

The Artist of
POSSIBILITY

BRINGING A NEW PARADIGM TO LIFE

02

Featuring

**THE POSSIBILITY OF
SURRENDER IN
UNCERTAIN TIMES**

AN ARTICLE BY ROBIN BECK

REDEFINING HAPPINESS

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR.
SHEFALI TSABARY AND PHIL
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**BECOMING
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**A WARM HEART AND A
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EDELSTEIN

ISSUE #2

**The Quest
for Happiness**





THE QUEST
FOR WHOLENESS CAN NEVER
BEGIN ON THE EXTERNAL LEVEL.
IT IS ALWAYS AN INSIDE JOB.

— *Dr. Shefali Tsabary*

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SURRENDER IN
UNCERTAIN TIMES



REDEFINING
HAPPINESS



BECOMING
UNHOOKABLE

Issue

Two



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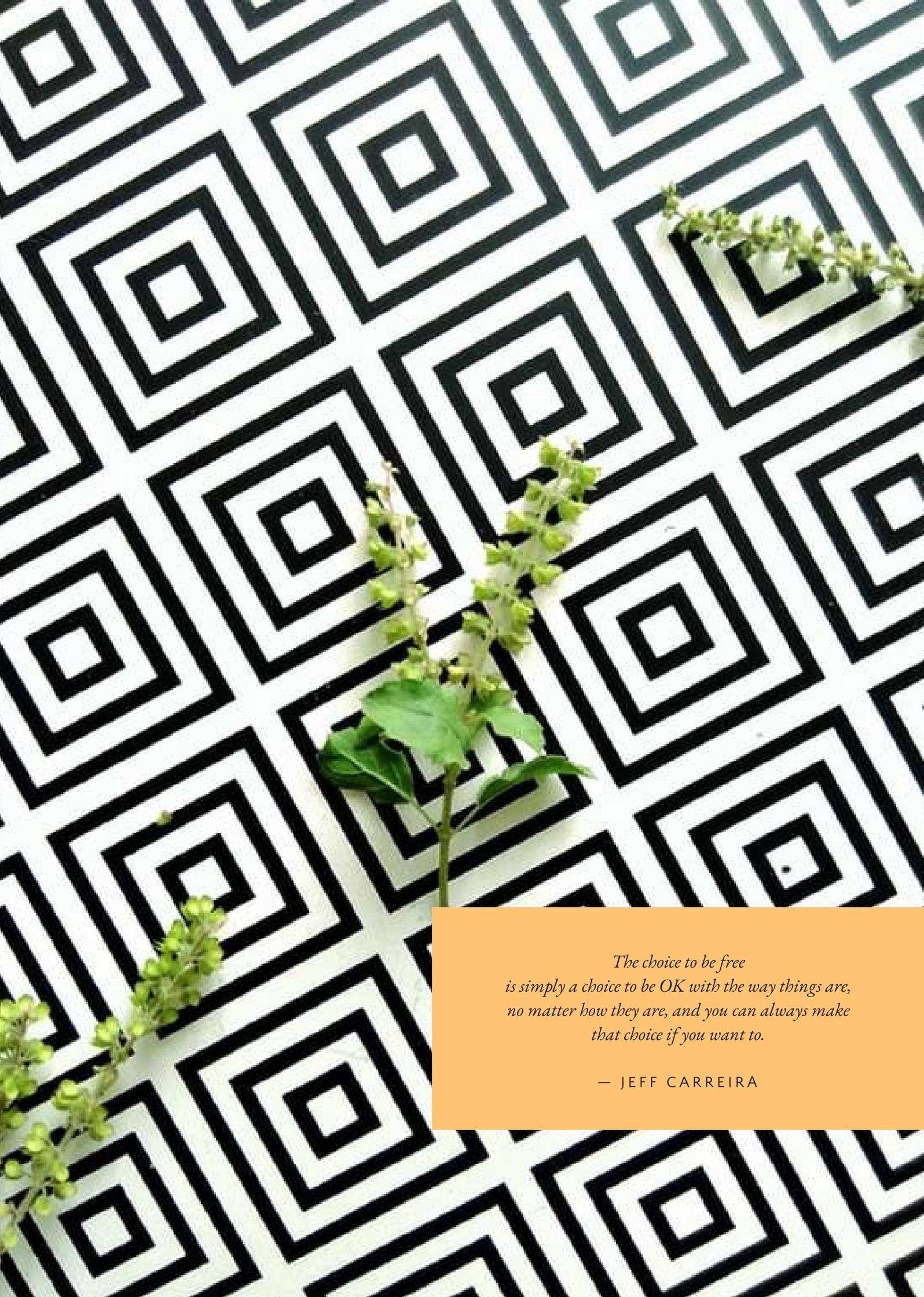
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*The choice to be free
is simply a choice to be OK with the way things are,
no matter how they are, and you can always make
that choice if you want to.*

— JEFF CARREIRA



A Note from the Editors

We are very pleased to present to you the second issue of *The Artist of Possibility*, a quarterly publication devoted to communicating views and perspectives that demonstrate the emerging possibilities of a new paradigm.

Our second issue centers on the theme of Happiness and we want to begin by acknowledging that the theme for this issue, and almost all of the articles it contains, were written prior to the COVID-19 outbreak. The one exception is our feature article by Robin Beck, appearing first in the issue, which offers a powerful response to the insecurity generated by the coronavirus.

It seems to us that *happiness* is an essential theme for a journal that upholds inner freedom as a necessary foundation for paradigm-shifting.

In the rest of the issue, you will find an interview with Dr. Shefali Tsabary and Phil Moore on the topic of happiness. Dr. Shefali is an international speaker and clinical psychologist, well known for her work on conscious parenting. Phil is a teacher in The Mystery School and an expert on the topic of love-based education.

Our third feature is an excerpt from Jeff Carreira's most recent book: *The Art of Conscious Contentment*. Jeff is the founder of the Mystery School. He is

also an author, mystical philosopher and meditation teacher. In this excerpt, Jeff shares his insights on how to unhook ourselves from habitual patterns of mind.

Our final article is an inspiring book review of Joseph Goldstein's *A Heart Full of Peace*, written by Amy Edelstein.

Lastly, as a perfect finishing touch to the issue, we included a number of uplifting contributions from our members.

We are so happy to present you with the second issue of *The Artist of Possibility* and we would love to hear your thoughts after you've had a chance to read it.

You can contact the editors [here](#).

Jeff Carreira

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The Artist of

POSSIBILITY

BRINGING A NEW PARADIGM TO LIFE

Emergence Education publishes this online jmagazine containing articles, interviews, art and poetry that express and explain the emerging possibilities of a new paradigm.

In our pages, you will find information about the ideas, people and perspectives that are catalyzing new ways of seeing, feeling and acting in the world.

Each issue of *The Artist of Possibility*
will include the voices of some of today's most respected
paradigm shifting luminaries, as well as contributions offered
by our members.



Don't miss our third issue, set to publish on July 15th 2020, where we
will be exploring the defining characteristics of an Artist of Possibility!

The Artist of Possibility is offered free of charge.

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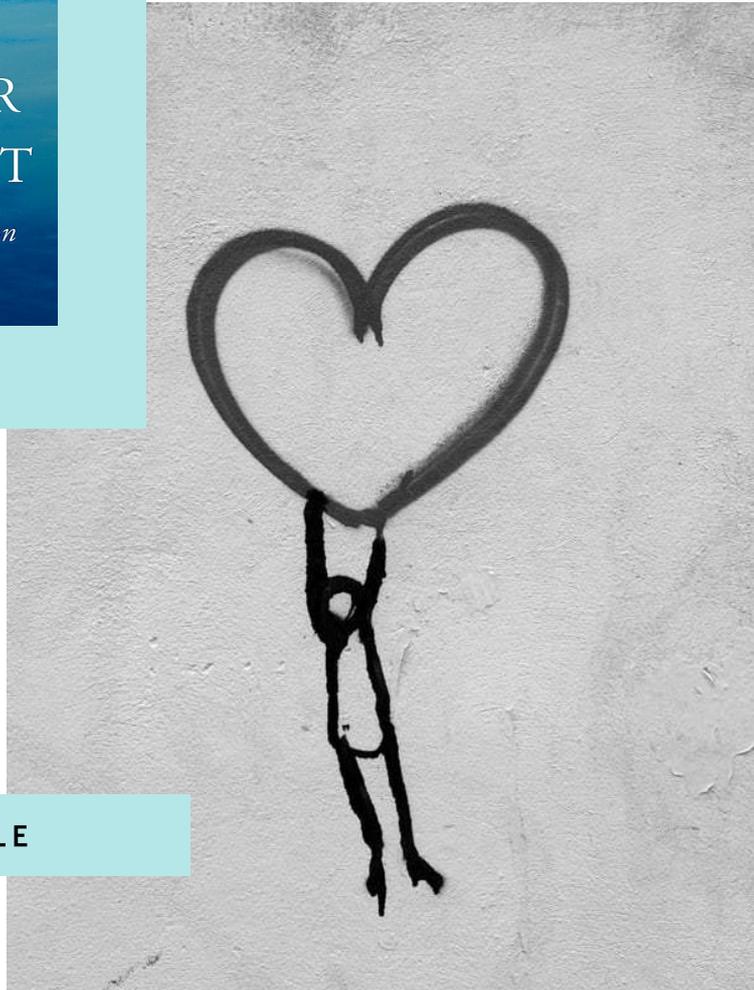
MICHAEL A. SINGER

No.1 *New York Times* bestselling author of
The Untethered Soul

THE
SURRENDER
EXPERIMENT

my journey into life's perfection

OUR FEATURE ARTICLE



The Possibility of Surrender in Uncertain Times

by Robin Beck



This year has plunged me, and most people I know, into a state of pure uncertainty. More than ever I find myself feeling out of control, even when I acknowledge that the story I've told myself about how the world works is as unstable as the melting ice caps. I'm familiar with relating to this kind of not-knowing as a spiritual practice, but when the future feels as unknown and terrifying as the depths of the open ocean beneath your feet, it's difficult to really, truly let go.

Even under seemingly "normal" circumstances, surrendering to uncertainty can be incredibly difficult. I'm often impatient with myself, and siloing my life into "spiritual practice time" versus everything else fosters habitual ways of being that are so very difficult to rely on when you need them most.

Even before the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak that has defined the year of 2020, surrendering to life felt like such an incredibly radical act of trust only achievable through constant vigilance or indefinite submission to a monastery.

With so many human and non-humans suffering together, the low hum of menace that permeates all interactions and the media waves makes me feel as if I'm back to the basics, as if we've softly brushed up against the reset button.

Personally, I'll admit having felt a low-level anxiety buzzing under the surface for most of my adolescence and into my adult life. While I don't claim to speak for all millennials, many friends close to me in age report a similar sense of dread about the future and our present destructive tendencies as a species. And this pandemic highlights how we truly walk the razor's edge as we carve out a path for our species into the unknown.

In this uncertain time, I'm trying to reinvent what my relationship to the present, and therefore the future looks like. This doesn't mean that I stop planning or develop some sense of complacency towards the future. Quite the opposite. Sowing the seeds of presence now helps give me a sense of clarity-in-action that supports the highest good I can imagine for the future. Times like this help us lay down our differences, and act out of love, integrity, and symbiosis. So it's back to the basics: knowing that I don't know.

Of course there are an endless amount of questions: why is this happening? Why didn't we collectively see a pandemic coming? How are we allowing so many to suffer? Why weren't we prepared? Why do we only focus on the human impact, when global warming and ecological collapse probably created this problem? Logically, I can argue with the situation

all I'd like. Logically, I can say that it's obvious a global crisis was coming and that we've been driving our gas-guzzling SUV-of-a-civilization towards a cliff for decades. But truly, the massive amount of suffering experienced by so many, through sickness or through isolation, renders all my conclusions and righteousness irrelevant. So again: *I don't know.*

My tendency to argue with the way things are lies in direct contradiction to a spiritual path. Some say the path ends when we choose to accept and love things as they are. In a word, we might call this surrender.

I began to consider the idea of surrender more seriously when I read Michael Singer's *The Surrender Experiment*, and recognized that this concept was more than just a spiritual truism, it's a way of life. In the book Michael tells a truly inspiring life story about his relationship with the divine and how that relationship was defined by his decision to approach every event that happened to him as an opportunity to let go of control. Instead of arguing with the way things are or what was happening, Michael looked at every potential crisis as a catalyst for change that his current self couldn't imagine.

This attitude allowed him to flow into a state of acceptance of the trials and tribulations that face us all on our journey. Michael points out that "each of us actually believes that things should be the way we want them, instead of being the natural

result of all the forces of creation". Isn't it true? We are so very upset when things don't turn out like we want, and assume that the world shouldn't be this way. We assume some divine creator really, really messed up.

The cultural zeitgeist of the modern era is defined around the idea of a privileged individual achiever, and the assertion that if we work hard enough, if we struggle enough, if we *argue* deeply enough with reality, that we can have it any way we want. The universe will open up to us, because in this modern human experiment we are limited only by our own laziness. When we see injustice in the world, the good in us feels compelled to end it, and if we work hard enough then we can create the fair, just world we assume God intended.

Michael noticed this tendency early in his life, and asked himself "am I better off making up an alternate reality in my mind and then fighting with reality to make it be my way, or am I better off letting go of what I want and serving the same forces of reality that managed to create the entire perfection of the universe around me?"

The first time I considered this kind of relationship with existence I found it profound... and so deeply impractical that I couldn't bring myself to take it seriously on a gross level. Part of me believed that it was naive, and so privileged to assume that any of us could really give up struggling with the reality we see around us. There's just *so much* suffering in the world. There's just *so much* injustice. Just because one privileged person feels safe enough to

let go of their desires and ambitions to trust God... well.

I challenged my "practical" belief in triumph over adversity by asking myself where I would be if I hadn't struggled so hard to get where I am today. Hasn't every opportunity, every event in my life been the culmination of some struggle? But when I examined this belief more deeply, I began to see cracks in my own armor. In fact, for every victory I can count, the story could be retold as an opportunity having been gifted to me, not a heroic journey through fire and fury. While I may have been working towards a particular goal very diligently at any point in life, the biggest upsets, the most glorious victories, the triumphs over all odds were actually the result of some completely unexpected and unpredicted event coming out of left-field. Some would call this luck, or becoming accident-prone. Another word for it might be grace.

Living this way is an art. It requires interrupting the deeply ingrained patterns of unsatisfactoriness that I cling to so dearly to drive and motivate myself. I was taught so many stories about how struggle is the way we live, the way we relate to life. But upon reexamination, I realize that the same set of events that brought me to where I am today could be told through the lens of grace, and saying yes to an opportunity that arose out of crisis. Nearly every event that I am so grateful for in retrospect (a job offer, a loving partner, finding a sense of

community, discovering my spiritual path) was incubated by an event that I felt resistance to (the loss of a job, the ending of a relationship, a period of loneliness in a foreign place, the utter loss of who I thought I was supposed to be).

I struggled when Michael posited that “no matter who we are, life is going to put us through the changes we need to go through. The question is: Are we willing to use this force for our transformation?” While I still find it difficult to embody this attitude towards living every day, I’m intrigued by the idea of letting go and practicing nonresistance as a way of life, whether I like what is happening or not.

This is not spiritual bypassing, as some might be tempted to argue. Neither Michael nor I are suggesting that avoiding pain and being lazy is the correct posture for a surrender experiment. In fact, making a true attempt at living this way requires intense introspection and psychological examination; a process that I’m constantly having to apply with immediacy and presence. If you intend to interrupt the ingrained pattern of arguing with the way you assume life is supposed to be, then you must transform the very way you think and respond to what’s happening.

And that brings us back to today, and the slow, silent trainwreck that’s unfolding around us. How in the world can we surrender to this terrible event that’s claiming so many lives and

causing untold human suffering?

I can’t provide you with guidance about the best way to grieve. The unfathomable sadness that surrounds a pandemic needs to be processed at the individual, cultural and societal levels, and it’s not something we can simply pick up and move on from next year.

But the lessons in *surrender* still apply. We can choose to argue with the way we assume things are supposed to be, or we can allow things to be as they are, ideally with a bit of hope to color in the bleakness of this moment. I’ve had to take time off of the constant barrage of terrible news, and spend more time reconnecting with my friends, family, and neighbors, even if it’s been through phone calls and other virtual means. What I’ve seen emerge outside of the news channels is a sense that however this may end up, we’re all in this together, more than we were before.

So I invite you, now, to close your eyes and sit with the question: do I really know how this will all turn out in the end? We’ve been told the worst-case scenarios for how this pandemic could play out. Since we can’t know, because we don’t know the answer, take a moment and imagine the very best possible world that could arise out of this tragedy.

We can’t predict the world we will

live in when this is all over. Without denying the hardship we're facing, a deep shift in our consciousness may result from this collective experience, and we may come together as a global community in ways never seen before. This is my hope, my dream, and the part I hope to play in whatever comes next for our human family. For now, I will continue to mourn for the suffering of untold masses, and surrender to the hope that there is a new world, a new paradigm we can't even conceive of awaiting us on the other end of this crisis.

With love, I ask that if you are able to stay home, stay home. If you cannot, please be safe and practice what social distancing you can.



Redefining
Happiness

DIALOGUES *with*
DR. SHEFALI TSABARY
and PHIL MOORE

by
JEFF CARREIRA
& ARIELA COHEN

Part One:

Finding Wholeness from Within

An interview with Dr. Shefali Tsabary

Artist of Possibility (AOP): Hello Shefali, first of all thank you for speaking with us. We saw your recent YouTube video called “Why Your Happiness Isn’t Even Yours” and it fit in so well with the theme of our issue that we wanted to speak with you in more detail about some of the points you made in the video. To start off, I want to ask, if our happiness isn’t ours, then whose is it?

Shefali: So, what I mean by that is that happiness isn't something that we can purchase or acquire or glean from anything on the outside. It is a decision we make about our state of being and our state of life. It is really a decision, a commitment toward a state of being. And I wouldn't even call that state of being happiness per se because happiness to me is fleeting; it is something that is dependent on something external. What I'm referring to is an inner state of being, akin to contentment or joy or really aliveness.

So, I prefer to think of: How alive am I? How present am I? Instead of using the clichéd term happiness. Happiness again to me is something that has become polluted. Something that we think we can acquire, purchase, glean from the external. Therefore, I don't prescribe to this notion of happiness. I really prescribe to a notion of being alive. Am I here? Am I feeling everything I need to feel? Am I deconstructing my belief systems to see whether I am in alignment with nature and my present moment as it should be, not as I project it as needing to be? Becoming conscious is really the ultimate goal I seek. So, it's about being conscious, present, and alive in the present moment.

AOP: How do we end up becoming so committed to someone else’s happiness rather than our own?

Shefali: Well, because we were raised by



Introduction

In the following interviews, we had the pleasure of speaking with Dr. Shefali Tsabary and Phil Moore to ask about their understanding of happiness. Dr. Shefali Tsabary is an acclaimed author, international speaker, clinical psychologist, and wisdom teacher. She is a leading authority on conscious parenting, and specializes in the integration of Eastern philosophy and Western psychology in her work on topics such as: anger, anxiety, purpose, meaning, relationships and conscious health. Phil Moore is one of our contributing teachers in the Mystery School for a New Paradigm. He was also the director of a school that he ran and developed for over four decades - The Upland Hills School, north of Detroit. During his time as a director, Phil developed an inspired learning community dedicated to a pedagogical approach of love-based education, and published a book on the topic entitled: *The Future of Children*. We are delighted to have had the opportunity to talk with these inspirational and insightful Artists of Possibility.

this dictum of an unconscious culture that states that we need to deserve trust and love. We need to work and earn it from those that were our earliest caregivers. So, we learned early that who it is we are, authentically and organically, simply wasn't deserving of trust, approval, validation and love. We discovered early that we need to develop into someone that was then deserving of those things. We needed to put on a mask and create a persona. This is what I call the false self or the egoic self that is like a shell that we develop in order to not get hurt, to not get rejected. So, it's a false self that we develop as we realize that if I'm that, then I will get the love.

We create this transactional self, a false self that lives on further and further into our lives, and then ultimately suffocates us because it suffuses out the true self. Therefore, it's this reemerging into our true authentic essence that becomes the quest of the spiritual life. When we realize that we can't make anyone else happy, really, without committing to our authentic selves, that's when we disrupt our old patterns and evolve into our true selves.

AOP: In your YouTube video, you mention that we are socially conditioned to believe that only a handful of things can make us happy. Can you speak about what some of those things are?

Shefali: Well, we're conditioned to believe that happiness lies on the outside. We're conditioned to believe that we can purchase, acquire, or glean these things from the external world. This is the conditioning. You see, these are the faulty misbeliefs of the matrix that we have been falsely conditioned to rely on. So, things like beauty, achievement, wealth, belonging, fitting in, peer approval, social status, a career, our labels, our identities, our titles. All of these things are false, but we attach to them and become affixed to them because we've been taught to believe that this will get us to a different state of inner mind.

So, we're all chasing a different state of inner mind and we go down the wrong path. To truly change the inner mind, we need to work on our belief systems and we need to become mindful of how it is we can live in the present moment. But that is never taught to us. So, we're squandering our energies going down the wrong path and picking up the wrong crumbs, which will never lead to true eternal bliss. It'll just keep us down down a rabbit hole of searching and craving things that takes us further and further away from truth.

AOP: You are well known as an expert on parenting, can you tell us about some of the ways that parents condition their children's relationship to happiness?

Shefali: Well, because parents themselves are unconscious and live externally driven lives, it's quite natural that they inadvertently teach their children to look for happiness on the outside. Because parents themselves are living a misaligned, misguided life so far away from their truths - so unhappy with themselves, so non-accepting of their own bodies, their own minds, their own state of being - they quite naturally teach their children to be discontented as well.

When children learn to look for happiness on the outside, it just becomes a never-ending quest. So, in order for parents to truly teach their children to look on the inside, parents need to embody that wisdom themselves. And it begins with parents accepting their own truth, their own bodies, their own fallibilities, and their own limitations, and then transmitting it to their children. So, even if children get caught up in the external world of say beauty or success or achievement, parents can say, "yeah, that's important in this form-based world, but it's not really who it is you truly are. You know who it is you truly are: someone always beautiful, always full and complete.

These things don't make you less complete." So, teaching children the insidious traps of comparison and competition is how to break free from the conditioning.

AOP: In the video you also mentioned how we are conditioned to seek happiness in the future. Can you say more about how this ensures that we can never feel happy now?

Shefali: Well, just this whole idea of even looking for happiness, of pursuing happiness and liberty, is just so false. It's so wrong because the minute you say you need to be happy, there's an implication that you're not happy. And then it's qualifying and conditioning your life to be happy only when certain criteria are met. This is a sure-fire way to never be happy. The Buddhist teach acceptance of the *isness* and that's really what I teach. How do you accept this *isness* no matter what and be Zen with whatever is showing up? And when we become okay with the *isness*, no matter how it shows up, that's the true bliss. That's eternal joy, because we're not asking for life to be anything other than what it is.

But the minute we qualify life and say that this is good and therefore I feel happy, and this is bad and therefore I'm going to feel sad, we're really creating great suffering for ourselves and it's a huge trap. We have to eliminate these notions of good and bad, and simply begin to accept life as it is. And that is the pathway to eternal bliss.

AOP: Wonderful! Thank you so much Shefali for sharing your insights on this topic. I am sure these will be beneficial and inspiring to many of our readers.

In a final few words, what would you suggest for those seeking to cultivate this inner state of happiness on a daily basis?

Shefali: I would suggest that they cultivate a practice of solitude and contemplation, through meditation, which allows for greater communion with oneself.

Part Two:

Happiness Happens

An Interview with Phil Moore

Jeff Carreira: Hi Phil, first of all thank you so much for taking the time to share your thoughts with us today. Here's my first question: Can you start by speaking about what you think happiness is and what cultivates it?

Phil: Thanks to my experience of being around children at Upland Hills School - where being outside for half of a day and playing is a central part of what we do - I have seen how happiness is a byproduct of losing yourself in an activity or an experience. It's not necessarily something you are looking for; it's something that emerges. Having worked with children at the school for forty-eight years, the most beautiful thing I've realized is that happiness emerges when we fall in love with each other or fall in love with the natural world.

Falling in love with each other is the essence of making friends. It's when Victor meets Marty, they're five years old, and they just connect. There's a spark that happens and it never diminishes. It continues to be a part of their relationship. In that magic, happiness happens.

Jeff: So, you see happiness as an emergent property of the love of friendship. Can you say more about the kind of happiness that emerges from friendship? You've been involved with Upland Hills School for over four decades and, in that time, you've seen lots of kids come and go. Not every kid bonds with every other kid, right? So, what is it that makes two kids become instantaneous best friends for life?

Phil: Well, first of all, it's a big mystery,



so I don't really know, but I do think it's related to being able to see each other's soul in a certain unguarded and open way. There is something that happens in those moments of connection that is very magical. It often involves laughter. Two people just really get each other's sense of humor and that creates a bond because finally someone gets you. You say something that everyone thinks is weird, but your friend is laughing hysterically and there's no reason for you to explain a thing. In the school, I've also seen how compassion can be the trigger. Someone gets hurt and someone else comes to help. That kind of compassionate caring for someone else and listening to them is very important.

Jeff: It seems that the root of happiness is love. Upland Hills School is built on what you call a love-based education. When I had the chance to visit the school a few years ago, it was clear to me that there was so much love alive between the children, and the staff. As a visitor there, I experienced tremendous open-heartedness, compassion, joy and happiness. From what you've been saying, it sounds like the happiness and joy are

byproducts of the love, caring and concern. When love is present, there is a natural bubbling up of happiness and joy.

Phil: It's all interwoven. I think of the DNA of love with strands that look like yarn fibers twisted together, and that is how I experience it all. Mutual love creates mutual awareness. That mutual awareness is similar to what the Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh calls the inter-being. Whenever we're together, there's an inter-being connecting us that is energetically alive and we can feel it. It connects us, encircles us, and creates the atmosphere that shapes our interactions and the feeling of being together. It brings a sense of peace and equanimity between us. That mutual awareness is an antidote to the anxiety that we experience so much at this time in our culture.

There was something that happened during your visit that illustrates the power of mutual awareness, and I'll never forget it. You were speaking to me and I was listening intently to every word. All of a sudden, some child put their arms around my stomach from behind me and gently hugged me. It was completely unsolicited. I grabbed the little wrists and had no idea who it was. It was such a beautiful and tender moment. It just arose out of the loving atmosphere of the moment. I can't even talk about it now without feeling the emotion.

When you feel that kind of loving expansiveness, you immediately want to give it away. You just want to pay it forward, as they say. I felt so good, so loved, and so blessed by that little hug that I wanted to hug someone else. That kind of feeling wants to spread itself.

Jeff: Since we're sharing stories, I had a similar encounter with one of the children that I will never forget. I was participating in a game with two teachers and about twenty kids of about five or six years old. There was one little girl who ran over to sit next to me, but there was no room. She looked sad for a moment and she smiled, turned around, and sat on my crossed legs. I felt an explosion of joy and happiness. That kind of innocent, unguarded, open-hearted trust is so beautiful. Maybe happiness is the natural result of relaxing our defensiveness and being open-hearted and vulnerable. Maybe happiness is there before we start protecting ourselves against the world. And when circumstances allow us to relax, happiness inevitably returns.

Phil: The biggest distinction between a love-based school and a fear-based school is that the first priority of a love-based school is to maintain a context of mutual awareness and compassion. We've been trained to think more about content than context. We worry about teaching trigonometry, or calculus, or biology. We're focused on the content. But the context, the environment in which the content is being taught and learned, is what's truly important. Miracles constantly arise if the atmosphere is right and if we, students and teachers alike, are all committed to maintaining that atmosphere. One of the beautiful things about children is that, when they're empowered and loved, they spread that and build a field of open-heartedness. That atmosphere is always there when things are good and when things are bad.

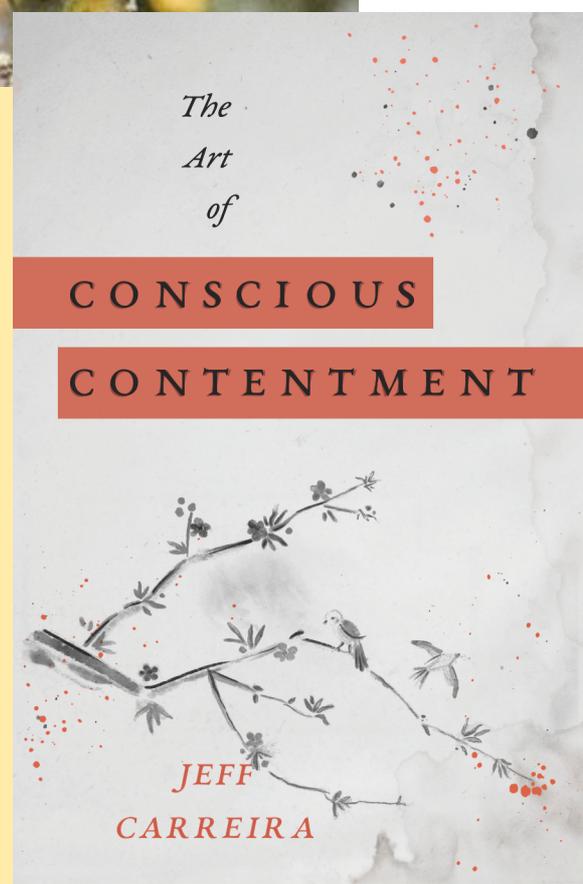
When Jean Houston visited our school, she had told us that she had consulted in over 100 schools in countries all over the world. She addressed our student body and asked the children if they knew that this was an amazing school. They all enthusiastically said yes. But what impressed her the most was that they were enthusiastic without

being out of control. She hadn't seen another group of children who were so uninhibited without anyone taking it over the edge and getting a little too loud or a little too rambunctious. What I would say is that they were able to maintain the context. And the contextual container includes both freedom and boundaries, and everyone is on board with them.

Jeff: The reason Upland Hills generates so much happiness is because everyone is committed to holding an atmosphere of love, and that context includes things like mutual respect and responsibility. That context safeguards the open-heartedness of the atmosphere and keeps it from closing down.

Phil : Exactly. That atmosphere of love and open-heartedness is the source of happiness in Upland Hills School.





BOOK EXCERPT

Becoming Unhookable

A BOOK EXCERPT FROM THE ART OF CONSCIOUS CONTENTMENT

By Jeff Carreira



Introduction: For years I've taught a form of meditation I call The Practice of No Problem. The goal of this meditation is to release our awareness from its compulsive habits of fear, worry and self-concern, and - if we choose - to follow it to profound heights of spiritual freedom and illumination. In my life, this practice has proven to be the key to Lasting contentment. The following excerpt has been taken from my new book *The Art of Conscious Contentment* and, in it, I share the most important happiness skill I know of... the ability to become unhookable.

The Practice of No Problem can be taught to anyone in about ten seconds. The instructions are simply to sit and not make a problem out of anything that happens. Period. That's it. That's all the instruction you need.

It is literally as simple as that. Once the meditation begins, you simply don't make a problem out of anything that happens. And then, just to make absolutely certain you don't end up with a problem, once the meditation is over, you conclude that nothing went wrong and forget about whatever happened during your practice. That's it.

Go ahead and try it for five seconds or so. You'll find that it's so easy to have no problem for a few seconds, but to have no problem for an hour can seem almost impossible. What's the difference? What happens over the course of an hour that makes us increasingly certain that something is wrong?

What happens is that you get hooked on nagging thoughts that keep tempting you to think you've got a problem, and eventually you become convinced that something is wrong. The only thing that makes this meditation difficult is that we think meditation should feel a certain way, and unless we feel that way, we assume something is wrong. As long as you believe that your experience in meditation should be one way and not another, you'll keep getting caught in beliefs about something being wrong.

Meditation done in the form presented in this book can help diminish our anxiety and existential confusion and, at the same time, increase our focus, sense of peace and well-being. The reason this meditation can have such a positive effect on us is because so many of our troubles are caused by the cultural habit of assuming that something is wrong.

We've been trained to believe that something is either already wrong or will go wrong soon, and so, we've learned to protect ourselves by staying on guard most of the time. The result is that we have adopted an inner posture toward life that is a little pulled back, relentlessly defensive, and always busy scrutinizing things to make sure they're safe. We end up feeling suffocated in a straightjacket made up of our fears and concerns, and we want to be free.

You can learn how to break the habit of assuming something is wrong so you can live a more open, easy, free and spontaneous life. Even more importantly, you might discover that life works out much better that way.

Your journey to inner freedom won't be easy because, as soon as you start to let go of the assumption that something is wrong, a part of you will start to argue

that it is. And the arguments will sound very convincing. As that voice keeps arguing with you, you will be more and more tempted to concede and give up, but don't. The miracle will come if you persevere. My first piece of advice to you is: don't quit before the miracle happens.

Like almost everyone else who starts to meditate, I used to think that meditation would quiet my mind and make my nagging thoughts go away. After meditating for about twelve years, anywhere from one to eight hours a day with periodic long retreats, I finally realized that my mind wasn't changing. It was just as neurotic as it ever was. And it dawned on me that maybe it was never going to change. I started to get depressed thinking that all that practice had been a waste of time. But then a miracle happened - I realized that even if my mind never stops, I don't have to listen to it.

The first miracle of meditation is the realization that your mental habits don't have to go away in order for you to be free of them. As soon as you learn to stop paying attention to your mind, you will realize that you were never anxious, worried or self-concerned. Your mind is all of those things from time to time, and if you keep listening to it, you'll think that's you, but the truth is you are not your mind.

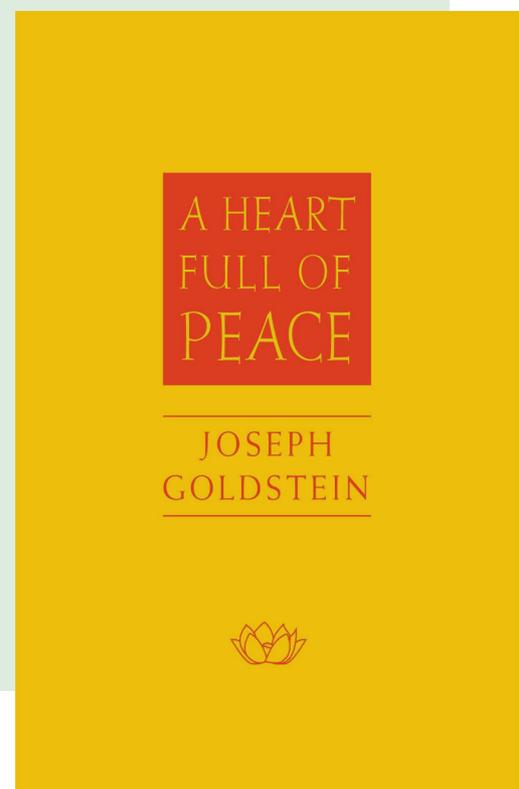
The bottom line is that we're incredibly reactive to our minds and, in meditation, we get to see how our minds keep hooking us over and over again. They try to hook us one way then another, always wanting us to worry about something. If we don't take the bait, they just try another

approach until we do.

The normal cycle of meditation goes something like this: You start out determined not to make a problem out of anything. Then you get caught on something. Then you free yourself, then you get caught again. And so on, and so on. The goal is to keep going until you are free of all mental reactivity - not because mental activity has stopped, but because you can't get hooked anymore.

In meditation, you learn to be unhookable. That means that no matter what your mind is doing, you are open, easy and free. What you will discover though, as soon as you start the practice, is that the temptation to get hooked is hard to resist. You're going to get hooked by your mind over and over and over again, but that doesn't matter because meditation is not about being unhooked, it's about being unhookable, and those are two different things. When you no longer get hooked by getting hooked, you'll be unhookable.

The most important thing you need to understand about meditation is that it's all about becoming unhookable and that means being OK even when you get hooked. That's the secret.



BOOK REVIEW

A Warm Heart and a Deep Practice

JOSEPH GOLDSTEIN'S A HEART FULL OF PEACE

by Amy Edelstein



Joseph Goldstein's *A Heart Full of Peace* is a little book. Slight in size, welcoming, simple. Much like the author. Though Joseph towers tall, he is thin as a rail, gentle, and unassuming with eyes that burn black and bright like a rabbi emerging from a night of intensive prayer. Yet Goldstein preaches not the bible but the Dhammapada, the Pali Canon, mixed with aphorism and quotes from a unique blend of traditions, from the poet Izumi to the novelist Marcel Proust. His dhamma, or message, is at once traditional and utterly contemporary. Contemporary not because it has specifically been updated, but rather because it comes from his own practice, from that which he has

observed and seen, as he questioned and penetrated the workings of his own mind. If 10,000 hours is meant to be the marker of an accomplished practitioner, Joseph has reached and passed that many times over with his meditation. At seventy-five, he still sits his own retreats, still learns more about the most fundamental tenets of the rising and passing away of desire, and is, in all humility, still willing to see his own conditioned biases as evidenced by some of the seminal work he and others at Insight Meditation Society (IMS) - the center he co-founded with Sharon Salzberg in 1976 - have done around race and privilege over the last ten years.

When I first met Joseph it was in 1985. I had arrived at IMS in the flush of autumn, to sit the three-month retreat together, in silence, with one hundred other meditators. Some were highly experienced; next to me sat a world-famous social activist. Others, like myself, were in their twenties, wet behind the ears but with a curiosity and thirst to find out what was real, what was true, what was the deeper purpose of life. Joseph was a knowledgeable and steady guide. Continually turning my attention to that which was most immediate and able to be discerned with focus and patience, he taught me to cultivate insight through the *Vipassana*

practice of mindfulness as he had learned it. Noting and labeling thoughts, sensations, and feelings as they arose and passed away. To my young and inquisitive mind, I found the repetition hard, "when bliss arises, note that bliss has arisen. When it passes away, note that it has passed away. When anger arises, note that anger arises. When it passes away, note that it has passed away." I followed the instructions, the same ones that gave Joseph such penetrating clarity about the nature of desire that he discusses in this book.

That retreat was some thirty-four years ago. Many thoughts have arisen and passed away since. Joseph has given many more dharma talks some, like this one, re-written to reach practitioners outside of the retreat context. I picked up *A Heart Full of Peace* just a couple weeks ago, after seeing Joseph speak at Jefferson University in Philadelphia. It was a packed lecture hall, standing room only in the middle of the city, and yet for me, it stirred to life the felt sense of those deeply quiet and still evenings on retreat at IMS in Barre, Massachusetts. Now was also a very different time. I felt the ripening of my twenty-four

year-old self, the decades of deep practice and retreat. I felt Joseph's familiar clear insight, his direct experience, and his warm and easy humility. Similarly to all those years ago, he still spoke from his living practice, shared stories about unmasking the tricks of his own mind, all the while transmitting the lightness of being that comes from decades of personal application of the very techniques he shares.

After his talk, I had the chance to share my respects after so long. Laughter, camaraderie, and intimacy passed between us, like an electric current through water, that connection that arises pre-thought between long time meditators who share what it is to live a life that is in the world and also not of it. It was an honor to see my mentor again; a feeling of pride welled-up at his sustained contemplation and love of the wisdom that has come from it. As I walked through the lobby, I stopped and picked up all the books I didn't yet have. My library shelves are filled with words of spiritual friends, *kalyana mitra*, that offer their companionship on this also solitary meditative path.

This beautiful designed book, *A Heart Full of Peace* was taken from one of Josephs' many talks, given

in 1993 at Harvard Divinity School, revised, and the new edition published by Wisdom Publications in 2007. Unlike many contemporary books about meditative peace and loving kindness, Joseph's book does not aim to be secular. It does not aim to be Buddhist either. It is true to the long tradition from which Joseph draws many of his insights, and the references to parables and passages from twenty-six-hundred-year-old texts give it roots and authenticity. It is true to the Buddha's practice and teaching of *ehipassiko*: to find out for yourself if any particular method is true and works.

It contains two sections: *A Heart Full of Peace* and *The Practice of Freedom*. The first section of the book lays out the basic practice of *metta* or lovingkindness, sharing with candor insights on how our minds work, and how to cultivate compassion in very difficult situations. Joseph described how he worked with his own feelings during that time of particularly inflamed strife in the Middle East. "I find my *metta* practice including all in this wish: 'May you be free of hatred, may you be free of enmity.'" Cultivating a peaceful heart is not an action turned

outward. “The practice of compassion means letting experience in,” writes Joseph. “When we can open to all parts of ourselves and to others in the world, something quite extraordinary happens.”

Joseph’s freedom comes from seeing, observing, knowing, and training. Training the mind and training the heart. The second part of the book about the training for *sila* or moral conduct in body, speech, and mind is equally simple and profound. One gains peace of heart through reflection on love and generosity of spirit. That love stays non-personal and unbounded through: the penetration into the nature of consciousness, interconnectedness, and abiding in freedom from grasping after that which comes and goes.

He teaches the path he has walked. “The training in meditation will only happen through your own effort. No one can do it for you. There are many techniques and traditions, and you can find the one most suitable for you. But regularity of practice is what effects a transformation.”

A Heart Full of Peace gives you all you need to make that profound,

fulfilling, and life-altering transformation if, like Joseph Goldstein, you put it into practice. I can’t imagine a warmer or more authentic invitation to do so.





MEMBERS'

Contributions

The Artist of Possibility includes contributions from members of **The Mystery School**, an online community of inspired individuals dedicated to spiritual transformation and mutual evolution.

If you'd like to become a member, join here!





Applause

By Jeff Sullivan

Applause

So many wait for some outer acknowledgement to finally say their piece...

Why wait?

Here and now. Let us,

You and I,

Begin to share the richness of this miracled life and never dare stop.

Even if you might find yourself seemingly alone.

Don't believe for one tempting second

That you're in need of the applause and acclaim

Of anyone to speak the longing and love

That's in your heart.

After all,

Isn't the universe kissing your feet?

Daily as you walk, reminding you you're alive,

Already applause enough?



Flying Home

By Peaslee DuMont

A short poem called "Flying Home," beginning with the first word "Breakthrough!" This poem describes taking off in an airplane through thick fog, and suddenly rising above the clouds into bright sunshine looking over the same clouds that were the fog, from a different point of view.

"Don't believe everything you think" seems to me a bumper-sticker version of mindfulness practice and a key to living in flow and creativity. The poem uses an experience of breaking through fog to embody an immediacy of Life, less filtered through thought and more experienced as "every shining pine needle."

Flying Home

Break through! The plane rises above the clouds,
and what was gray mist all around becomes a flash of light,
a sea of white corrugated clouds we rise above till they stretch endlessly
like some great snowfield far below, luminous in brilliant sun.

How much our lives
are passed under a gray blanket of thought,
while sun or stars are so pervasive, so nearby
if only we could rise above the clouds to see the shining light in every tree, in
every blade of grass
in every one of us resplendent, darkened
Human beings.



In Love

By Adriana Colotti Cornel

In Love

Awake, Aware, Conscious

I AM Awareness

Always have been, am and will be

I AM Content

I call it to be a Bridge of Light

I see all of us as Bridges of Light, indeed!

So...we are from the stars and from the earth

A unique expression of awareness

The Infinite Field

Manifesting our uniqueness

The lake, the ocean, the air we breathe;

The concentric circles of the pebble falling into the lake,

The waves of the surface of the ocean

The rainbow is per excellence the bridge of light

It has all the shades of light that colour the arc of its ephemeral existence

Appears from nowhere ends nowhere though we can see a trajectory

Shades of light

Uniqueness in the sky

We interact like that and build more bridges between us

It is a colourful symphony we play

Everyone plays its note in a unique way

Shining the light of awareness

It is the same light for all, the Source

The softness of my awareness is translucent

It warms me up in the contentment of being alive

As the miracle I was waiting for

It is a wonderful mystery contemplating itself

Another bridge of light from the Infinite to the Finite ecstasy of this moment

So intimate and yet eternal

How can I not be In Love with awareness?

It is all there is.



Living a Life Without Regrets and Finding Joy in the Unknown

By Iris Turney

Jeff has recently written about a life without regrets as well as the "fear of the unknown" which often stops us from changing. It brought back a memory for me, from a time when I found there can also be a certain joy in the unknown.

In 1996, I was fortunate enough to be included in some of Carlos Castaneda's "secret" classes. A group of us would be invited to meet at a rented dance studio in West Los Angeles on a Saturday or Sunday, and gather around him as he pointed things out to us and made suggestions for experiments we could try. One day I found myself in the front row, just a few feet away from him. He was very short and lean, standing just under 5 feet tall, and was casually dressed. One would probably not even notice him on the street, except perhaps that he seemed pretty fit and had a lot of vitality for someone his age. He usually came in with a big smile and would joke around in the beginning, and then get around to pointing out things about the human condition in ways that sometimes seemed exaggerated, sometimes comical, sometimes tragic, and often all of those together. As he stood there, he started twirling his finger in the air. After a few seconds of this, he said (paraphrasing), "This is how we are, we are just going in circles! If you really examine your life, you will find endless repetition. Your life is a set of routines and habits which you repeat year (twirl) after year (twirl) after year (twirl)." With a bit of seriousness he continued,

"There is a comfortable predictability, because you already know what will happen if you stay on the path you are on. But there is another way; you can change your mind at any time and do something different. And I can point out the way, but I can't tell you what will happen because I don't know! The thing is, we have endless possibilities. We are unknown to ourselves, and we have latent abilities that we are not even aware of. You can decide to step out of your habits and routines, and see where it leads. But don't just take my word for it, try the experiment and find out for yourself!"

This was a pivotal turning point in my life, as it struck a chord deep within me. I had to agree with him because it was true! My life was a set of routines and habits, and year after year was pretty much the same. At that time, I was living the "American Dream" in the suburbs. I had the husband, the house with a mortgage, and the corporate job. My in-laws had a lot of traditional expectations from me which I found annoying. I felt I was leading a kind of 'secret life' as a closet meditator, and interested in all kinds of spiritual things that I couldn't even talk about. I realized that every year was pretty much the same and would continue to be that way as long as I continued doing the same thing.

I decided I was ready to move on. I moved to Los Angeles to be with a community of like-minded people, and I've never for a moment looked back or regretted it. My friends and family thought I had lost my mind. In this new life, as I was following the practices recommended, I found more magical things began to happen. And at some point, I began to believe that it's not that they just started to happen, I believe they happen all the time for us if we just are paying attention and have enough energy and awareness to see it.

Throughout his teachings, Carlos Castaneda would often tell us we had to first and foremost break our habits and routines. We even had certain practices and movements called "not doings" to help us with this. He would explain that our routines and habits keep our perception and views fixed and rigid, so nothing new can come in. Breaking habits and routines result in more fluidity in our lives, which is necessary for gaining the awareness and energy needed for perceiving our reality in new ways. As we tried out different ways of being, we learned that our so-called identity was indeed very flimsy and almost arbitrary if we examined it close enough. We played with different identities, and tried new names and behaviors. The community I was in was having quite a lot of fun with this and the other practices,

and it definitely was helping us find new possibilities. Synchronicities became more commonplace, as were unusual events. Dreaming aware (also known as lucid dreaming) was also happening with more frequency. With the practices, our awareness and energy were definitely expanding! It wasn't always comfortable, but it certainly was a magical world filled with more awe and mystery.

I hadn't thought about this for a while until recently at Jeff's last summer workshop, where we did the exercise of taking another name and identity, and optionally a foreign accent. Not only is this an extremely fun thing to experiment with, but I found knowledge I wasn't aware I had coming out of my mouth through this different identity. I believe it is true that we are unknown to ourselves, and we really do have latent talents and abilities that we are not even aware of. We are a mystery, and the world is a mystery. Our possibilities are truly endless, and we can change at any time. We can pull unknown things out of the field around us when we're fluid and open, and not attached to things being a particular way. So I would invite you to try it out and see what happens for the pure fun of it!



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