The Law of Attraction* does work. I highly recommend a serious look at its precepts.

For me, the most complete explanation for *The Law of Attraction* comes from Esther Hicks. Her many tapes and books produced with her husband Jerry give much insight and practical strategies.



In short, there are three aspects to what Hicks presents: *The Law of Attraction*, *The Law of Deliberate Creation*, and *The Law of Allowing*.

To quote Hicks, "That which is like unto itself is drawn." This is *The Law of Creation*. The one who speaks most of illness has it. The one who speaks most of wealth has it. We are as magnets, attracting what we feel.

Feeling, or emotion regarding a subject is key to understanding and activating *The Law of Attraction*. We may say loudly and often that we want something, but if our emotions are plagued with fear and doubt, it will *never* come to pass. We create our own experience, and many have much of what they don't want. They suffer creation by default. That which you give thought to is that which you invite into your experience. *The Law of Attraction* works whether you want it to or not, it is whatever you are thinking about.

*The Law of Deliberate Creation* offers a proactive approach to forging *The Law of Attraction* into positive benefit. Hicks suggests there are two aspects to the *Law of Deliberate Creation*:

1. The launching of the creation with emotion.
2. The allowing or receiving of that which has been launched.

Driven by intense emotion, visualizing the reality of what you want begins the creation. Once launched, you will take action in joy and will know what to do at the moment you need it. With creation, you must see and visualize what you expect, and you will be led to the perfect action which you seek—one step at a time when you



need it. As a force driven by emotion and belief, the right elements, ideas and people are drawn to you, like a magnet.

The *Law of Deliberate Creation* extends to *The Law of Allowing*, which suggests that you must calmly allow it to happen! One must realize that, “I am that which I am, and pleased with it and joyful in it.”

Interestingly, as you interact with others who may not believe like you or behave as you think they should, you must extend *The Law of Allowing* to them. It is accepting them. “You are what you are.” It is a terrible mistake to focus on what they are that you don't like, because you would then focus on discomfort, negating the positive benefits of *The Law of Attraction*.

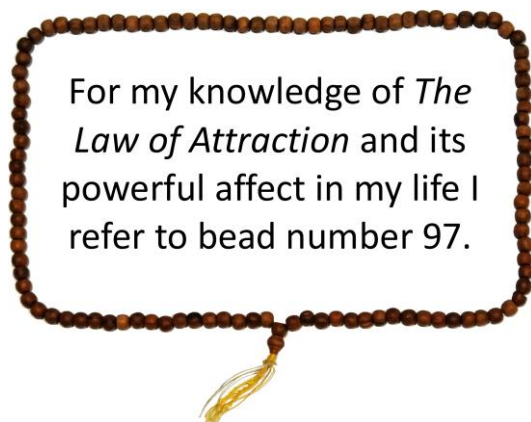
As individuals, we are not here on earth to bring about conformity or sameness. You violate *The Law of Allowing* when you try to convert others against their will. You cannot enforce conformity, because conformity inhibits creation.

As mortals, the notion of growth suggests that we must constantly create and recreate our world to make it a happy productive place. Enforcing conformity only creates frustration and angst. Wars continue to be fought—both on the battlefield and within homes because of the attempt to enforce conformity. *The Law of Allowing* is essential for growth and progress for yourself and others.

If one is to truly live *The Law of Allowing*, then they are joyful in the differences of others. Allowing is not tolerating, because in tolerating you are binding yourself in negativity, dwelling upon that which you dislike. If you truly are accepting of others, then no negative aspects of their behavior or personality will bother you. This concept may be hard for parents or teachers to embrace, but

at its core it remains true. Parents and teachers are well advised to love, guide, teach, and set an example but never condemn. Through *The Law of Attraction*, attract your charges to want to embrace your goodness.

Clearly, these principles reflect deeper truths of unconditional love, compassion and acceptance.



For my knowledge of *The Law of Attraction* and its powerful affect in my life I refer to bead number 97.

## **God and Our Departed Loved Ones Can Bless Our Lives**

Throughout the world people of all religious and cultural persuasions believe in the dynamics of an unseen power, the universe, or God. In Thailand the Buddhists do not believe in God as a person, but they wholeheartedly believe in the power derived from living a life of goodness, and that entities unseen can bless their lives. They pay particular reverence to their loved ones passed on, whom they believe still live in a spiritual realm. All through the

country shrines can be seen honoring the dead, often with items of food as a sacrifice.



I believe, as many do, that our departed ancestors have the knowledge of our circumstances and through their love can help us, and through our willingness to be thankful to them can receive their support.

As I have suffered various setbacks throughout my life, I have been amazed in retrospect that through some miraculous intervention I was lifted from my difficulty. I sincerely believe that my own ancestors, such as my parents, who knew me best, were there to assist when needed. As they have been a constant blessing to me, I want to be a constant blessing to my own posterity.

Somehow, as we plod along trying our best but often doing stupid things, we are protected—sometimes at the last minute—from total disaster. At other times, disaster strikes. Accidents, tragic deaths, bankruptcies and shattered relationships occur. But my

faith tells me that through these experiences we learn things that benefit us later in life.

However, lest we become awash in negative energy and despair, we must utilize *The Law of Attraction* for our benefit, remaining emotionally charged with what we need and want. At other times, deep sincere prayer must be applied to give us comfort and insight.

Our prayers in supplication, much like *The Law of Attraction*, must be laced with positive emotion. I know many who pray endlessly that God will bless them with this, and with that. Some people fall to their knees ready to read a shopping list to God. Prayers of this nature lacking in sincere humility and gratefulness fail to achieve much efficacy.

If prayers are laced with phrases of appreciation, then the negative deficit thinking shifts to positive fulfilled thinking, then God and his agents can bless us with what we really need, which is empowerment to solve our own problems.

I taught a Sunday School class once in which I presented the idea of expressing only thanksgiving in our prayers. I challenged everyone to try it for a day. At the end of the class, a gentleman offered such a prayer. As he had to concentrate only on expressions of gratitude, he found it difficult to not fall into the habitual litany of "Please bless us with..."

At the top of the mountain, I was given the timeless opportunity to reflect on all that had gone well in my life. In an expressive tone of gratitude, I remembered one of the most dramatic experiences I ever had.

## **From on Top of the Mountain I Remembered a Miracle in My Life**

After being drafted into the army during the Vietnam War, I was stuck in a low paying job as a private first class. I was serving no grand purpose in the army, for the troops were coming back from Vietnam and there was little hope for me to have rank advancement which would provide adequate income for my family.

I was distraught over the neglect of my family. I had three small children, and my private's pay did little to support them.



I was languishing in a holding pattern in Missouri, while my family was waiting in Utah. In earnest humility I prayed mightily for help.

Without expecting it one evening while praying, I suddenly was consumed with the image of an angel standing guard at the doorway to the apartment where we had lived. The angel could only be described as glorious, with white flowing robes and medium length white hair. His sword was drawn.

I knew at that moment that my family would be cared for. The vision is similar to experiences told in the scriptures. I do not claim to be a prophet with heavenly visions, but I know what I saw, and it gave me great comfort. Clearly, powerful energy of a divine nature gave me visual witness of the protection accorded my family from beings not of this Earth.

Shortly thereafter I was given a permanent assignment at Ft. Leonard Wood Hospital. This enabled me to bring my family to Missouri so we could be united. However, we were very poor, for my private's pay was inadequate. So poor were we that welfare food from the state of Missouri became available to us. I was also allowed to substitute teach at a nearby high school.

After a few months, I contemplated the possibility of getting a hardship discharge, so that I could resume my career path outside of the military. My superior officer said it was impossible to get a hardship discharge, for they were just never given. However, he was obliged to give me the application form.

After several days of documenting evidence of how damaging the poverty was to my family, and how helpless I was to do anything about it, I was near ready to submit my application. Included were details regarding our health. My wife and oldest son developed a strange infection under their fingernails. The army doctor asked if we were eating fresh fruit. No was the answer, we couldn't afford it. All we ate was canned products from welfare.

With my application, I included letters from my extended family indicating their inability to send us money.

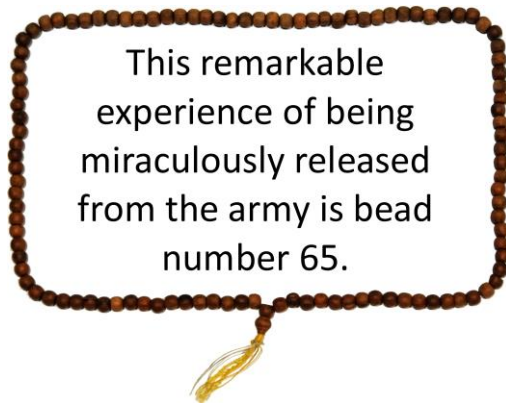
When I submitted the application, which was several pages long, I was told it would take weeks to work its way through the base commander at Ft. Leonard Wood, then up to the 5<sup>th</sup> Army Commander.

Throughout the preparation of the application, I unwittingly exercised *The Law of Attraction*. I saw myself returning home to my career, I saw myself being discharged from the army, and the

visions were laced with positive emotion. I expected after a few weeks I would receive approval.

How surprised I was that only three days later I got a call saying that my application was approved, and that the next day I had to process out of the military. I was shocked, humbled, gratified, and with choked emotion called my wife, and we began preparations to return home.

Was it divine intervention? Was it the law of attraction? It's probably both, for I do believe in unseen powers and divinity.



Many years later my youngest son Trent was about to be deployed in Iraq as a Marine officer.

I gave him a blessing.

I felt inspired to say in the blessing that if an enemy combatant found Trent in their gunsight, that the image would be blocked, and they would not be able to harm him.

At this moment I was exercising faith and the power of the Law of Attraction, seeing that he would be safe in a threatening situation. I also believe that by the power of the priesthood I held, God would bless my vision and protect my son.

Many months later we learned of a remarkable incident. Trent was in a convoy of Humvees on a dangerous mission. He was riding in the last Humvee. Typically, the enemies of Americans in Iraq would plant an IED, improvised explosive device in the road, triggering it when the last military vehicle passed over.

Riding along, Trent felt a tremendous explosion rocking the Humvee. An IED device went off seconds too late, sparing the lives of those in the last vehicle of the convoy.

Was this a miracle, yes.

Was it an answer to prayer, yes.

Was it the result of a priesthood blessing, yes.

Was it the result of the Law of Attraction, yes.

On another occasion I was asked to give a blessing to a member of our family who had a life-threatening condition. I was surprised she asked me to give her the blessing.

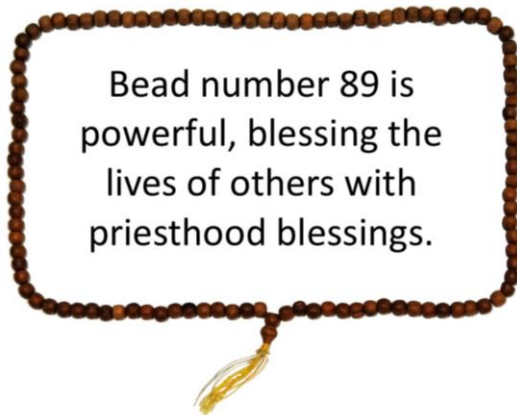
Maybe I have a gift in this regard that she recognized. If so, I am humbly appreciative, particularly in light of the fact that I have been critical of the institutionalization of religion, and the redefining of principles to rules and taboos.

I believe in the principle of giving blessings and honor the authority I have within the church of being able to give priesthood blessings.



In the blessing I felt impressed to promise that she would live to see her grandchildren. She stood up after the blessing weeping uncontrollably, while hugging me.

So, this many years later, the children keep coming. How thrilled she is to be an active and involved grandmother with her second-generation offspring.



What do you ultimately want in your life that will bring you the greatest peace, security, and joy?

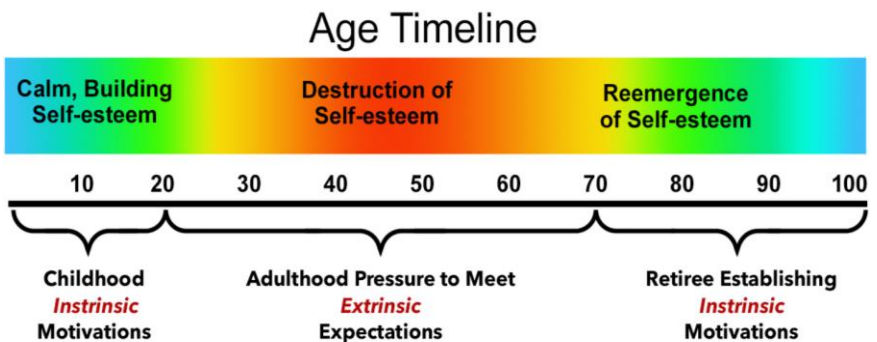
# Commitment to Love, Trust and Acceptance

## Chapter 15

Much of this book was written 17 years ago when I was in the midst of personal crisis. In November 2007, at the top of the mountain in Thailand at the Buddhist temple of Wat Doikeung, I experienced for a few hours a remarkable sense of calm and freedom from suffering. There was no doctrine, no expectations, no exchange of money, no nothing but the sound of birds, breeze and insects.

One does not need to journey to Southeast Asia to experience such a realm. God and the universe have provided mountains, oceans, forests and gardens everywhere to heal the soul.

But for me, my sojourn in Thailand provided the catalyst I needed to reverse my life of extrinsic pressures and begin to validate internal intrinsic feelings that would bring me physical, emotional and psychological well-being.



Reflecting on my life, I am now 79 (I expect to become a centenarian). In this life timeline I move from intrinsic motivations as a child that nourished a good self-esteem. From about age 20 until retirement at about age 69, I was constantly affected by extrinsic forces from other people and institutions. Much of these expectations were justified as it related to business, family and religious affiliation.

## **My Life Has Been Filled with Happy and Joyous Experiences**

Through those years I had many joyous experiences, and treasure them as part of my life's journey. However, much of the pressure occurred because of unnecessary precedent established over many years that became institutionalized. This created an environment in which the institution or traditions were more important than the uniqueness of me as an individual.

## **I Am a Highly Creative Person**

Many people in our current society are microscopes or clipboards, as explained in chapter six. Microscopes and clipboards function well in a group or society with well-structured rules, expectations and limitations.

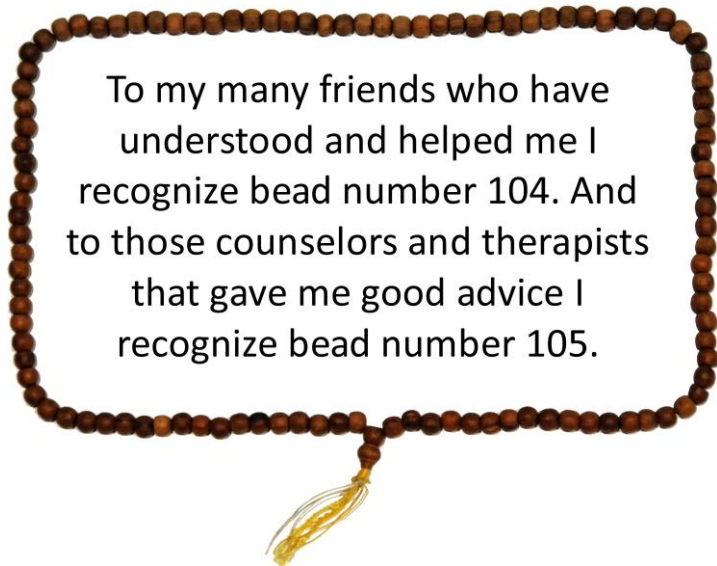
Beach balls and puppies need freedom, as explained in chapter six, and room to explore and bounce around. The restrictions of society and religion can crush the creative expressions and feelings of such individuals. I guess I am a beach ball, or maybe a puppy.

The American society has evolved as a perfect environment for microscopes and clipboards. The United States is driven by

business, by deadlines, by profits, by being the biggest, the best and the strongest. In America, an attorney, a doctor or a CEO is at the top of social strata. Artists, photographers and writers are at the lower levels of social strata.

In Native American cultures, and many Asian and Latin cultures, artists and creative people are at the top of social strata. I am an artist, a writer, a photographer, and so it seems perfectly natural that I would fall in love with a Señorita from Mexico, also an artist, Normita Huerta. This happened 8 years ago.

Prior to that, I was never ready for a permanent and serious relationship. I needed to learn what a real and long-lasting relationship looked like. I credit many therapists and counselors over the previous many years who helped me formulate my own construct of how an endearing relationship should function.



To my many friends who have understood and helped me I recognize bead number 104. And to those counselors and therapists that gave me good advice I recognize bead number 105.

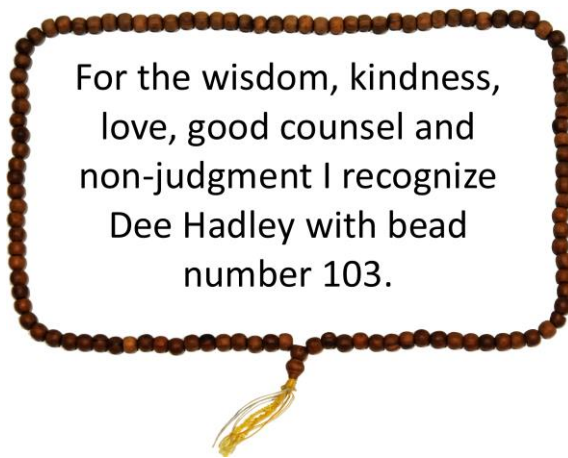
Many of these people became dear friends who understood and accepted me, giving good advice that helped me along the way.

## A Family Therapist Who Made a Difference

I want to acknowledge one family therapist who has since passed away.

Dee Hadley was an elderly gentleman who besides helping me in many counseling situations, was never judgmental of me, and completely accepted me for all my faults as if they were not an issue.

Particularly amazing to me is the fact that he was very religious and well connected with the highly structured Mormon culture and hierarchy. He never doubted that as a freedom loving creative eccentric, I was still loved and accepted.



From Hadley I learned that love is charity, and that in a relationship one must always give love, kindness and help. In short, one must be willing to be of service to their mate.

The opposite of this as an attitude of "What's in it for me?" Marriages that sour and fall apart are the result of unfulfilled

expectations, and the selfishness that pervades, "what can I get" instead of "what can I give."

## **I Am Ready for a Permanent Relationship**

I celebrated my 70th birthday nine years ago by assembling a gallery walk of pictures and mementos revealing the story of my life. This was on display in my home in Bluffdale, Utah.

I was fortunate that my dad loved photography, and my mother loved to write. So many were the reminders of years past even from before I was born. I assumed this gallery walk might be only of interest to my family, but I was astonished at how many people have wanted to see it and are amazed at the museum quality of the presentation of my life. Portions of the gallery walk are now on display in my new home in St. George, Utah.

The last section of the exhibit was left blank because it was history yet to be written. Almost immediately, I began to realize that my time had come to be married again. I told almost everyone I knew that I would be married within the next year, but I did not know who my partner would be.

I had known Norma Huerta for about four years. She was a good friend, but I never considered a serious relationship with her. The powers of the American ideal held sway, and I was intimidated because I do not speak Spanish. So, for many years in my loneliness, I pursued many relationships with other women, always finding that I needed to fit into their schedule and was often left feeling like a low priority.

When I began talking seriously with Norma, I learned that women of her culture have learned to nurture and support their men. This

is perfect, but only when men are willing to nurture and support their women. This reflects the teachings of Dee Hadley.

Norma was willing to change her entire lifestyle to nourish and meet my needs, and I wanted to make her happy in every way.

Norma is fortunate that as a child she had a loving foundation with parents who loved, respected, and cherished each other. Sadly, as happens with so many women in later years, she as a mother was left alone with children and not properly cared for. However, irrespective of her trials, she has always chosen to be happy.

Norma's commitment to happiness and love brought her to me. Along the way in my journey to find her, I learned through many short previous relationships some very important things to help me articulate what is necessary for my own happiness. And my happiness is not assured unless I know how to make her happy.

For several years I had been searching for someone to love and support and love me without conditions. She was willing to help me fulfill my ambitions and watch my creative potential soar. Suddenly, it wasn't the expectations of others, but the desire to help me find and fulfill my own expectations. And in the process, I have a profound desire to help her soar and meet her expectations.

Dee Hadley asked her, "Don't you just want to make him happy?" Of course she replied, and he asked me, "Don't you just want to make her happy?" Absolutely, I responded.

## **Conditional vs. Unconditional Love**

Through the middle years of my life identified in the red zone of my timeline, I was always bothered with what I considered



"conditions" upon every aspect of behavior, particularly as it regards moral expectations. I was left to believe that God's love was "conditional" upon my obedience.

Many children are raised with the conviction that the love of their parents and family is conditional, based on obedience. Now, obedience to reasonable rules of the home and society are necessary to create a safe environment for all. But when those expectations challenge the very essence of a person, their creative nature, their jokes, or their outlandish ideas, then self-worth begins to erode. Their spirit can be destroyed.

Natural consequences for mistakes, or harmful behavior are essential. But when someone is left feeling that they are a "bad person" and not a person who made a mistake, then they are belittled. I was left feeling this way many times.

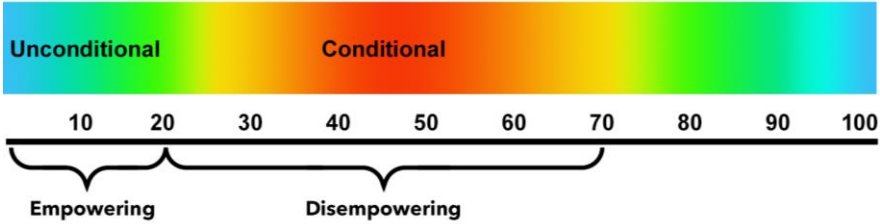
Through these trials, I have come to believe that God has unconditional love for all of us. However, I have been challenged on my belief that God loves us unconditionally. He may not approve of what we do, but He still loves us and I am convinced that love is eternal and will never end, no matter what we do.

I have observed that in the early years of a child, youngsters feel unconditional love from their parents. Their innocence fosters adoration and complete acceptance from their families. But unfortunately, as age and maturity evolve, more and more individuals are made to feel that their behavior determines the level of love they receive, that love is based on conditions of obedience and achievement as overseen by the parents.

After years of struggle, searching and learning as expressed in the chapters of this book, I have come to a very simple and complete

understanding: The first 20 years of my life were imbued with empowering unconditional love.

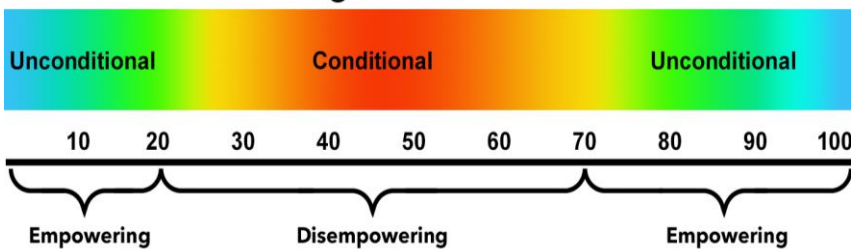
### Age Timeline



The next 50 years of my life I experienced conditional love which is disempowering. This happened because of various environments of work, politics, extended family and other relationships. I talk about this a great deal in the book *Picking Tomatoes in a World Full of Apples*.

Now I realize that for me to find true peace and happiness for the rest of my life, I must not only seek unconditional love for myself, but give unconditional love to everyone I know and with whom I interact.

### Age Timeline



To my children and their spouses, to my grandchildren and great-grandchildren and to my former wife, friends, neighbors, and associates of any kind, I give unconditional love.

I hold no grudge or criticism of any kind. I have spoken honestly of my feelings and experiences, but I know that all people have their own journey, living with their own expectations, hopes and disappointments. Where I may have intersected with others, I know they acted on the best knowledge and experience they had.

## **The Gift of Benevolence**

Compassion, generosity, altruism and goodwill are wonderful synonyms of benevolence. These Christ-like qualities undergird everything I want to be, and characteristics I often see in others.

Benevolence is the ability to meet the needs of others without want of reward. It's giving! It's giving of your heart, of your time, your kindness, of your love. Such acts of trust draw the giver and the receiver closer to divinity.

I am reminded of the young man on his motorcycle who rescued us in the motorhome.

A few years after that incident, I hired an undocumented gardener who with his family had recently arrived from Guatemala. They had an old wreck of a tiny car. I said adios as he left for the day. After a few moments I heard him grinding the starter of the engine in his car, which was failing and completely stopped. I went out of the garage and saw him hunched over the steering wheel praying.

Instantly, in my heart I was convinced I could answer his prayer. I opened the hood and discovered completely eroded wires

attached to a very old battery. I got the car started and told him to drive straight to an auto repair shop where I was a frequent client to get it fixed. I said I would pay for it.

As he drove off, I called the shop and told them the story. After about an hour I got a call from the shop, and they had completely fixed his car without charge, knowing this was a good man with a pure heart who needed benevolence. I was thrilled and deeply humbled.

During this period of time, we were traveling extensively producing videotapes for our business, *The Video Journal of Education*. This enterprise with its ups and downs is fully revealed in the book *Picking Tomatoes in a World Full of Apples*.

While in New Zealand, I was admiring a camera strap attached to a 35mm camera owned by our host at that time. It had beautiful multi-colored patterns of Māori design.

“Do you like this strap?” he asked. “yes” I said, “It’s beautiful.”

He took the strap off and handed it to me, “Here, it’s yours.” I was stunned. He explained to me that it is Māori custom to give items of importance to strangers deserving of benevolence. Even though he was a Pākehā, a white person, he loved the Māori people and their customs. I have this strap on display in my studio/museum.

Recently I was on a visit with my wife Norma to Mexico. We were visiting her brother and his wife whom we greeted with love and acceptance. While in their home, I was admiring a large carving of a jaguar head.

Without hesitation, her brother Oscar gave us the carving. Anyone who now enters our home sees this magnificent jaguar head, a gift without expectation.

In Oscar's heart was benevolence and giving. I have since learned that in many cultures throughout the world, besides Māori and Mexican, giving and sharing are part of their joy of living. It is certainly true among the Thais in Thailand.

## Verses to Encourage

From the *Twenty-four Hours a Day* meditations inspired by various readings for *Alcoholics' Anonymous*, I share this thought:

*I pray that I may be calm in the midst of storms. I pray that I may pass on this calmness to others who are lonely and full of fear.*

I pass on this calmness in the form of unconditional love and acceptance. It reminds me of my mother and her sisters when I was a teenager. While visiting the home of Grandpa Drury in Denver, they were lamenting their estranged sister who had severed any ties to the family and disenfranchised herself from the church.

“What are we going to do about her, dad?” My mother plead.

Calmly he replied, “We are going to do nothing but continue to love and accept her and pray for her welfare every day. She will come back some day.”

And sure enough, many years later she was again within the loving fold of her family and gospel associations.

I have shared this story with many people who are struggling with their own children, who as adults have abandoned the teachings of their youth. There is always hope, and what never changes is the love we have for them, no matter the struggles they may endure.

Another encouraging meditation from *Alcoholics Anonymous* reads:

*I would do well not to think of the Red Sea of difficulties that lies ahead. I am sure that when I come to that Red Sea, the waters will part and I will be given all the power I need to face and overcome any difficulties and grow in peace and strength as a result.*

Throughout my life, I have approached the Red Sea many times. I began to cross that sea when I reached the top of the Asian peak in Thailand. And now on the other side, I find myself free from the advancing armies of Pharaoh in their chariots, and their weapons of criticism, judgment and scorn.

Following the pillar of smoke by day, and the pillar of light by night, I have arrived at the promised land, in my home with a partner who understands, empowers and loves me.

For true happiness and freedom from the fears and uncertainties of the Red Sea, I have consciously and deliberately made the following pledge to my new wife.

**An Unconditional Commitment to Acceptance**

**An Unconditional Commitment to Trust**

**An Unconditional Commitment to Love**



How truly ironic, that through much of my life, I have fought the conditions placed upon me, and now I discover that I will have true peace and happiness by placing conditions upon myself. What was once extrinsic, is now intrinsic, by my own choice.

With unconditional acceptance, I don't have to criticize or find fault.

With unconditional trust I never have to lie.

And with unconditional love I never have to be alone.

And what is bead number 107? That bead was designated 17 years ago for what I might discover that would bring me happiness for the rest of my life.

Having reached the top of the mountain is now symbolic of where I truly am for the rest of life, constantly living in peace and happiness as I venture forward.



For Normita,  
I celebrate bead  
number 107!



# Epilogue

Sometimes our journey ends where it began.

I want to share a remarkable experience that occurred some weeks after I completed the first draft of the book 23 years ago in 2007 after returning home from Thailand.

Throughout my life I have been given over to feelings of a spiritual nature. I never doubted that life existed before we were born into this earth, and that we will experience some form of progression after we die.

I have also felt a special kinship to my ancestors who have passed on before. I was very close to my grandparents and had fond connections with all of my extended family who are now dead.

Still feeling a lot of stress and uncertainty about my place in the world, I found myself meditating in a prayerful trancelike state. This is how I described what followed that night in 2007.

*I had an apparition, or vision, if you will, wherein I saw a vast number of people assembled, looking compassionately at me. They were standing as if in a wedge, with people descending back to infinity from the center front. In the foreground was one man. I believe it was my father. (When my father died in 1979, I begged him in his unconscious state to help me with my problems from the other side, particularly in my career aspirations. I had never felt that help until this moment.)*

*The vast congregation conveyed to me a sense of their love. The feeling was so profound and beautiful that it left me*

*comforted and assured that my ancestry is very much aware of and supportive of me. In short, they love me with an unconditional Christ-like love.*

*What then opened to me was a disturbing image of a tree whose trunk had been split as if by a huge ax. At the base of the trunk was my wife and myself, and the break of the trunk on her side had several branches. Each branch was one of our children. There were no such branches on my side of the trunk.*

*With this I realized that my children were emotionally, spiritually and intellectually aligned with my former wife, and that I—although I was loved by them—was viewed as a difficult, hard-to-understand problem. In many respects, for a long time, I have felt to be the pariah of the family.*

*Sadly, the unconditional love I felt from my ancestry seemed fractured and muddled with my posterity.*

After the divorce and before moving to St. George I lived in two different homes, with large play areas for children. My grandchildren loved to come to my house and play, watch a movie in my theater or just hang out.

Since then, I have become fully engaged in the circle of my ever growing family, and respected and loved for who I am. I believe this has occurred because I have always sought to give unconditional love, acceptance and non-judgment. I have also been of service to them when needed, to my former wife, my children and their spouses, my grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Through that continuing love without acquiescing to notions I cannot accept, I have seen my posterity now look at me with the

same unconditional love my ancestors did in that remarkable revelation 17 years ago.

Now, happily, when we get together, we are completely accepting of each other and our differences without the drama that years ago permeated our associations.

When my family gets together it is raucous with numerous conversations occurring simultaneously. One friend observed that we were loud. I don't function well in large boisterous groups, but I love being with them, nonetheless.

In small gatherings, if I am given the opportunity to share my philosophical and spiritual views, I am treated with respect and sometimes awe for my wisdom and deep understanding.

On one occasion the conversation focused on the difference between Mormonism and high protestant views. With everyone listening to me, I shared my conviction that at some point each individual must transcend above their religious dogma, no matter what faith they ascribe to, and establish a personal connection to God. Furthermore, I believe that living the commandments is only a first step toward the ultimate persuasion of learning to live the attributes of Christ.

My commitment to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has remained steadfast, as long as I strip away the encumbrances associated with institutionalization and ignore the power struggles of some within its ranks, and overlook the judgments that follow. I feel capable of focusing on a pure relationship with Christ. With this testimony, I continue boldly and confidently.

I hope that by my self-deprecations in this book, the reader found with me one in whom they can empathize, having discovered a series of ideas and suggestions to deal with their own dragons and demons that will help them find balance, peace, and harmony within this world amidst those they love.

Be sure to share your story with me by going to my website, [LintonMinute.com](http://LintonMinute.com).

## A FAMILY IS LIKE A TRAIN

Always coupling, rearranging and  
Sometimes losing cars.  
Often derailed, it takes a  
Lot of work to put it back on track.  
Accidents occur and occasionally the  
Locomotive runs out of steam.  
Often the train goes round and  
Round in circles, seeming  
To go nowhere.  
The whistle blows, the lights flash,  
But nobody pays attention.  
Yet, the train moves on, and on and on.  
It may go faster,  
And it may go slower,  
But it is always moving forward  
To greater destination.

John Linton

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