

WAKE UP MOM! DAD! WAKE UP!

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By Janet O'Donoghue

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*This book is for Jason, Tiffany and Vicky, and Mike and Lettie O'Donoghue –
the best teachers a soul could ask for*

Have you ever wondered why babies are so adorable? Or for that matter why they cry so effectively, able to jolt a mother from a deep sleep with a whimper? Well, perhaps it is so, because we humans are actually deeply asleep.

I mean, can you imagine what it would be like if babies were just neutral? Blank slates with no appeal. They wouldn't last long. Or, on the other hand, if it were simply sufficient that they were exactly as they naturally are, gurgling, cooing bundles of joy *all* the time?

I can just see it. Mom is totally entranced by this fascinating being, and then after a perfectly beautiful bonding session, there are 'things to do'. So, Mom goes off into her habitual distraction with all those essential tasks. Like cleaning toilets because Grandma is coming to visit (they must be *spotless*), shopping for three pairs of new shoes, checking e-mail, running the family business, whatever.

Although she is fully aware that baby needs to be fed every three or four hours to sustain life, she has forgotten to set the reminder on her cell phone. Eight or twelve hours fly by in typical fashion when suddenly, in the middle of choosing which sauce will go best with the pasta for supper, she is hit by a lightning bolt of awareness.

F____avourite swearword! When last did she feed the baby? *Damn* that bloody cell phone alarm! It didn't go off *again*! She races off to baby's room, where she finds junior happily gurgling into his pillow while he starves. Of course, there's no need to feel guilty cause he's such a happy little chap, and no lesson is learned.

No. The truth is, babies have to be enchanting, and also be able to wail effectively, because their very survival depends on it. Because we no longer carry them next to our bodies to sustain bonding, and for convenient feeding. We put them in cribs, and give them ridiculously expensive plastic toys to look at, instead of our faces.

Did you know babies are genetically hard wired to be attracted to the sight of the human face? Even newborns, barely weeks old will try to copy your facial expressions if you allow yourself to express to them. Babies have to be awake, because they are born to a person who walks around in a state of semi-consciousness.

And that's if they're one of the lucky ones.

Think of the ones born to those who are deeply unconscious - same energy - just exaggerated. The truth is, babies *have* to start waking us up from the moment they are born, or else they would simply not survive. And any men who are nodding their heads in self-righteous agreement - well, have you ever wondered why women have the babies?

Shocked? Fantastic! The thing is we don't even know we are asleep until someone or something shocks us into awareness – rather read this than an accident, illness or some other tragedy. The truth *will* set you free, only first it will usually piss you off! Feel the hackles rise? Read on.

Maybe that's what makes parenting, in my opinion, the most challenging and transformative process available to any human being - and most people just "fall" pregnant. We do not require a certificate or a qualification; we are pre-eminently successful at producing babies. There isn't even a good *manual* available.

Sure, there are some people who have had some ideas and even written them down, affecting *millions* of people with their ideas. Dr. Spock had a marked effect on the upbringing of a *whole generation*. Well, I don't know how well his ideas worked - I don't even know if he was a parent himself!

Never mind what the 'holy books' have to say about parenting. "Spare the rod and spoil the child". What does that mean? And who wrote that? Some person who proclaimed he was writing on behalf of an "ever loving God".

Very loving act that, beating a child with a rod/stick/hand - and I *know* how that feels from both ends of the stick. Simply disgusting.

The truth is, there isn't a single person who can tell you how to raise your child.

Any effective parent of multiple children will tell you that each one is completely unique and responds to different "methods" of parenting. This is the beauty as well as the challenge of parenting. The other scary one, is the day a parent realises "Oh God! I sound just like my mother/father."

That one usually takes the wind out of our sails, even if we're only slightly aware, because we know from *personal experience* what didn't work with us as kids! Yet here we find ourselves doing the very same thing! And it's strangely compulsive.

This actually, is the true wake up call. This is the moment of opportunity to realise that we can choose to be **reactive** parents or **creative** parents. This is the **MOST IMPORTANT CHOICE** you will ever make as a parent.

Choose to be a conscious parent.

"Children who live with criticism learn to condemn.

Children who live with hostility learn to fight.

Children who live with ridicule learn to be shy.

Children who live with shame learn to feel guilty.

Children who live with tolerance learn to be patient.

Children who live in encouragement learn to be confident.

Children who live in praise learn to appreciate.

Children who live with fairness learn justice.

Children who live with security learn to have faith.

Children who live with approval learn to love themselves.

Children who live with acceptance and friendliness, learn to find love in the world."

Author Unknown

I never, ever intended to marry or have children, so it came as a huge life shock when I "fell" pregnant at 25. I made the decision to leave a toxic relationship because of the pregnancy, and made a go of it on my own. What an experience!

Strangely, I absolutely LOVED being pregnant and particularly enjoyed the freedom of doing it alone. I, the most undomesticated woman on the planet, even learned to knit, and got totally creative with it.

In those days 'unwed' mothers were uncommon, or rather, rare (some people considered us pretty 'common'), So I expected a certain amount of prejudice. I was wrong.

There were outpourings of support, mostly from older women who totally loved the idea of not making the mistake of marrying simply because of the pregnancy.

I had no idea what to expect in terms of when the little critter actually arrived - you can read all you like, and I read a lot! The experience is unique. When he did arrive, what happened was beyond my imagination. This was an experience of love in its purest form to date. I realised immediately I held him that *in no way* was this 'my' child.

Here was a tiny, perfect human being on loan to me from some other place too grand for my mind to even contemplate. I realised that loving him was going to be a continual process of letting go, from that moment on.

So, I chose to be a conscious parent right there and then. I have made myriad mistakes, gross ones and minor ones, some in between. I have also made huge strides in awareness, and have put into practice what I have learned. It all started with that decision. My (not!) children have been my awakeners, they have brought that which I am/express into the world, alive and more fully into being.

One thing I can guarantee from experience is that you will not get it 100% right - you will make mistakes. And that's okay, because when you make sure you are aware, and awakening, then you and your child will both benefit most effectively from the lessons learned. This is how change is effected across the generations. This is how the evolution (or devolution) of the human race takes place. Depending on what we choose.

This is how we can create a world that works for everyone, everywhere. Or a path of destruction which defies any and all common sense.

They say that the definition of insanity is not bashing your head against a brick wall repeatedly, it's expecting a different outcome each time you do it. Well, the human race is pretty much breaking down the wall with all the head bashing - we just don't seem to learn! And yet, thankfully, every now and then, we do.

This 'asleepness' is pretty much a function of us having given our minds away long, long ago.

Even today, in the so-called high technological age of 'freedom' (oh yeah right!), we are so entranced with the idea of "the box", that we even have a concept called thinking "out of the box". I don't know about you, but I have NEVER seen any box like object surrounding me or anyone else. The box doesn't exist, people.

I do know that in my naiveté, I have given myself away countless times to someone I considered more qualified, better, more motherly, more whatever than I, because of a simple lack of self esteem. My daughter Tiffany was the best example of this in two ways.

I was about five weeks pregnant for the second time, when I had a persistent bladder infection due to what turned out to be gestational diabetes. One morning I woke up in absolute agony. I couldn't even stand straight.

I persuaded my husband to take me to the emergency room. After a couple of hours of waiting a young female doctor asked me a few questions. Being reasonably health and body conscious, I explained to her that I had had a persistent bladder infection, and that I was pregnant, although it would probably not yet show on urine tests. She asked me if I had done any exercise which could have resulted in a pulled muscle. I replied definitely "No. None at all".

She ordered a urine test and disappeared. The next thing I knew, a nurse walked in with an injection, told me to roll over, and expose the old gluteus maximus. Before complying, I asked her what was in the syringe, and discovered that the good doctor had ordered a shot of a muscle relaxant, which I *knew* was not kosher for pregnant women.

My objections were pretty much shot down, excuse the pun, so I slapped the syringe out of her hand, and ran from the hospital, jeans somewhere down around my hips and trailing goods from my purse, even the actual purse. My husband of the time followed behind - embarrassed beyond measure - picking up bits and bobs, and apologising for my insanity.

The next day, I went to my own Doctor (note the capital), who discovered a major kidney infection which, if left untreated would have resulted in a miscarriage. Furthermore, he confirmed that the injection I refused was likely to have caused birth defects.

You can be sure that I had a lot to say to that hospital administration, particularly on behalf of their less knowledgeable patients, and action was taken. Horrified doesn't even come close to the feeling. I never did manage to convince my husband I was sane, but that's another whole story.

The second incident was the other side of the coin. When Tiffany was three, she had a childhood fever. It was not bad enough to put off a family visit, but peaked dramatically and suddenly, resulting in convulsions which occurred at the doctors' rooms. She was sent off with her father in an ambulance to hospital.

When I arrived, she had a painful drip already set up, and there were lengthy consultations with a specialist regarding a lumbar puncture to test for viral meningitis. This involved inserting a (THICK) needle between two vertebrae to extract spinal fluid - an extremely painful procedure. I enquired at length, and discovered that no anaesthetic could be administered during the procedure – the experts couldn't/wouldn't tell me why. They "reassured" me that she would be given a strong drug which would erase the memory of the pain.

Every cell in my body screamed "No! No! No!" I could not seem to get them to understand (husband included) that whether she remembered or not, she would still *feel* the pain of the procedure. After major resistance, the ace-up-the-sleeve came out. If I didn't have the test, and my daughter died from Meningitis (within 24 hours I was told - there was no waiting for this), it would be my fault. Oh me of little faith.....I conceded against all intuition and agreed to the procedure.

It was truly heartbreaking to watch the drug take effect, and see that beautiful little girl obviously hallucinating. I am ashamed to say, cowardice took over when we (three adults) were told to hold her down, to stop her from moving against the pain. I bolted and stood just outside the door. I will *never, ever* forget the long, plaintive moan-scream which followed. If any of the Gestapo had feelings of remorse, then I can imagine how they felt. I could only scream silently with her and weep waves.

After the fact, she indeed had no conscious memory of the pain (small bloody compensation). Just the painful drip. And they could not pry me from her side. That evening, I noticed a lumpy rash on her skin. I called the night matron and showed her, pointing out that it looked very like chicken pox to me.

"No, no (what do you know?)," says Matron, "It must be a viral rash." Well, hell-o!! What *is* chicken pox, but a childhood *virus*? It took another twelve hours of painful antibiotic drip feeding every couple of hours, before the specialist could see her.

By then she was covered in - oh yes - chicken pox. To his credit, the 'speshilist' doctor (I am sure he was really very good if too gung-ho for my liking) just sat and stared at her silently for at least twenty minutes. Flabbergasted was the word that came to my mind.

I can only pray that he undertook a REAL reconsideration of the words "necessary procedure". I don't know if I have ever forgiven myself for that decision, yet I started to give MUCH more consideration to my intuition and common sense in the face of authority...and/or expertise.

I can think of other circumstances too when I have taken the "loose canon" route in hospital. Like when my son had a tonsillectomy with grommets implanted at the same time, which took over two hours instead of the usual twenty minutes. I found the surgery on my own, and had just burst through the doors in a state of near panic, when I heard him (5 yrs old) shout "You don't have to HIT me!".

I still don't know what that was about, and didn't hang around to find out. The hospital discharged him with a bottle of Panado, a mild analgesic. By the next morning he could barely speak he was in such pain. A quick trip to my Doctor (angel) - against mutterings of the "cowboys don't cry" type from his stepfather - revealed a butchering of ridiculous proportions considering the simplicity of the procedure. They had bruised his eardrums! Doctor (angel) was horrified and prescribed a much stronger pain relief.

To boot, I heard days later that several patients had *died* on the operating table from badly administered anaesthetics at that particular hospital, over that period of time. No wonder I have wrinkles. I have also had positive experiences in hospital and am not knocking all medical practitioners. Just, when it comes to our loved ones, especially those too small to speak for themselves, it's the parent who has to find the courage, chutzpah, call it what you will, to speak up on their behalf when our GUT FEELING is undeniably clear.

It is *guaranteed* that your child will wake you up to some degree, even at the cost of his/her own life. You might as well choose it now, and complete the process with some degree of ease and grace. Let's have some F.U.N. (Fundamental Universal Nature) along the way, for Heaven's sake.

But how, you say?

Start now.

STATE YOUR INTENTION right now i.e.

"To become aware of how I am as a parent, acknowledging that I don't know since I am the parent; to feel this fully and allow the feeling to motivate adjustment where necessary, and do what works."

And act from that intention. And act from that intention. And act from that intention...

Then, DEVELOP A TASTE FOR HUMBLE PIE - taken best with cream cheese and a sprinkling of nuts.

Read a little book called "Who Moved My Cheese".

Enrol on and complete an awakening experience like The Human Touch (now thePoint).

Develop the ability to LISTEN, which absolutely requires the most difficult activity for many parents, that of remaining SILENT for extended periods of time.

You're already 100% committed. Face it - it is impossible to send them back. The cost of this commitment is measured in the amount of ATTENTION you are prepared to pay - I prefer to think of it as give.

The miracles you will see will depend on the QUALITY of attention given.

Developing the practice of BREATHING CONSCIOUSLY is essential.

Cancel the gym contract, this is more important - and you'll be doing a *lot* of it. You may want to train your children early on to support you in this by reminding you to "BREATHE" on occasion. Remember, they can see and feel what's coming as they are already alert and awake to your sleep. Don't worry about teaching them to breathe, they are already naturally Olympian breathers. We generally dampen this talent as they grow.

If necessary, they'll learn by your example, as with *everything else they learn*.

I repeat, THEY LEARN BY YOUR EXAMPLE.

This truth will shock you many times, and in your unconsciousness you will want to lie about this to yourself and others. "That's your daughter!"; "Where did he get that from?" Sound familiar? I confess, my children had to learn to swear 'appropriately', since there was *no way* they could be in a vehicle with me, and not become aware of some choice words which they initially related to road-hogs.

That will bring you what will seem to be the most difficult bit : TRUTH TELLING and, requiring even more, TRUTH HEARING.

Once you have chosen to come to terms with these challenges and start to PRACTICE them consciously, you will start learning to

BE CONSISTENT WITH YOUR WORD.

This is possibly the most fundamentally effective parenting (and life) skill. And trust me, it is a skill to be developed. If you think you are already consistent with your word, then just listen to yourself interact with your children for a week or so. Consistency in word and boundaries develops a basic trust in life within the child's psyche, so start straight away! Even when they are so small you assume they can't catch you out on it, practice, and just see how wide awake they are.

Come into *deep and real* relationship with how consistent you are with your word. When you 'fail', be gentle. Count to ten and choose again! Judgement is a waste of energy and will just re-enforce what hasn't worked. Simply notice, and choose differently. Humble pie is a wonderful pick-me-up here.

Changing your mind is not a 'woman's prerogative'. It is a totally necessary skill in parenting. It's *what* you change your mind about that matters. If you find yourself breaking a promise, dismissing little Jenny's scribble as a scribble instead of the incredible creation and gift for you it truly is, then change your mind.

There will be times when you feel like throwing in the towel:

RE-COMMIT TO THE PROCESS.

No-one can tell you *how* to engage these simple tools, and you don't need to be told. All of the above came completely naturally to you once. You have simply forgotten. It can be quite intimidating to re-engage your true nature – that depends on you. It can be a wonderful and liberating journey of discovery. A support system can be of use here, one that will not seek to provide you with the answers, but will encourage you to rediscover those aspects of yourself.

I am in the process of establishing various support mechanisms to 'hold the space' for parents and am available to be contacted by those who are willing to engage this process.

Visit **WAKE UP MOM! DAD, WAKE UP!** on Facebook.

Giving Up

I have done a lot of giving up in my life. I am so well acquainted with the 'point of resignation' as to be astonished that I still do it. In the development of the psyche of a child in the modern way of living, there comes a point when the child decides he/she simply can't win. This is the *point of resignation*, and "I can't win" can become a fundamental bit of self talk which colours all our creations from that point on. It is one of the basic decisions of the mind which if not overcome as a part of the natural maturation process, leaves a person feeling (and thus talking and acting) powerless.

In ancient societies where co-operative community still formed the basis of living, and people were self sufficient and still very much attuned to the rhythms of nature, there was very little neurosis and/or sociopathic behaviour. Children were nurtured by the whole community, and also taught to be responsible contributors to the whole from a very early age.

There were valuable rites of passage to mark the phases of maturity. Children were guided through these phases by the whole community, under the watchful eyes of caring elders. Their development was celebrated with sacred ritual which was still pure and not diluted with dogma. They were empowered and celebrated as individuals who formed the whole, and were thus imbued with a sense of self respect and self worth.

Our rituals are a sad parody. We throw a 21st birthday party at which the idea is to see how drunk we can make the celebrant. Not even considering that we are robbing them, not only of the conscious experience of being celebrated, but even the *memory* of that celebration if they get drunk enough.

Just ask yourself – is it possible that this is true?

We spend fortunes on a wedding to celebrate a marriage which has very little chance of lasting beyond a few years, since the newly married couple can count on very little real community support in the experience. We have forgotten the purpose of these rituals and so they have become ineffective (and expensive) tokens.

Giving up. It has *never* felt marvellous, grand, beautiful, fantastic, enlivening. It has *always* felt awful. The only thing I haven't given up (yet) is smoking. And that is hardly rewarding. I have to acknowledge that it is amazing to me that I have enjoyed life as much as I have, and have recovered from all that giving up so often.

Every time, I pick myself up (sometimes from deep pain and even depression) and have another go. This is an aspect of conditioning and human nature which I am sure applies to all of us in varying degrees. It is an expression of faith in Life, God, Love. Sometimes, we may feel we just cannot do it again and choose death by suicide – the ultimate expression of free will.

I have faced the possibility of suicide myself a few times – something (maybe even fear) always keeping me from that final act of resignation. Once, the fear of living was so much greater than the fear of dying, that I was calmly contemplating just 'ending my story'. Only I couldn't bear the thought of leaving my young children behind. Who would love them the way I did?

I even sat and contemplated taking them with me; something I had held strong judgement on until I was standing in those shoes. I felt the pain of someone faced with these decisions. Compassion opened gently around me as I wept for everyone who had ever felt this way – hopelessly afraid.

In that moment I felt myself literally held in some completely compassionate presence. There was only complete acceptance and an awareness that forgiveness is. And in that moment, I surrendered completely

to Presence, choosing at a level way beyond thinking, to *give in* to life, instead of giving up. To hand over to a higher power (give up) and faith was re-ignited.

In that space of vulnerability I felt Presence, and felt utterly assured that no matter what, I was held in compassionate acceptance, and loved beyond my thoughts and imagination.

Of course, this did not mean that suddenly everything was okay in my world. I still had to face the nightmare my life had become. I still had to handle what seemed too big for me to handle. I still had to step into a future I found terrifying. I just felt at some deep level, that I was actually equipped to do it, and that the Presence I had felt had *faith in me!*

Even at the point I had been completely faithless.

I was in some way reborn, and each step I took from that point on became a new journey. One of giving in to life, one of immense satisfaction, one in which I have the eyes to see and the ears to hear Presence beckon me to know love again, differently, every step of the way. One continuous exploration and realisation of myself as a compassionate being.

This was an awakening. From this point on in my life, whenever I have been willing to just look and see, listen and hear, I have been led into a deeper and broader experience of love.

Beloving. Beloved.

SURRENDER

Standing at the edge of the lake of dreams
I gaze down into the still clear waters
And see no reflection

Kneeling at the shrine, head bowed
I feel my heart break by the light
Of the flickering candle

I am what I am
I have chosen it so

The yearning to be and remain what I am
Runs in rivulets down my cheeks
As I surrender
To what needs to be done now
In the life that is

Letting go of what I want it to be

What's The Point?

Here is an excerpt from David Elkind, *The Hurried Child*:

"The child is constantly confronted with the nagging question: "What are you going to be?" Courageous would be the youngster who could look the adult squarely in the face and say, "I'm not going to be anything; I already am."

We adults would be shocked by such an insolent remark, for we have forgotten, if indeed we ever knew, that a child is an active, participating, contributing member of society from birth. Childhood isn't a time when he is moulded into a human who will then live life; he is a human who is living life.

No child will miss the zest and joy of living unless these are denied him by adults who have convinced themselves that childhood is a period of preparation."

Just imagine the generation such thinking can produce! Just imagine the effect of parents choosing to release their own baggage and consciously celebrating their children. Well, it starts now. With you and I.

This is how we can transform the world into one that works for everyone, everywhere, one step, one person at a time. This is how we can create children that are inheritable to our Earth. By letting them be! And in so doing, we will create a world inheritable to our children.

WAKE UP MOM! DAD, WAKE UP!

I can almost feel a sweat breaking out here.

No worries! You are already perfectly supported in this process. You can see and feel this support work in your life by simply joining the transformation game.

Do this via whichever vehicle works - usually one that chooses you rather than the other way around. I can highly recommend an experience called "The Human Touch" by Stephen Norval (nothing to do with parenting, and everything to do with awakening - this work is now evolving as the truePoint series). There are many, many other vehicles which will equip you with the tools to **awaken**, and so realise your true potential as a conscious parent.

There will be pain to meet, of course there will be - tissues and band aids are freely available. And the joy on the other side of that pain is beyond anything you can recall or imagine. Join the thousands who are consciously (and even unconsciously) creating a world that is inheritable to our children. We must ask ourselves every, single day :

What is the legacy we are leaving? What are we leaving for Earth's children to deal with? Look at, see, the world we live in and ask yourself, "What actually matters?"

You can be assured your children will respond with gusto in any 'button pushing' required to speed up the transformation process. They come with a button pushing *guarantee*, hard wired to your particular buttons.

They will not rest on their laurels at 20 or 30%. They'll prod you and poke you, and love you and forgive you, until you are firmly on your way to putting your money where your mouth is in bringing your life into a state of profound integrity. So allow them to.

There is no effort or challenge or burden for them in this. They are simply being themselves, and acting from their instinctual wildish and free nature, to the extent that they have been allowed to retain access to that nature.

They were born awake - we the parents generally put them to sleep over years and years of our projections, neuroses, ineffective parenting etc.

At least that is true in my experience.

The Human Touch and the work I have done within The Human Touch network since, have been an amazing support in this journey of awakening which I am sure will never end. There is so much to learn and experience and play with.

Before I engaged this journey consciously, my favourite self-talk litany was "I can't do this on my own" (raise three children, fix the roof, whatever). On the Human Touch, I saw with remarkable mind-shattering clarity "Hello! I already am doing it".

And all the work I have done since has shown me how to be more effective at it. I still go to sleep (go unconscious) and get all reactive, yes. I still do, but far, far less than before. These days when that happens, I can be with the truth of it, no matter how painful, and trust that whatever moves, moves in consciousness which is greater than awareness, and so serves the whole.

Here is a poem I wrote last night after losing my temper radically with my daughter.

sleep steels silently, so fucking subtly.
that scarlet pimpernel, Thought's
sweet lullaby - betrayer of soul.
consciousness tears open,
floods in the pain
created by my own actions.
i see the truth - repelled,
disgusted, loathe-filled.
yet, love loves tenderly
taking on the tigerish mind;
holds the idea of me in
it's own darkness even;
stroking that snarling beast into submission.
in tension.
intention.
wake up.
Forgiveness is.

Creative Parenting

What makes parenting so *difficult* is that it *matters* so much! We know that what we do, and how we handle relationship with our children will have an effect on ourselves, our children and the world we live in. The same is true of course, for all relationship - work, romantic, friends etc. This is even true for our relationship with strangers.

How we handle relationship, is how we create our lives (individually) and the world we live in (collectively).

This is a beautiful (or terrible) thing depending on how we are handling relationship. The problem is that we tend to handle relationship REACTIVELY as a result of the conditioning we experienced as children and throughout our lives. We become victims of this conditioning, or rather we become victims to the decisions we have made about ourselves in relationship with this conditioning.

The fact is we have been affected by the relationships in our lives, and have made decisions about ourselves and life when we were very young, which remain "locked in" to our unconscious minds. These decisions colour our thinking, our reasonable mind, which is our tool for creating our lives. In the illusion of these decisions we can sometimes feel so *powerless*. Our challenge is to overcome or release, and rise above our conditioning. Our challenge is to re-create our thinking, and thus recreate the way we create our relationships; lives; the world we live in.

In truth, when we drop all the judgements and resentments about our past, some of our conditioning has taught us "what doesn't work", and some of it has taught us "what does work". Simple. Our challenge, especially with parenting, is to turn REACTIVE into CREATIVE.

Our children are our mirrors - the ones that push the most buttons are the ones who are most like us! They are also the barometers who gauge and reflect exactly how we are currently handling ourselves and our relationships. They don't do this 'on purpose' - they are just being themselves. It is how human beings work together.

As we become aware of our conditioning (and all parents will experience this) through the way we react and respond to our children, we are given the opportunity to:

1. Examine our own conditioning.
2. Let go of ingrained beliefs by examining the core truth of those beliefs, getting the gut feel, the deep inner wisdom, the truth.
3. Be creative and find ways that work to interact with our different, unique children.

It has been said that it would only take 2 or 3 generations of children who have been appreciated, *celebrated* and encouraged to be all they can be, to totally transform this planet.

I love this planet - despite the terror, and horror and awfulness which the human race perpetuates on it and each other. I am not even saying it is *necessary* to change it - just possible, if we so desire. It starts with you and I. We are the only ones who can do it.

There is no prince charming/saviour/miraculous event coming to rescue us! We are it. **We are it!** We are the miracle we wait for. We are our own saviours, and we are 100% supported in this, and all of life, by the infinite power which guides all that is.

We are not required to *understand* this - a finite mind is not *capable* of understanding the infinite. We can accept the support in realising it though. And we can contemplate the infinite and experience some of it here, now.

We can change anything and everything *simply by changing our thinking*.

There are myriad therapists/workshops/transformational leaders who have already engaged this process, and walked the talk. As soon as you open to the idea, you will be drawn to or presented with the method which best suits you. It may not be the one you think is best, in fact the more resistant you are, the more likely it is to be perfect! 'Thought' planted a feather and thought a chicken would grow.

In our current state of unconsciousness we often really don't know what is best for us (never mind our children), so the best thing we can do is trust that we are indeed supported by that infinite universal power, and trust what life presents. That is how life works. We just have to go for it.

A mistake we as parents make is thinking we have to teach/raise/mould our children. This is just not true.

They are truly perfect when they are born - it's all the moulding and teaching and raising that causes the problems. We project all our unconscious and unresolved needs, desires, concerns (all our BS) onto them, and even expect them to live out our own uncherished, un-lived dreams.

In this way, the talented artist becomes a C.A. simply because he/she will earn good money. His art will forever be lost while he buries himself in O.P.M. (other people's money). In the words of Roger Waters - "It all makes perfect sense, expressed in dollars and cents, pounds, shillings and pence." Non-sense I say.

What we do have to do, apart from housing, feeding, clothing and educating our children, is to **engage open relationship with them**, by giving them the fullness of our attention, and guiding them with regards to the world we live in. We have to **earn** their trust, respect and acceptance by **being** trustworthy, respectful and accepting.

I repeat: A child learns what it lives with:

Children who live with criticism learn to condemn.

Children who live with hostility learn to fight.

Children who live with ridicule learn to be shy.

Children who live with shame learn to feel guilty.

Children who live with tolerance learn to be patient.

Children who live in encouragement learn to be confident.

Children who live in praise learn to appreciate.

Children who live with fairness learn justice.

Children who live with security learn to have faith.

Children who live with approval learn to love themselves.

Children who live with acceptance and friendliness, learn to find love in the world.

Author Unknown

If we feel powerless, it is because we gave away or were stripped of any sense of being our own authority long, long ago.

We do this individually and collectively - with our parents (Just do it! Because I say so! Don't answer me back, you cheeky girl!), our teachers, our leaders, our governments and even our God(s), whatever we may call God!

This happens by force, coercion, manipulation, domination and control, and more subtly by over-protection which can lead to a child feeling dependent and weak. We lose all sense of trust in ourselves and so allow others to wreak havoc in our lives.

We literally become mindless slaves, nothing less. We overeat, overspend, oversex, overcompensate, overplay to numb ourselves out to the horrible truth that we have given ourselves away! Radio Controlled Robots!

We absolutely fear making any choice, only we don't realise this of course so we mask the fear by projecting on others. We completely ignore the fact that as human beings we are endowed with free will. We have been told God trusted us enough to give us free will, and we have no idea what to do with it.

So, acting out of our unconscious fear, we convince our children as quickly as possible that they don't have it. We start when they are barely out of the womb - "My Mom said I shouldn't hold her too much - I'll spoil her".

That's not holy in my book. If we cannot trust ourselves, and consequently our parents, our teachers, our friends, our leaders, how can we ever truly trust God or Life or Love. In this way, the state of our world is simply a reflection of our lack of trust in ourselves.

One of the most important challenges parents will face is to learn to trust themselves and each other, and in so doing become trustworthy. Children learn by example. They will become able to trust their parents to guide them within appropriate boundaries, whilst encouraging them to fully and freely express themselves, and thus remain their own authority. This means allowing a child to learn by experience, obviously within the wider experience of the parent who sets healthy and appropriate boundaries for the learning to take place.

Choice

Did you know that the three greatest fears of the human being are :

3. The fear of death
2. The fear of public speaking, and
1. The fear of making a choice?

Notice, I put them in reverse order.

I never would have thought this until I started to consider myself in relationship to choice. I long ago learned that the hardest part of making any choice is actually choosing. The easiest way to handle this is to simply choose. Jason (18) says conscious eenie, meenie, minie, mo is his most effective tool. And then handle the consequences of that choice. Easy. Until the mind starts to consider the **CONSEQUENCES**, and worse, imagine what those *might be*. That's when the process goes awry. It is easy to be unconscious in this process and just pretend that we don't *care* about the consequences, but that is not true.

The truth is we care deeply, we all do. It is the possible depth of that caring that frightens us. We have forgotten how deeply we care, and have blocked that feeling, for fear of it's equal and opposite force i.e. pain. We have been taught that pain is a 'bad thing' and we pass that onto our children, and so get caught up in a vicious cycle of repressed pain and thus repressed caring. At least I know that is true in my experience.

How do I know? I became just conscious enough to be aware of the actual feeling in my body. And when it comes to making choices - even relatively small ones - I have become aware of a 'mild hysteria' that runs deep beneath the surface. Even the word 'hysteria' brings up all sorts of innuendo.

As women particularly, hysteria has been internalised as a 'very bad thing' and unacceptable in the society we inhabit. Here's the dictionary definition:

hysteria. *n* **1** extreme or uncontrollable emotion or excitement: election hysteria. **2** *dated* a mental disorder in which a person converts psychological stress into physical symptoms. (possibly *the human race*?)

~ ORIGIN from Greek *hustera* 'womb' (hysteria once being thought to be caused by a disorder of the womb).

hysterical. *adj.* **1** affected by wildly uncontrolled emotion. **2** *informal* (this is where it gets interesting) **very funny.**

hysterics. *pl. n.* **1** wildly emotional behaviour. **2** *informal* (I love this) **uncontrollable laughter.** (Don't you just **love** laughing your head off? Ha Ha Klunk!)

Herein lies the lesson. Firstly, a parent's job is to get into clear relationship with how he/she is with choosing, by noticing, without judgement, how he/she **is** in relationship with choosing. Then, feel this fully every time. Then choose (!) how we wish to be in relationship with choosing. Declare that, and choose to live it. When we are clear with choosing, and can do so with ease, grace and total trust in life, fearlessly (actually, exactly as little children choose), the job is done.

At this point (once again) there is nothing to teach our children, as they will then be able to absorb our learning (older children), or they will be allowed to naturally mature their experience of choosing, being guided by a truly compassionate and clear parent.

Whilst we are moving through this process it is a simple matter of allowing children simple choices to practice choosing fearlessly, and to allow *ourselves* to develop sufficient trust in their innate ability to choose.

3 yr old - "Would you like bubbles, or toys in your bath tonight?"

10 year old - "Would you like to bath this morning or tonight?"

18 yr old - "Are you bathing?"

To be truthful, I have to admit that I did not have enough trust in life, and/or my daughter's natural mastery, when she fired her father at twelve years old.

It kept running through my mind that she was too young to make such a choice - despite the fact that she had decided to end her own considerable suffering with total clarity. I allowed what happened simply and only because I was in the practice of not-doing (i.e. Learning to love what is, exactly as it is). And because my mind could never have kept up with her. She was SO clear that she literally shut me up with her energy alone.

Since then, I have accepted her decision with true compassion and will support her in however she decides to handle the situation further. And she has blown my mind. I know others who are waking their parents up like this too - many, many children.

To Rise in Love

Will you be alone with me, Beloved?

Here, in the centre of all that is,
was, and is still to come.

Will you let go of you and I
and simply be free together?

A mindless wondering,
wandering through feeling,
seeing smelling touching being.

Will you cease all resistance?

Surrender in acceptance
of what is now, expanding
into nothingness, totally.
resting in the rhythmic space
of open hearts beating
time, to eternity.

Will we dissolve completely?
so that only light remains
dancing through the cosmos
home at last.

Ex-es

Whoa! Now this is a minefield. Can you feel the hairs on the back of your neck stiffen? Read on.

Fact: If the ex is also the parent of your child/children, you are never, I repeat **never** going to be out of relationship with him/her. If the ex has disappeared or even died, there will still be an internal mental/emotional connection and relationship within you and your children.

Phew! That's the simple truth. The best thing you can do at this point is simply acknowledge the truth of this, and accept that this is so.

As long as you are in denial of this, nothing will shift.

Now, take a deep breath. Pat yourself on the back and thank heavens you are no longer in a relationship that clearly didn't work.

Now, consider the possibility of establishing a relationship with this person, as co-parents, based on respect for yourself and your children.

You can choose to act at a level which works. By maintaining consistent healthy boundaries, you will make this happen.

The other party does not need to agree or even know of your decision.

Simply clarify what works, and choose a level at which you can interact, with the intention of maintaining the dignity of each other as **parents**, and then put this into practice.

Your children will benefit enormously. In order to create successful results here, you will have to be willing to drop **all** the stories about the other. You cannot see clearly with all the stories and resentments whirling around your mind.

I can say this with the assurance of lived experience. I was convinced that I had the worst ex ever. I even justified this story by citing the clinical diagnosis quoted to me by my doctor i.e. Manic depressive with psychopathic tendencies, kleptomania and compulsive lying with the capacity for sexual abuse. It took me a while to realise that *every* woman in my state of mind felt *she* had the worst ever partner. I was deep in victim mode and consequently, completely powerless.

Much of it was true - all sorts of drama went down. The drama probably still does happen, only not in our part of his life, and then again perhaps not! Since I dropped the stories, and chose to set the pace, our quality of life has improved dramatically. The children have come through the trauma and pain stronger people, in part because I was clear enough to support them through it until they could choose for themselves, in their own clarity.

I am not saying this is easy. I have to be super conscious of everything that is happening, and have to be attuned to what they aren't saying as much as what they are saying. I have to be humble enough to acknowledge my contribution to their pain, and courageous enough to adjust my own selfish behaviour. I have to release *everything*, especially judgement, and I have to be creative every step of the way. I have to stand in forgiveness constantly - forgiveness of myself. I have to let go of the story constantly in order to see the miraculous gift in every situation. I have to be really practical in order to make real what I am learning, so that we will all benefit from the lesson in the long run.

However, it is **easier** than you would imagine. BREATHING really helps. And if you fail, count to ten and choose again. Become more and more determined, and you will succeed. You will be amazed at the support you encounter along the way if you have eyes to see and ears to hear.

One of the bonuses of such an undertaking is that you will free yourself (and your children) of all the judgements surrounding the stories, and thus free up your energy to be used to much greater effect.

I guarantee that when you find yourself being consistent with this, no matter what, you will eventually free yourself completely from any attachment to your ex-partner. You will be free to focus your energy on what matters - your children. And any new primary relationship will benefit tremendously with just the two of you now in it.

You will also find the relationships which reflect the energy tied up in your ex-relationship, either rise with you or melt out of your life, to be replaced with relationship at the level which you choose.

I can also assure you that the co-parent of your children will eventually raise his/her level of behaviour in accordance with your consistency. If he/she doesn't - so what - their behaviour will no longer have the power to affect you or your children. Remember, your children learn by experience, and anyway have a completely different relationship with that person than you.

You may even find yourself wishing the ex well, and loving them in some mysteriously compassionate way that you never could have imagined. This new kind of love will have no conditions attached - you won't want them back; you won't expect them to change; you won't want anything from them; you will still call them to their responsibilities.

Remember, the major beneficiaries of this process, and it is a process as unique as you are, are your children. They have a relationship with both of you. Make sure *you* are the one who is willing to make it work for their sakes.

Some points to consider:

- Become completely neutral with regard to anything the ex says or does.

Breathing helps here. Learn to really listen to what the ex says, and simply ask yourself - Is this true?

If you are honest, sometimes the 'Yes' answer will be painful. If so, the pain will pass as quickly as you let it, and you will have something to work with in terms of adjusting your own behaviour. If the answer is 'No', there is nothing to defend, and you will have no desire to react - the truth just is, and you know it.

- Be neutral when the children tell you things about the ex and his/her life. Just breathe and listen. *Any* response is not going to help. Remove yourself and scream into your pillow if you feel the need. Just listen to them - they are trying to work through some pretty complicated adult stuff!
- NEVER accept the unacceptable. Go to whatever lengths are required if you feel your children are at risk. Just do what must be done out of love for them, and not fear of the ex, or revenge, or desire to control. Be uncompromising in getting the best deal you can for them.
- Support your children's self esteem and self respect by allowing them space to move through their own experience, and reach their own conclusions in their own time. Always assure them that they are loved, and that they have your unconditional support.

- Learn to listen to them without offering your advice/opinions. Just listen. This can truly take years of practice (ask me), but you will master this skill, and you will be amazed.
- If at all possible, foster a healthy relationship with the other parent's new spouse and family. Even if this doesn't last (the custodial parent is usually the rock around which the children build their lives), they will feel lucky to have extra people who love them.
- Respect the choices they make, and support them compassionately when facing and handling the consequences of those choices.

The Love – Hate Paradox

Recently, I completed yet another Human Touch experience as a team member, and was once again confronted by a disco-ball of mirrors in the team and participants. Something that surprisingly became prevalent very quickly was facing into feelings of hatred.

Over the four days, several people shared verbally around feelings of intense hatred. This brought to my awareness a period of my life (from about 12 to 21) when, in my perception, I was locked into a love-hate relationship with my father.

Put simply, I thought he hated me, and simply could not see that our personalities were diametrically opposed, and that his behaviour was his way of loving me.

Of course, this perception of relationship with the primary male in my life was resurrected in my relationships with my son's father, and again in my marriage. Even though I *thought* I was with very different men, it was this unresolved paradox in my psyche which attracted such havoc onto my stage in relationship with men.

Come to think of it, anyone who came along would have had the same projected onto their relationship with me. I was determined that I could not be loved.

The recurring pain of these unhealthy relationships was also the cause of me remaining celibate for many years, and choosing to live alone for fear of the 'complications' in relationship.

Being fully aware of the true nature of love (so well described in 1 Corinth : 13) I was convinced that relationships with men were not the fertile ground for the experience of love. I had a wonderful taste of it with the children. And with friendship.

I just never saw that it was my unconscious projection that wrought havoc with the men in my life, even to a certain extent with my son.

On this Human Touch, the first time a person shared a feeling of hatred, she made direct eye contact with me as she spoke. Being in a state of 'mindlessness' or in the simple awareness of acceptance at the time, I felt no repulsion or rejection. I saw and felt exactly what I saw and felt when someone expressed *love*.

I was amazed. I had heard the words "hate *is* love" before, but I hadn't *felt* the truth of them. Soon enough, several others shared around feelings of hatred, at different points in time and unaware of the commonality of their sharing, and the same thing happened.

I realised that *in the body* love and hate are exactly the same physical energy. This energy is then run through the mill of the mind (ego). In the case of hate, the energy is attached to a painful memory or detractive judgement, resulting in a negative emotion (one that removes value from relationship) resulting in us doing what doesn't work in relationship – leaving, blaming, resenting, demeaning etc. With the label of love attached, the SAME ENERGY has a positive idea (one that adds value in our mind) attached making it easy to do what works – trust, share, stay, praise etc.

What I *experienced* over those four days was that I have a choice! I felt the hate as love, and so CHOSE to do what works, and the result was astonishing. Nothing short of miraculous.

Now I know, beyond the shadow of any doubt, that there is nothing stopping me from full, free, satisfying, whole (holy) relationship with any human being on the planet! It is simply a choice – to do what works because it works. To live in love and give *up* to a higher power that which I doubt I can handle.

To give *in* to relationship everything I have to give. To forgive myself immediately when I feel I have failed, and remember that NOTHING is required of me. I am loved exactly as I am, becoming all I can be. I no longer *need* to be loved by a man. I am loved by love. Now I can enjoy loving men again.

In being human, I am becoming the human Being which I started out as, whole and holy, a full, free flowing expression of life and love.

Beloved

*Beloved,
dare you stand
naked in your vulnerability
and receive this outpouring
though you may not approve
of the form love flows forth from
or feel worthy of it's receipt?*

*Beloved,
will you open the
unknown depths of yourself,
totally accepting, acquiescing to
an instant's complete expression
of another self, and stay, stand
firm until the torrent expends?*

*Beloved,
do you feel
across the abyss which
time and space seem to be,
the loving thoughts in which
you are cradled at anonymous
moments, by an insignificant other?*

*Beloved,
are you willing
to cast aside all
preconception, misconception,
throw all caution to all winds,
and simply
be loved?*

Aware Vs Awake

Journaling is an extremely effective aid in the bid to become aware as a parent. The simplicity of this tool belies how much it can actually affect our lives. In order to be effective, it requires only a few minutes a day, a simple notebook and a pen/pencil. It is recommended that you do this on waking every morning as this is when you are closest to what has been streaming in the unconscious in sleep.

There is no correct way to journal. Just write whatever comes up - this is for your eyes only. Just fill the lines. What you will discover, is that every now and then an insight will strike you. Like a "penny dropping" or "the light coming on". These insights bring into your conscious awareness, things that were unconscious. Since we create mostly unconsciously, that is with our unconscious thinking, insights are an opportunity to release conditioned thinking, and regain the power we have invested in our judgements.

The difference between awareness and being awake, is simply choosing to act on the insights. Being insightful is awareness. Acting on the insights brings us to wakefulness. And there is *nothing* better than being wide awake, fully energised, going for it at 100%.

Everyone has had experience of that feeling at some stage. We just don't believe we can sustain it. We don't trust ourselves.

So, when a "penny drops", just pick it up. Make a note of it. Take as long as you choose to become more aware of how this old, conditioned thought affects your life. Feel the cost of it. Carry a slip of paper around with you to remind you of what you are becoming aware of. The more aware you become, the more opportunities you will be presented with to choose to think and act differently. This is an active process.

Once again, you are the only one who can choose to be effective or not. It is your life and you are the creator here. You may encounter resistance from yourself or others. So what.

There is no right or wrong here. There is only your choice. And life will give you as many opportunities to overcome the conditioning as you require in order to do so. You may require determination to liberate yourself. Once again, that is your choice. You can choose the long hard road and suffer it by resisting (but this and but that), or you can just do it.

You will feel the effect of acting on an insight and, one step at a time, you will feel a sense of achievement which will lead to another and another. Soon, you will have completely released an old, possibly crippling idea, and will have recreated an aspect of your life.

Here is an example. In journaling this morning, I came across the insight that as a child I could never understand my parents' relationship. Because I was seeing it from only *my* perspective, I decided very young that this thing called marriage was not for me. As an adult, I kept attracting relationships with men who gave me plenty of "reason" to leave. In this way I could be right about marriage being "not for me". Their marriage had other effects, most positive, and I regret nothing of our journey. Only, I realise that I blocked off a whole realm of possibilities which I am now more open to.

The truth is, I would love to have a partner to share my life and my children with. I simply did not believe that such a thing existed for *me*. Now that I am aware of this insight, I have the responsibility of acting on it. That doesn't mean I have to give myself away to the first person (poor sod my mind said) who presents himself. It means I have the opportunity to become aware of the judgements I hold in relation to marriage or committed relationship. And I have the opportunity to see other perspectives and viewpoints. And I

will be presented with the opportunity to explore them in the real world. As always, it remains entirely my choice how I engage these opportunities.

I recommend you start journaling immediately, and persist even when you think it may be a total waste of time. I suggest you get yourself a support mechanism in journaling. Join up with another person (not necessarily your partner) and check in with them weekly. Do not discuss your journaling and don't let each other read it. Just ask each other have you done it? How are you feeling about it? Have you received any insight? Are you acting on it?

This is not a long book, and yet if you engage this process, just these first few pages will keep you busy for quite some time! I suggest as you read, you underline, highlight, comment etc on the pages. This will give you some homework. Go back to what grabs you and explore the concept in real life yourself. Go as deep as you will. Go as wide as you will.

"The greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to see something, and tell (themselves in this case) what it saw in a plain way." (Author Unknown).

Practice this with your children actively. Children are such integrous beings they will support you in the process 100%. Remember, sometimes their "worst" behaviour is supporting you to free yourself of some ingrained, deeply buried judgement you hold on *yourself*. It requires release for you to be more of who you really are. Journal it.

Stephen Norval says: "You are who think you are, only who you think you are, is not who you are."

This is one of the most profound statements I have ever heard, and a fundamental truth.

So we find ourselves interacting with who we think our children are, instead of allowing them to show us who they really are! Instead of allowing them to be who they really are (they don't have to *know* this because they *are* already who they really are), do what they love to do, and consequently have everything there is to have that is worth having. We are too busy trying to squeeze them into our little (non-existent) boxes!

Things

Here's a shocking bit of wisdom for you. Children don't want *things*. Sure, they enjoy having them, who doesn't? The truth is they know that 'things' are the consolation prize. They want YOU - your love, attention, guidance, healthy boundaries, the freedom to express themselves *fully and freely*; they crave ACCEPTANCE.

Will it really be the end of the world if you don't get to drive that Ferrari / Landrover / Peugeot you've always wanted? No. The end of the world *will* be the day your child discovers, faces and *feels* that while you were running down the Ferrari, a CHILD DIED EVERY FIVE SECONDS! OF STARVATION! in the same world you will hand over to them and make them responsible for.

Look, if you have the cash, buy the car. Hey, ENJOY it! Only here's a challenge. Don't eat for a day or two, and get hungry. Not the "I feel like eating" kind of hungry. It physically hurts hungry. This could take a while depending on how well fed you are. No matter. When the physical pain of hunger is really there, and you're really FEELING it, then. Then, remind yourself that it takes *forty days* to die from this. That should motivate you to not-drive the Ferrari just one day a week.

The money you save on fuel that day? Take it and spend it on essential foods (hungry people don't care about luxury), deliver it personally on foot (the Ferrari is parked, remember?) to a really needy family.

The tragedy is you will not have to look far. Take your children with you to share the whole experience - older children may need a resistance allowance here so give freely. And just be with them in the humility of the experience. Their natural compassion will blow your mind. As much as I love fast cars, nothing about them can compare with experiencing your children as the true human beings they naturally are.

This exercise may also motivate you to not-eat meat just one day a week, to forego the Johnny Walkers just one day a week, so that more of the world's grain can be sold more cheaply to make bread, instead of more expensively to the cattle farmers and breweries to churn out luxury products, which only about 2% of the population can afford. It's our world, not yours.

I repeat : the children want YOU - your love, attention, guidance, healthy boundaries, the freedom to express themselves fully and freely. They want ACCEPTANCE. Start to practice this straight away - on yourself.

So stop working so damn hard (to buy things), and start to play a bit. Remember? Play? Not sport, goofball! Ring a Rosies, skop die blik, tyre rolling, mud puddles, tag, leap frog, freestyle dancing in the lounge "Look Mom! Dad's a ball-er-INA!" Whatever!

When a baby is born (excluding the effect some drugs and procedures can have on women in childbirth), the parents are naturally in a heightened state of empathy, joy, radiance, beauty etc. Carpe Deum. Seize the day! Feel it all. And when the 'third day blues' hit, and the milk flows ceaselessly from breasts that seem an abomination so huge they are, feel that too. Weep and wail, express your tears and your milk together.

When that is passed, feel the floods of joy return once more, and so on. It's the one time in your life when a manic-depressive state is completely available to experience fully and freely, and it is even considered 'normal' to act this way. So cease all resistance, and GO FOR IT! Forget life for a while and throw propriety out of the window.

What you'll find is that, if you make space for the rollercoaster, and keep baby *close*, you'll start to enjoy the ride. IMMERSE yourself in your baby's presence. You will find that an indescribable peace takes over more and more. Now, ask yourself "What really matters?"

Children are naturally awake. They are born pure consciousness, pure soul, pure divinity. Without getting fluffily, and always keeping it *real* (Trust me, you don't want to go down the lip service road) **let them stay that way.**

Mostly, excluding dangerous situations obviously, you just have to stand back and be with what is happening. Sorry to say, bud, but you are quite insignificant in the total scheme of things.

Your job is to feed, house, educate your child, and most importantly to LOVE them as best you can in any given moment i.e. *consciously relating with them in the truest way you can at any given moment*. Note:- relating WITH them. Relating TO is a one way street, and not relating at all.

Your job is *not* to TURN them into something, or MOULD them (no really, some of us actually think this way). You're not a lathe, and they're not table legs. If you are truly willing to get out of their way, whilst maintaining appropriate, properly elasticised boundaries, you will MARVEL at what they can manage all by themselves. And it never stops. They are free - born free, and free they will remain. Sure, they'll make mistakes - that's how children learn. All you are required to do is **hold** them in that learning curve without robbing them of the lesson by consoling them, or making it feel better. Just stay consciously relating and acknowledge the learning taking place. They will get it. They will teach you from it, if you can bear to just be silent with them in it.

The truth is that we have so forgotten what it feels like to be free that we rush in to fix, fade or change them from the word "No". That's, the word "No", not go. There we have it. The first thing they ever *hear* is the word "No".

Mom/caregiver: "Hush baby, don't cry."

Baby (inbabywail): "I'm HUNGRY Mother! I feel EVERYTHING a ZILLION times more than you, Mother! FEED ME! WARM ME! CHANGE ME, I'm WET and COLD here! Please don't take away my wonderful warm poooooooooo!"

Whatever.

And as they grow, it just gets worse, and worse. "Don't touch that plant!" She looks at us as she reaches for it. That really gets us going - our precious is being *naughty*. So she gets a smack to re-enforce the 'teaching'. And she's FURIOUS! You can see the resentment in their eyes in the moment, even at 18mths and younger. I'll tell you why.

The toddler's mind is INCAPABLE of hearing the "Don't ". All the baby's mind recognises is "touch the plant". And she gets walloped for it! That's where that first look comes from. She's trying to figure out what the hell you want. That's where the second look is born too. No *wonder* she's furious. You smack her for doing what you told her to do.

Listen, it works the same for you. The sub/unconscious mind only hears the pure *instruction* clearly and precisely. The word 'don't' *literally* does not exist, and cannot (brain-trained 'can't' junkie - I am aware of it) be perceived by the subconscious mind.

Don't believe me, test it out. Tell yourself repeatedly for a few hours "I will not eat cake". You will find yourself craving cake.

That's why all our resolutions fall by the wayside. It's the way we think and thus use our language. We have learned (been conditioned) to use ineffective negative language. Words that are not even *real*.

DON'T = DO NOT = DO to the psyche.

CAN'T = CAN NOT = CAN ad nauseum

"You can't do that!" Just watch me. It's *dangerous*, people. "Johnny! Don't jump off the roof!" See? The most important thing you can do is start to listen to yourself, and notice what you say, and how you string words together. Adjust when you are addressing your child, and it will become habitual.

Not only are you transforming the life *you* are creating, you will be leaving a legacy for your child beyond your imagination. "Leave the plant alone, sweetie." Much more effective, and *much* less confusing to all. TEST THIS OUT. Play with it. You'll be shocked. "I mustn't touch that wire with the screwdriver". ZAP! One direct hit right between the eyeballs. Been there, done that, got the T-shirt.

I am currently sick and tired of "giving up smoking". I saw a simple truth recently. It was "I was born a breather". At some point I "gave up" and became a smoker. I recall the exact moment. I connected the "I give up" thought, which accompanied a feeling of anxiety, with the habit of reaching for a fag. I also saw that it is more important to "give up" giving up. So I am playing this game now:

"I am not willing to give up smoking (which is true), but I am willing to say yes to breathing". Get it? I still smoke, and the desire lessens every time I choose to say "yes" to breathing instead of smoking. And I get to enjoy a sense of humour while I allow smoking to flow out of my repertoire of habits. As long as I say yes, breathe consciously, and then leave the cigarette unlit.

The word but brings me to BUTTS, not cigarette butts - the bum cheeks. Do you see that if you say the word 'but' in a sentence, it negates anything you have said before the word 'but'? Like, "I love you, but I could *kill* you right now!" What's the feeling here? Love? Play with this one too.

Anyway, BUTTS are primarily for sitting on, and as we get older more aesthetic purposes arise. Parents, however, see a convenient receptacle for any of a variety of forms of gratuitous violence. I have received and given hidings. They are just a projection of our own resentment, or worse, some misguided advice regarding pain being 'good' for a child. And shouting is simply giving the hiding on the face cheeks. Hidings are a means of dominating and controlling, and they are ineffective. No. We are highly creative beings. Just getting up out of bed in the morning requires a miracle of co-ordination, and we can even do that after spending an evening in the confusing company of Johnny Walker & Co. We can do much, much better than that.

Just a quick note regarding alcohol and drugs - the cost of the bottle is high. The cost of imbibing what is in that bottle can be uncountable. What really matters?

I was smoking a fair amount of pot and was partying quite hard at one point in my life - no alcohol involved, and I had a LOT of fun - when my son was about two. I justified this by ensuring that it happened when he was safely tucked in bed at Granny's, and he had my total attention when I was with him.

Then one day, I smoked a joint which contained something more than plain old pot. I literally woke up driving home on the wrong side of the road - I couldn't remember a good stretch of it at all. The first thought that flashed through my mind was of Jason, and that I had *no right* to do this. It was simply no longer an option, and I made the choice to live alcohol and drug free.

I have made many of the mistakes of reactive parenting, including smacking, and worse, punching an arm in temper! I have also had the privilege of experiencing much more *creative* parenting. When Jason was

around five years old, and in BIG TROUBLE - he had been chipping away at all my father's walls with a screwdriver, fixing them - I simply handed over his 'punishment' to him.

I still bought into the idea of punishment as opposed to consequences then. I explained his 'crime', and suggested he come up with an appropriate 'sentence'. Oh, little me, He was so much more severe than I would have been. No TV games, videos or TV for three weeks! Shame, and he stuck with it too.

I have much, much clearer perspective now, and have learned that a child (anyone) can only learn by facing squarely the consequences of their actions. This works superbly in the smaller, softer things like the stinky fish story. Jason caught his first fish on a trip to Sodwana Bay. After he got over the shock of it dying in his little bucket (he couldn't bring himself to eat it), he insisted on carrying it around with him wherever he went.

It was forbidden near the tent, of course, and after a few days he really got the drift! Phew! He has never really fished again as he has no intention of eating what he catches, and really felt (and smelt) the waste of that stinky little fish.

When he and his cousin (about 8 and 12 yrs old) lit a fire in the garage, however, a different strategy had to be engaged. Obviously I didn't want him to be burnt (we had neighbours who actually touched their child's hand onto a hot stove to 'teach him a lesson'). Instead, I immediately got into the car and went to the nearest hospital with a burns unit. I just wandered in and explained my predicament to the matron. She twigged straight away, and without a word, went into the unit and brought out a two month old baby who had rolled into a fire. The baby had obviously been there a long time judging by the terrible scars covering her face. My heart broke as the matron quietly and gently bent down and just showed Jason what fire can do to the human body.

He was FURIOUS with me! He raged! He told me what a bad mother I was, and that I had scarred him for life! Perhaps.

It didn't matter. That time I held the space for the learning that occurred with loving attention. He learned a valuable lesson, and he didn't get burnt. I never kept him away from fire. Instead, after that, I taught him how to handle fire safely and effectively. He still starts the campfire for me and he's amazing with fire-poi. He has to date been burn free.

Not all of my impromptu trips with the children were of this nature. I also decided to take him to the local fire station when he was about three. We took the firemen a thank-you cake as they had come to rescue Jason's kitten from a high rooftop. Apparently, they love this kind of thing as it's good practice for the men. The firemen were so sweet and gave him a grand tour of the whole place. They let him into the special vehicles and plopped a hat on his head. He was then taken around the block in the big engine and allowed to work the siren.

The point is because I set the clear intention to parent consciously and creatively, and have consistently been willing to become aware of and release the conditioning which lies at the root of reactive parenting, I have been open to receive the inspiration to consistently increase the occurrences of creative parenting. Having acted consistently with that purpose in mind, I have also enriched our quality of life and relationship with others beyond any expectations I may have held. As a single parent, I have exceeded any and all self – inflicted restrictions and am free to explore infinite possibilities, one step at a time.

Authority And Obedience

“Do and observe all things whatsoever they will tell you, but do not follow their example”

Mathew 23:3

Bringing our relationship with authority into an harmonious state is an essential aspect of the development of the human being. I know I had an authority issue! I bounced between being an appeaser and peacemaker, to being a rebel wild child, the trip here and there varying in duration from months to moments.

Of course our attitude to authority affects *every* relationship we have, and not only to other human beings. It affects our relationship to money, power, sex, work and most especially, our children. We are conditioned to believe that in relationship we are always either “above” or “below” someone/something. The ruler or the ruled. We think we either have to **be** the authority or be the one who has to **submit** to the authority. And we have countless ways of being in relationship with *that*.

Our attitudes create our reality, individually, and because we are social beings, collectively. So, we can say that “reality” in any moment is the effect of the sum total of the attitudes of all the human beings on the planet; the “majority” attitude being the prevalent, and creating the present reality which we all get to experience.

Change occurs when individuals share ideas regarding *new* attitudes and ways of being, take action to effect the change in the world, and communicate the successful changes to others, who may or may not join the cycle.

When this is done in a forceful and manipulative manner we get to experience the power-mongering and propaganda of Revolution. When it is done via a peaceful medium such as the Arts, we get to experience a Renaissance, leading to Evolution.

When critical mass in the population is reached, the ideas/attitudinal changes “catch on” to everyone and start to become prevalent. As described, this can happen forcefully in Revolutionary time or naturally in Evolutionary time, with commonly known very different results! It takes years, and yet critical mass is always attained in a moment. And since change is constant, new changes are constantly being invoked and effected and communicated.

Looking as a whole at the human race, it is easy to see that we have not been doing what works in terms of authority for a long time. The concept of leadership as we know it is completely outdated. Our relationship with authority as a whole can, since the beginning of recorded history (I exclude the aboriginal tribal societies of all nations who handled authority hierarchically, but in a completely different way) be seen as one of those at the “top” and those “below”, dominance – submission, control – rebellion, haves and have-nots.

We have so abused our relationship with authority that “the victim” and “the bully” became key archetypes in the unconscious human psyche; and the conscious “master” (one who masters his/her own energy) and “servant” (one who serves) were all but abandoned. The results are plainly visible. Everywhere we look we see this social rape, or equally true, social self-mutilation. We are constantly either trying to **be** the leader, or giving away our power to someone whom we **think** is the leader.

This stems from our unwillingness to simply take responsibility for ourselves – our own thoughts and actions. And the cost to relationship and thus society is co-operation and mutual support. I say, please

let's not put anyone "on top" anymore. The only thing for them to do at the top is topple. And we've had enough of that – it doesn't work.

When we look at the global village the world has become – a virtual internet café – it is easy to see why and how the rate of change/evolution has increased. Life has literally sped up. Isn't it time we started being conscious in this process? Choosing ways of being that work to effect peace, harmony and abundance for all?

The funny thing is that EVERYONE has authority issues, even those *in* authority, just nobody wants to admit it. It really blew my little mind when I encountered this simple truth.

It is part of the game of being human to explore "being in authority". Note:- Being (supreme being = God) in (within) authority (author = creator of a story). The God within is the creator of my story.

I am obedient only to the Being I am. Who I really am (the being within) is the creator of my life. In other words – total accountability and total responsibility.

What if we choose people to represent the human race in playing the game of governing/managing/authority who *get* this? REALLY get this.

There was a nobleman who had a devoted servant whom he treated with respect, dignity and kindness - when he noticed him. The servant took pleasure in his duties and dedicated himself to performing each task with loving care and excellence over many years in his master's service. He needed no acknowledgement. It was reward enough to see his master return weary from a long business trip to find his slippers in exactly the right place warmed by the fire; to witness the little sigh of pleasure, as his master reached out without looking to take up the glass of his favourite cognac which was exactly where it always was.

Eventually, the servant was so efficient that he organised appointments without having to consult his master, and enjoyed the way his master's days ran so smoothly. He was there first in any crisis, always ready to do whatever needed doing in the moment to serve his master. And yet, no matter how important he became, he never forgot the little things, like the cognac and the slippers.

One day, the old servant passed away, and as the master returned home he received the news. Feeling an indescribable sadness, he went to his armchair to absorb this news, feeling for the slippers which were always there, and reaching out without looking for the comfort of the glass of cognac.

As both feet and hand connected only with air, the realisation of how devoted his servant had been hit him, and tears began to roll down his cheeks.

He thought to get his cheque book to make a gift to the family, and then realised he didn't know if his servant even *had* a family, nor did he know where his cheque book was kept. Who was he to see on the morrow? What business lined up? In his mind's eye, he pictured his servant chortling and chuckling away in the shadows of the room at the irony of the situation, and so laughter started from deep in his belly. Soon, he was laughing uproariously, tears pouring down his cheeks and dripping from his chin. The other servants peered worriedly at each other thinking the master had finally lost his marbles!

When he finally regained his breath, he called his household together and spoke to them of the love of his devoted servant, and the final gift of his old friend as he said, "And of the two of us, who do you think was master, and who servant?"

The word obedience is interesting too. Obey = comply with. So, obedience at an effective level, means "complying with" agreements as to how we wish to play the game of life. This is co-operation or mutual support, which is a whole different ball game with a whole different set of results.

I have participated in and observed people playing this game of mutual support, and even without “knowing” it, acting in simple (blind) faith, achieving amazing results. By blind faith I simply mean recognising a truth, and without knowing the outcome i.e. with no guarantees, acting in new ways to create new ways of being that work.

This particular set of people (the Human Touch Mutual Support Network) has developed highly successful and effective ways of working together in ease and grace, without a hierarchical structure being required.

Note : **Being** required - because when it works, it works because it is God/Grace driven at the core. When we act from our spirituality rather than the reasonableness or rightness of the ego, we get to experience Heaven on Earth. We touch into the infinite possibilities of our Humanbeingness.

Many masters have shared these ideas, and for whatever reason we have turned them into leaders/icons/superheroes. We have created religions full of dogma around their teachings, sometimes missing the point entirely – we can’t see the wood for the trees. It is interesting to read the word DOGMA backwards (God being the ultimate authority or supreme Being). Have we been getting it farce about ace?

The truth is, however it happened, we *do* live in free will. We are naturally our highest authority. We are the masters of our own ship, and the creators of our reality. Individually and collectively.

So when we have enough people willing to do what works or rather do what serves the whole, critical mass is reached, and we begin to create Heaven On Earth, right here, right now. We begin to be people who ‘lead’ by example. Who walk our talk. Who teach instead of preach – simply by being ourselves. Who hold ourselves accountable. Who are humble enough to accept adjusting where necessary, and we begin creating a world that works for everyone, everywhere. A world that our children can indeed inherit.

In order for this change to occur, we require conscious rebels. The rebel in us bristles (thank God) when authority is ineffective. We can either give ourselves away to this FEAR, and put the rebel in charge. This leads to some radically ineffective results e.g. addictions, relationshit, revolution.

Or, we can harness the energy of the conscious rebel and effect change in attitude, action and result. I call this *revelling* and it leads to a 180° shift. (Revolution is a 360 ° shift which means right back to the beginning).

SO

Feel		Feel
Everything		Everything
And	OR	And
REBEL		REVEL!
You resist the master		You <i>are</i> a master

CHOOSE

You are the one, the hope of all the ages,
The dawning of a new sun, closing all the old pages.

The future rests within your heart
Open it now, make a new start.
Feel the love, create a world
That works for all, great and small.

For you are the one, the hope of all the ages,
The dawning of a new sun, closing all the old pages.

All the change the world will see
Rests on your willingness to be
All that you are, all you will become,
A shining beacon of what's to come.

For you are the one, the hope of all the ages,
The dawning of a new sun, closing all the old pages.

And the human race will change it's pace,
Slow down and see heaven's face
Right here among us, a brand new dawn
The rising sun bringing a peaceful morn.

For you are the one, the hope of all the ages,
The dawning of a new sun, closing all the old pages.

My Way Or The Highway

One of my favourite “old timer” songs is Frank Sinatra’s “My Way”. I spent much of my life rebelling against the “one way – my way” concept and am grateful that I did. However, I regret that I did it from a position of insecurity which led to a lot of effort, struggle and pain for all concerned.

I love the gentleness of Frank’s version, and believe that *everyone* deserves the opportunity to do things their way too – that’s how we teach and learn from each other. That is how we can develop new ways of being and doing that work for all.

Recently, I came face to face (or confronted) that unconscious part of myself who was still desperately clinging to the belief that “my way” was not good enough, and had to be protected and defended against all “challengers”. I recognised just how strangely and deeply this belief affected how I was creating my reality.

This conflict has consistently triggered my “leaving pattern” and it is at the point where I give up and think “I can’t win” that I leave relationship (significant or otherwise), either physically or emotionally and go unconscious into relationship. This time, however, I chose to stay – the job being affected was far too close to my heart to leave.

I connected with the humility of Frank’s song and realised that there must be an easier and gentler way to resolve this conflict of “two one ways”.

Instead of ‘giving up’ I surrendered to the conflict, and with the graceful support of some wonderfully mature mentors, allowed all the emotions to run. It was not a pretty sight. Imagine a 43 year old woman with the self-image of a graceful server dissolving into a two year old tantrum, and expressing volcanically the build up of years of resentment over “feeling controlled”.

Once expunged, the humiliation of seeing that I was doing the very thing that I despised the most to another settled over me.

Now I was in a position to handle things differently.

Now I was empowered to support the highest in another with the highest in myself. The first thing I did was “clear” verbally with the other person, and I did this with the conscious choice of gentleness. WOW!

What a lesson for both of us. Instant transmutation from conflict and hatred to co-operation and respect. We were both flabbergasted at how much we mirrored for each other in so many ways. In terms of working together, we realised that it would take time to merge “our ways”, and so agreed on a “trigger stopper”. We agreed that when we felt the energy rising between us, we would stop, take a deep breath, come down and adjust to what needed doing to get the job done.

This was so effective. People could not believe we were the same two women working, and we suddenly started really enjoying working together. The job was done effectively and we had fun and we broke through our “authority issues”, taking positive action in resolving and replacing bad habits.

This experience has brought me to a whole new beginning as a parent. My children are now 18, 13 and 12, and really exploring their relationship with authority in new energy ways. Now they will be supported by a mom who is just a little more awake. They now have the opportunity to discover their own ways with ease

and grace. They will challenge what needs challenging standing confident and true in their right to question, and change what clearly doesn't work, acting true to themselves. And guess what?

They have never been more co-operative!

In fact my youngest daughter Victoria has just asked if she can do an extra hour of Maths today. I am still lifting my chin off my chest.

The truth is we are each other's awakeners – that is what “suffer little children to come unto me” means. We choose how much suffering is involved.

Children *know* the Kingdom of Heaven. They live there (here). They love us enough to insist we join them on that playing field if only we will.

Right And Wrong

The fundamental and crucial point to notice in any “my way or the highway” conflict is the **rightness of position**. The problem is not that two human beings have different ways of being or doing things. It is that we are convinced of the RIGHTNESS of our way, and thus the WRONGNESS of all other ways. CONFLICT results.

On a global scale, this is the fundamental root cause of all (and I mean all) the wars and suffering on our planet. The beautiful thing is that *every* time *anyone* transcends this conflict, changes occur in consciousness. The more these changes occur (one at a time), the closer we get to critical mass, the closer we come to changing this basic human attitude for all. Consider this acronym:

Peace and conflict

Exist

As simple choices.

Choose peace.

Easy.

Listen to the John Lennon song “Imagine” and realise that each of us can contribute in a very real way to creating such a world here, now.

Too simple you say? Consider this and then test it out in your world. It only takes one of us to ‘get off our position’ to create peace. We relinquish nothing but our rightness. We simply acknowledge that our ways are different, and allow that. Then, when the way is clear we can allow co-operation (the true nature of human beings) to be, and our interactions take on a whole new flavour.

This works on all levels of relating. Since the particular focus of this book is parenting, I would ask that you play with this in relationship with the co-parent and children in your lives. I can only say that now I finally “get” it. I am playing with it, and experiencing for myself the marvellous results. The children are likely to be our teachers here. They are still much more connected with their natural intelligence than we are. We have lost trust in ourselves, and it takes time to allow those old defences to dissolve, attitudes to adjust, and behaviour to follow suit.

Since the *word* is the most powerful tool of the human being, I would urge you to *listen to yourself*. Notice without judgement the words you use. Notice the feeling which is powering those words. Then, adjust. Adjust your words often enough, and your thoughts and deeds will follow suit. It is paradoxical that consciously speaking your mind, can actually change it.

So too, you will find yourself experiencing new feelings in relationship. Some feelings may be requiring release – all the old negative (those which cost relationship) beliefs and judgements have been tying up and trapping them. It is essential that you tell yourself the truth about these – that is the truth that will set you free.

Do this in your journaling time. Once you have completed expressing, the key questions are :- Is this true? Is this really true? Do I choose this?

There may be tears. FANTASTIC! Each tear brings you closer to joy, and the experience of full, free flowing relationship. There may be tantrums. Have these away from your children. Scream into a pillow. Take a short piece of hosepipe and a phone book and beat the living daylight out of it for five minutes (go the WHOLE five minutes) giving voice to the pent up frustration and resentment of ‘little you’.

You may require support. Phone a friend who is committed to the highest of you – one who will not support your bullshit or give power to your story; One who will simply give you a safe space into which you can clear – like holding a vomit bucket.

If you don't have a friend like that, do The Human Touch (now thePoint) and you will find many such friends.

Here are some examples of language changes which may work for you:-

You are wrong/right I do it differently

You have messed up That didn't work

You made a mistake This requires an adjustment

Fuck off I am way too angry to speak right now

NOTE: Use these on yourself first and then on others.

I am stupid That didn't work

Do you need help? Can I support you?

I need May I have?

Do you want? I would like to give you

What this exercise will do is get us to focus on what is working, instead of what is not. And since "where the attention goes, the energy flows" is a fundamental truth of how the Universe works, things will start to work.

This way, we are serving life, adding value to it and enriching our relationships. When we do this all the time, we find ourselves in a position of trusting the sufficiency of Grace in each moment. We find ourselves in a space of autonomy (auto – no – me).

In other words, we are automatically acting from Source instead of ego. Our defences slowly dissolve, and with them any barriers to relationship so we enter the playing field of holy relationship i.e. two human beings relating from the wholeness of their being.

Apathy (the inability to respond) becomes pro-activity as we own (take responsibility for) each moment. When we act responsibly (from our ability to respond) we find our lives unfolding in remarkable ways.

And if we listen (give attention) to the little co-incidences or synchronicities as showing us that we are on track, we find ourselves being guided into the perfect times and places to co-create/manifest our dreams one step at a time.

Jesus said "Everything I have done, you shall do and more." Miracles will unfold in your life through the simplicity of keeping clear in relationship, communicating and listening to life, and acting in faith.

As "A Course In Miracles" declares, "Nothing needs doing" and this is true. You will be taking action from a position of willingness and co-operating with life. Truly, with this attitude, you will find yourself at the centre of a miracle time and again.

You will see and feel and be certain that you ARE the miracle. You ARE the cheese! You are the one you have been yearning for and seeking, and you were all along.

You will experience feeling sacred, feeling that you are truly *nothing* without the “other” who stands in front of you. And you will start to treat the apparent other with respect, dignity, and honour as you will treat yourself.

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” will extend to ALL the human beings in your life. You will flow in faith instead of freeze in fear. You will acknowledge, accept and appreciate the perfection of what is. You will love and be loved.

You will be aware and awake. And you will change the world. You will rise in love and discover that Heaven truly is right here, right now.

The Critic - Acknowledgement Vs Shame

Shame is not something we *consciously* create in our children. It is vital that we become aware of how it manifests so that we can recognise our own buried shame and how we pass it on to our children. Then we can start to celebrate our children rather than shame them.

In fact, ANYTHING your child does which you are (consciously or not) ashamed of (What will people think?) is just bringing to light your unconscious shame. It is an opportunity for you to face the often deeply buried shame you felt as a child.

I remember when, after years of being "in" and "out" (mostly out) of any religious community, I finally found a small group of open-minded spiritualists who met for a service weekly. I had a deep yearning to reconnect with spirituality in a more organised way, without the rigid dogma of formalised religion.

When I first attended services with my two young daughters, I was mortified by their inability to sit still and quietly, and was literally petrified that they would disrupt the (mostly elderly) people around. I was genuinely and painfully torn by my desire to be there and the shame I felt that my children may be disruptive.

Of course, this was *my* perception, perhaps even shared by some of the community. It was such a clear reflection of my childhood shame - as small children we were expected to sit still and silent in church. Any whispering or movement would engender a tap on the shoulder and a stern warning look from our devout father (Hey, it worked for him - it was how *he* was brought up). In fact, at about age sixteen or so, my sister and I got the giggles during mass, and the priest actually came down off the altar and threatened to kick us out!!

But here I was, ashamed to the core of my children's "behaviour" and expecting to be rejected in my moment of need. Faith and Grace won the day however, in the form of a wonderful gentleman who completely related to my younger daughter's nature.

He would hold her patiently on his knee while she played with his spectacles (on-off-on-off), drew on his face with his pen, counted his fingers, and generally squirmed and fidgeted her way through the hour. He patiently encouraged her to find stillness by herself, and she did in the safety of his acceptance. The two have adopted each other and a wonderful healing has taken place in both.

I can't even begin to describe the feeling of relief I felt at being accepted by this small community - *exactly as we were*. They did not move to fix, fade or change us in any way. They just let us settle in and find our *own* way. I was so pleased when more children started to attend.

All of them found their own way of being during the services, and many took an active role. I will never forget Dayne doing his enthusiastic race around the room with the collection plate, to the indulgent smiles on the faces of (most) of the congregation.

The children were warmly acknowledged and appreciated by the community, and so they didn't need to act out. They were celebrated and it definitely showed.

One of the most common devices used to cope with shaming is called detachment. It's a numbing out, "It doesn't matter", "Whatever!", "What's the point?" reaction. You know the feeling.

Be aware of this in yourself, and in your children. It is a routine coping device used to ward off pain and vulnerability.

All human beings have a need for recognition which, if not fulfilled, can easily become an unhealthy quest for approval which can cripple emotionally, and leave children very vulnerable to peer pressure. One of the songs my children listen to says it best:

"For crying out loud, what's wrong with being proud of you are; You're a shining star." Find and listen to (feel) the song "Dragonflies and Astronauts" by the Parlotones.

It is completely natural for children to seek acknowledgement from their parents (who else can they rely on for this?). If their seemingly smaller achievements are acknowledged from a young age, in time the accomplishment itself will be the naturally sufficient reward it is.

An example is pre-school art. The child pours him/herself with complete abandon into early art. This may look like scribbles to some parents, but is an extremely personal gift from your child. They don't need garrulous words of praise. They need you to receive the gift with the fullness of your attention. They will observe your reaction and feel your reception.

So, simply receive the gift, feel it and then acknowledge it with a smile, a hug and a heartfelt "thank you". Pin it up on the fridge for a while - you can swop it for the new one soon enough.

Make a wall of your home dedicated to their favourite work, and keep changing the pictures as they grow and produce new favourites. This is all the encouragement they need to continue to invest themselves in their lives.

A child's creativity is the wellspring from which they constantly create and re-create themselves, their ideas and thus their whole lives. Your improvements, critical suggestions and/or indifference are damaging at the least.

Here's an exercise. Take some creative materials - paper, paint, wood, collage, whatever suits you - and spend a few hours creating a simple, artistic gift for your child. Put aside your preconceptions, and simply create as a child does - with complete abandon and freedom. Just let go, and go for it!

Present this to your child at the first opportunity, and feel their reaction. If their reaction is not what you expected, well of course it *may* have been coloured by their conditioning (by you). Notice the mirror, and adjust your own behaviour accordingly if that is what needs doing.

Obviously with acknowledgement, truthfulness is of vital importance. It is counter productive to praise a straight 'A' student for getting a 'C'. Rather, turn it around, and ask the child genuinely how *they* feel about the 'C'. They will give you an honest and sincere answer if you listen openly and allow them to be truthful. Then allow them the dignity to process that in their way, without any comment.

By the same argument there is no need to go over-the-top cuckoo every time little Mary uses the potty right. You may be creating a nightmare for yourself.

Children - even the *very* young, will recognise an insincere compliment which can then become a convenient and effective tool for manipulation. Children have equal capacity to master manipulation, as they do for mastering language/breathing.

And never, never smack or scold a child for having a urinary accident.

When any child is shamed, it is immediately buried under "It doesn't matter" or "I can't win" and quickly forgotten. This then becomes the unconscious premise on which we operate over time - we are really

good at re-enforcing this in ourselves and each other. It takes some conscious input and effort to overcome it in ourselves. Note, effort does not necessarily include struggle in my language.

By acknowledging, and celebrating (feeling fully) our children's successes, we naturally encourage our children to contribute themselves fully to whatever they do, and they will be empowered to create more and more opportunities to celebrate their successes with us.

Rules And Boundaries

Nothing much makes the hair on the back of my neck stand up more than "rules".

I get that there are things we can do that work, and there are things we can do that don't work.

When, however, we start to talk about rules as if they are an authority in their own right, something in me just rises up and challenges this with every ounce of my being. I rebel and I break them all.

For a long time there was a two way pulling within, as part of me (the conditioned) sought to gain the approval of others by adhering to 'the rules', despite the fact that I completely rejected the concept of authority for authority's sake. The other wildish, free (natural) part went the other way and urged me to challenge and break rules, if for no other purpose than to just discover their true purpose.

I feel that this is what children do when they constantly challenge the rules.

There is nothing that will flame the fire of defiance better than "Because I told you so." I know how tempting it is to fall into this, especially as our own conditioning may still hold quite a firm sway.

However, it is completely liberating for both parents and children to examine rules and authority, and start to develop the ability to maintain healthy boundaries for self and others in relationship together.

This involves being willing to let go of all the things we do by rote, the rules we adhere to simply because they are rules, and the boundaries we have outgrown, but maintain simply because they provide a comfort zone.

As you can imagine, this means keeping an open mind, and being able to listen to and co-operate with your children, and being willing to play with their ideas too.

I came to this one day after a huge meltdown. In the midst of a massive squabble in the car, and feeling the effect of quite a lot of life drama, the final straw broke the camel's back, and I fired myself as the mother and sole parent.

Admittedly I was not at all calm at the time, and I do not recommend being in the frame of mind I was in when undertaking such a process.

When, however, I had breathed myself into a state of calmness, I gathered the children and sat them down in a talking circle, with a talking stick and myself as mediator to ensure everyone had a chance to speak and be heard.

The structure was simple. We could say anything (except mentioning names to keep it impersonal) as long as we held the talking stick. If something arose, we had to put out our hand and wait for the stick. If the hand went down, the stick moved on to the next outstretched hand. This was really effective in determining that what was important was said, and that the less important fell away naturally.

The purpose of the circle was to decide:

- a) what changes were required to make our basic lifestyle more effective, and
- b) to develop some ground rules on which to relate.

I started off by saying that I was aware of how much the children had given up and were still giving up since the marriage ended, and that I was aware that it was hard.

Then I offered them alternatives. I assured them that I loved them. I said that if our life was not good enough for them, I could arrange for them to live elsewhere.

I assured them they would still be loved, and that they would possibly have more material possessions/room/time/attention/whatever. I assured them that the way things were, was not going to magically change.

What happened next was an incredibly beautiful lesson as I observed my children's natural integrity, courage and truthfulness emerge. I simply got out of the way, and we listened to each other. They handled themselves so beyond any expectations I may have had, I was truly humbled and my high horse, self-righteous anger and internal shame and pain simply evaporated as 'I' got out of the way and allowed them to shine.

The upshot of it was that we developed the 'Family Rools' (I said I cannot abide the whole *rules* thing):

Rool No. 1 (Jason) - Get over it

Rool No. 2 (Tiffany) - Nothing (no thing) matters

Rool No. 3 (Vicky) - Mind your own beeswax (business)

Rool No. 4 (Mom) - Respect

Simple as they may seem, we can never forget them since we introduced them, and we have applied these four rools to countless combinations of situations.

They are so effective we have never had to increase, amend or temper the rools at all in any way. And we still use them - we don't hesitate to call each other on them. It was essential here for me to be gracious about being called to set the example, and they did so love to do it!

We most enjoy using someone's own rool on them, and it is amazing how often that happens. We have deepened the meaning of the rools in many ways as well. I could write a discourse on each one, but that would completely negate the point here.

They are our rools, we birthed them and engaged them, and that is the secret of their continued success in our home.

By the same token, this process was a huge step forward in my life in setting some healthy boundaries in relationship instead of trying (always trying, how trying!) to please everyone, and live up to some ridiculous internal mental image of how I should be, could be or would be, if only.

In expressing the truth, I could put down my guilt – Omigosh! It was such a large weight I was dragging around needlessly. Putting down the guilt can be a really enlightening exercise. I found that I would unconsciously pick it right up again, and then have to remind myself to put it down again, pick up, put down..... it still happens on occasion, but I am so much better at dropping it quickly now, and leaving it down there with the other shit where it belongs!

Boundaries are essential to children - they give a child an irrevocable sense of internal (or eternal) security. Truth be told there is no other type of security. Security exists only within the individual being, which is intrinsically and ineffably part of the whole, which is everything that is, which is eternal, omnipotent and the guiding intelligence and force behind, within and around all that is.

Anything 'out there' which may seem to provide a sense of security is transitory and illusionary at best. Don't believe me. Test this out for yourself by examining yourself and your life through the microscope of essential truth. It is the truth you tell yourself that will set you free.

Appropriately set and elasticised boundaries simply create a safe and sacred environment within which your child can engage, explore and interact with the material universe in which he/she operates.

They provide a milieu within which a completely unique individual can develop in a uniquely individual manner. This is just infinite possibility being given a chance to grow, flourish and thrive in the world.

As with everything, this begins with the parents, who may have a lot to learn regarding healthy boundaries themselves. One look at the divorce rate is the proof of the pudding. Paradoxically, by consciously working at setting healthy boundaries for your children, you will learn to set them for yourselves too.

It is always a two way process. Giving and receiving are *exactly* the same thing, not two sides of the same coin, or dualities, whatever. Exactly the same thing. Learning is teaching which is learning. Exactly the same thing.

As with everything, small steps work. Acknowledging what works and re-enforcing *that*, works. The art of maintaining healthy boundaries in relationship is an ongoing process, one step at a time, with no end in sight. Until one day, when you have completely taken total responsibility for maintaining your healthy boundaries, you simply become aware that your relationships are actually *boundless*, and you taste true freedom.

In the meantime you have gifted your children beyond measure.

Nudity And Body Consciousness

Lighten up about body consciousness. We are inundated with air-brushed images of Perfect Bodies and Perfectly Beautiful women, men and even children - ever see a really "ugly" baby on TV?

So although we love them, and think they're beautiful, we worry that others won't and we give our two year old plastic surgery to have her ears tucked. Insanity!

Actually there is no such thing as an ugly human being. Some of our faces may be put together in unusual and diverse ways, but just look into any human being's eyes and connect with them, and beauty will be there in yet another unique form. This includes you.

This is all just about advertising, people.

Advertisers are expert manipulators. They take what they know to be our unconscious desires, dreads, dreams, and turn them into extremely powerful mind-control mechanisms in adverts. This is all in service of getting millions of people to spend money on things they do not actually need with money they do not actually have, to make the people who pay them a lot of money get much richer.

The problem is not 'them', it is we who buy into the whole deal, engage it and pour our energy and hard earned cash into the bottomless coffers.

We are ruled by materialism and are slaves to the ego of the body. I am all in favour of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and keeping the body fit and healthy for health's sake.

However, when we become slaves to the whole 'beauty' trip and we buy into someone else's standards of beauty (denying our own cultural and/or deeply personal choices) we get into all sorts of trouble. And we pass this on to the next and the next generation. We just become suckers.

Women who are 'overweight' spend, no, *waste*, agonising hours, days, weeks, months, years and a marvellous amount of money "fighting the flab" and attempting to mould their body into some idealised form, instead of celebrating the abundance of their natural shape.

I know many large women whose partners love and accept them exactly as they are, and yet they miss out on this, and doggedly pursue their self-torture. Out of all the infinite shapes women express, very seldom are many completely satisfied with their bodies anyway. We will find *something* to fix, fade or change.

And although men may not be as obvious about it, they are equally supportive of the whole travesty with regards to themselves as much as their women. Many men unconsciously regard 'their' women as a reflection of themselves. Hello! We are not even the same gender.

And because they actually deep down think themselves rather ugly, will go to ridiculous lengths to 'get' (often 'buy') a beautiful woman to show the world that they can't be all that bad! Is this true relationship? Of course not. A truly enlightened beautiful man (or woman) will be equally happy with a slim nymph or an old hag on his/her arm in relationship!

The majority of people who inhabit the earth do not even have the luxury of some body fat to sustain their lives. They are too caught up in the struggle to survive to even contemplate these issues.

Can you imagine the devastation in the 'beauty' industry if one day, every man and woman simply decided to accept their inherent perfection, exactly as they are, in one instant?

Total mayhem. How could they convince us to buy ANYTHING we didn't truly desire, from a beer to a fridge or car, since absolutely everything uses this premise to sell. Sex sells, people. Do you actually, truly buy into that? Do you want your children to be convinced to buy into that?

I have nothing against any of it: make up, fashion, gym, the works if we actually just played with it and enjoyed it like little children, and let go of it gracefully as we mature into deeper and more meaningful things. I have a problem with the fact that we think it is necessary and become slaves to it.

And we pass on all this paranoia to our children. We have skinny ten year olds worrying that they are 'getting fat' and worse a whole health industry to cater for the casualties of the pandemic - bulimics, anorexics, drug addicts, alcoholics, ad nauseum.

A lot of these issues are related to an inability to just accept ourselves exactly as we are. And of course we, the target market, are actually spoiled brats addicted to immediate gratification to numb ourselves out. In my experience, without T.V.'s and mirrors we actually kind of start to 'disappear' - we can't see ourselves, because we are looking *outward*.

And so all the physicality becomes just *less important*.

We stop obsessing about ourselves, and start to see others for who they truly are. We can start to accept the true beauty in another human being, which is way beyond how their face is put together, or whether their hair is straight or curly. And we start to enter relationship on a whole new level.

I have maintained a pretty open attitude toward nudity in our home. To my mind, the human body is a natural and beautiful thing to be cherished and appreciated, not hidden away, no matter what age or stage a person is at.

We don't flaunt our nudity, and if a person requests privacy, we respect their request, but no-one will freak out if any of us come out of the bathroom buck naked in search of some clean laundry. My children feel at home in their bodies. They are more balanced than I am in that regard.

They have watched my body go through all the womanly phases and changes. Pregnancy, post pregnancy, slim times, saggy boobs sadness, getting fit, getting fat, long hair, shockingly short hair, styled hair, hag bag phases, and dolled up to the nines. And I am grateful that they know *all* those phases.

How boring to always look exactly the same.

Odd Angels

It was in a dream I saw you stand
Beside this child – you held her hand.
Oh, such a sight it was to behold:
The tall, the small; all hair of gold.
Purity of moment; ever locked in space,
Peaceful radiance in each clear face.

In truth, it's both who slide on by,
Eyes downcast. Avoiding. Shy.
Dare you gaze deeply in this reflection,
See your own complete perfection?

Do you fear the surge to break
The silent scream of your deepest ache?

She is the mystery of your mastery
Shining back your gentle grace.
Power of innocence, tender tenth
Freedom trapped in helpless strength.
Stay, my friend, it 's your only duty –
Surrender. Feel the fullness of your beauty.

Sex And Sexuality

If you have pornography in your house, trust me, your children know it and they watch it too, when you are not there/busy/pre-occupied. They also show it to all their friends who come to play, so everyone else knows that you keep it, and that your children watch it. If porn is what floats your boat, just keep it completely away from the kids, please.

It affects their natural attitude towards sexuality and demeans it completely. They are literally bombarded with sex (not true sexuality) on television, in movies, magazines, adverts.....paying the price for our ridiculous obsessions and repressions.

Enough! Toss that stuff. As parents our job is to get our own sexuality sorted out – then porn will become obsolete.

We have demeaned sex and sexuality in our minds to just the act of intercourse. Now, we have to continue to re-invent it in more and more (sometimes truly bizarre) ways, because we completely miss the point. We crave fulfilment, satisfaction, affection, or even to dominate, control and manipulate each other through sex.

We have totally lost touch with the innocence of sex and our sexuality. It has been there since we were born. It has been through a multitude of ages and stages and transformations, and we have not celebrated this gift in ourselves. Our 'culture' has raped our sexual minds so much that the most we currently dare hope for is that the equipment actually works in the 'act', and we can 'achieve' what we think is orgasm!

Sexuality is the spirituality of the body. Sex is an incredibly beautiful, infinitely satisfying form of intimate communication between two human beings. It is an exchange of pure physical energy and, when engaged with the fullness of our original attention, and a genuine desire to give of ourselves, can really be the holiest of experiences. I cannot understand why celibacy has been such a big thing in religion.

And the old question "Was it good for you?" is one that *never* need be asked. Talk about sex by all means, openly and honestly, just do it when you are having a conversation, not when you are engaging the practice of your sexuality.

The truth is 'whole' or holy sex is a truly mind-blowing experience. At the point of true orgasm, there *are* no thoughts. There is no mind. There is not even a 'you'. So if there is any thinking going on ("Am I going to come? Is he going to?"), you are blocking the true experience. You are not giving yourself into this completely. You are holding back. You are pretending. The thought of anything different is terrifying to many people, but I assure you, remaining blocked is just painful. Get yourself onto a sexuality workshop and liberate yourself!

How do you feel about menstruation, masturbation, wet dreams, genitals? Are you at ease with the words? Can you chat about these topics to your children?

We can be sure our children are going to pick up on our unconscious, unexpressed (at least verbally) attitudes. These are all 100% natural (NATURAL) processes in human development. And yet for years we have oppressed and repressed our sexuality, and we carry an inherited sense of shame around sexuality. No wonder we can be so easily manipulated with sex!

We have lost or bastardised the ancient rituals and rites of passage which were meant to allow the maturation of our natural expression of our innate sexuality. Celebrate your daughter's first menstruation. Feel with her the emergence of her womanhood.

Establish some new rituals. Your own, if your culture has stripped you of soulful ceremony. It doesn't have to be grand, just heart-warming, soul-warming.

Celebrate the process of your sons becoming men and encourage them to respect themselves, their bodies and their sexuality.

Tell them the *truth* about sex – that it is beautiful to engage, and a natural part of life. Respect the women/men in your life, and they will.

Walk the talk, and no teaching will be necessary. No special (painful) birds and bees talks. Just meaningful discussion when appropriate to your child, and usually initiated by your curious child. Just shared wisdom.

Twin Flames Passion

Hot hand slips smoothly
onto bared skin and rests softly;
nestled hotly on curve of hip.
Heart stops, bursts open, beating
Hard. Blood surges, sweeping
Desire. Awakening every cell
in vibrant aliveness.
in the endless pause of a moment.
Passion absorbs body, and Being
is all there is, suspended
animation; anticipation.
Resistance rises, melts as the
soft, slow caress travels
lazily, with intent, setting
afire to the whole, radiating.
Exploding thought into a distant
shower of shimmering sparks.
Breath quickens, flames fanned into
a rushing tide. Waves crashing in
wild abandon to explode on the
shore of bodies merging, mingling.
Thought dashes in to save itself,
drowning, clutching, desperate to
escape it's own demise;
Instantly dashed by soul's surrender
consecrated in the white hot light
of spontaneous combustion.

Spirituality

I dreamed that I had an interview with God.
“So, you would like to interview me?” God asked.
“If you have the time” I said.
God smiled. “My time is eternity: what questions do you have in mind to ask me?”
“What surprises you most about humankind?”

God answered..
“That they get bored with childhood.
They rush to grow up and then long to be children again.
That they lose their health to make money and then
lose their money to restore their health.
That by thinking anxiously about the future, they forget the present, such that
they live in neither the present, nor the future.
That they live as if they will never die, and they die as if they had never lived.”

God’s hands took mine and we were silent for a while and then I asked.
“As a parent, what are some of life’s lessons you want your children to learn?”

God replied with a smile:

“To learn that they cannot make anyone love them.
What they can do is let themselves be loved.
To learn that what is most valuable is not what they have in their lives, but
who they have in their lives.
To learn that it is not good to compare themselves to others.
To learn that a rich person is not the one who has the most, but
the one who needs the least.
To learn that it only takes a few seconds to open profound wounds in persons one loves, and that it may
take many years to heal them.
To learn to forgive by practicing forgiveness.
To learn that there are persons who love them dearly, but simply do not know how to express or show
their feelings.
To learn that money can buy everything but happiness.
To learn that two people can look at the same thing and see it very differently.
To learn that it is not always enough that they be forgiven by others but that they must also forgive
themselves.
And to learn that I am here.....ALWAYS.”

Author Unknown

So. God. God is infinite. So by definition, it is impossible to define God. We, in our finite minds, cannot begin to comprehend the infinite (impossible), so we create religions, belief systems, cults, anything to squeeze the “concept of God” into some remotely definable “box”.

And then we proceed to declare these very definitions (dogma) sacred mysteries, beyond the comprehension of mortal minds, and ask each other (or even *force* each other) to accept traditions, theories, dogma etc. on blind faith.

I have no problem with faith.

As a lived experience, faith leads us to disturbance which leads us to marvel and thus experience mastery. When we engage faith (by stepping into the complete unknown) in our lives, miracles *abound!* We enter our natural state of innocence - like newborns we become totally vulnerable and receptive. And, like newborns, we radiate our essential nature which is Divine.

Usually, we are so preoccupied by our beliefs /thoughts/ideas/dogma that we only ever dip our *toenails* into the direct *experience* of that which guides/powers all that is.

We forget to *experience* and *express* divinity. Very young children are still free enough for a while to both fully and freely experience, and impart what we call essence/source/god. Shame! Can't we even see?

And nogal, we still try to convince them that OUR ideas of God are right and the only acceptable ideas of God. We teach them to believe that other (different/inferior) people have other (different/inferior) ideas about God, and that OUR ideas are really only right and true, and EVERYBODY ELSE's (even those who share remarkably similar ideas about God) ideas are deluded and inferior.

We wrap this all in a cultural cloak and extend this twisted premise to “everybody different is inferior”. And then! Then, we convince our children (who only wish to please us) that these ideas of God are worth killing and dying for, because we are so determined to be RIGHT!

We rob our children of the *direct experience of God* (mud puddles, dandelion seeds, stroking the cat/puppy/splashing in the hose pipe water on a hot day, chasing birds in the garden, being silly and laughing till we fall down, etc. to infinity), so that they will conform, often through fear, to our inherited/accepted *beliefs and ideas* about God!

Consider the irony of Christianity, whose basic premise can be summed up in one sentence “Love thy neighbour as thyself”. Over the centuries, Christians/the Church perpetrated more evil acts in the name of “God” than a paltry few Satanists have ever managed in the name of “evil”. And the American and Muslim extremists are doing pretty well in this department right now too. We are all equally accountable for our actions.

And let's not blame it on just the Catholics of old – every reborn Christian I have ever dealt with is convinced I am going to hell because I haven't undertaken a (their) ritual to publicly be ‘saved’ or declare Jesus as my personal saviour!

And *each* sect is convinced that Heaven is reserved exclusively for “we who are right!” Poor God. I am convinced the only way “He” could win in creating a Heaven for them all would be strictly segregated “Catholic Only” / “Muslim Only” / “Reborn Only” sections. I'll have the General Ward please God.

A good man arrives at the gates of Heaven and is met by the gatekeeper. “Ah, my son,” says he. “You have lived a simple life. You have loved well and lived well. You have been kind, sincere, truthful, honest, gentle, loving and compassionate. But I didn't see you much in the churches or temples.”

"True," replied the man.

"I was never a church goer. I preferred to be the very best human being I could be every moment of every day. It was not always easy, and I had a lot to overcome. I feel fulfilled and have no regrets. I said what needed to be said to whom it needed to be said. I had no enemies, only friends who forgot themselves on occasion."

"Indeed," said the gatekeeper. "Welcome, my friend, your mansion awaits." On the way, the man saw an acquaintance whom he had enjoyed in life, and turned in delight to greet the man who had been devoutly religious.

"Don't bother," said the gatekeeper. "He won't see you. That group think they're the only ones here."

In my experience, Heaven is any moment, any simple moment of joy, when we experience the presence of love, or rather Love's Presence.

Moments in which we are unbound by the ideas/beliefs we hold, freed of our judgements and prejudices and fear, and simply feel and experience the energy of love.

I don't mean our **idea** of love. I mean a bird in flight, an exquisite blossom (there must be billions on the planet), the compassionate touch of a stranger, a random act of kindness, the laughter of a child, the graceful dance of a tree swaying in the wind, friends holding hands, a moment alone bathed in the pure awareness of all that we don't know, the light radiating from a soapy bubble, a song or piece of music that sends tingles and goose bumps all over my body, endless moments.

Recently, I had the privilege of being present with a number of children who were having an animated and congenial discussion of many of the ancient, and some more modern ideas, of God. They were discussing who was who in the 'Ancient Celestial Zoo', and fitting some more modern versions into the fray. Then, a five year old piped up in absolutely authentic knowing:

"Yes, but the MAIN god is *powered love*."

I have never heard a better description. Both his parents are atheist. Another time, a four year old happened to be present when I was struck by the splendour of the stars in a dark night sky. The child asked me. "Do you know why the stars are there?" "No," I said. "Why?" He replied, "So when people forget, they can look at them, and remember God." Both parents are also atheist.

Another time I was working at a school fair, and asked a whole bunch of children aged about 5 to 12, "What is the most powerful number of all?" Without fail, and with no hesitation at all, every one of them answered "One". They didn't have to think about it.

The truth is, we are *literally* one. We are all *part of* the same soul/source which is what we sometimes call God. This soul/source generates all inspired thoughts and ideas (where else could they come from?), and arranges matter in an infinite variety of creative ways to generate bodies, so that we all get to be 'individual' for a while, and experience, and play on this amazing planet in one form or another.

Some people say the 'ego' has no place in this. Well, I simply cannot see how it *can't* have. The ego is simply a set of ideas, mental constructs and defence mechanisms.

At some point in a child's life, the mind will identify itself to **be** the being. I remember now when this happened in my life.

Note, it was not a bad thing. We have to forget who we really are in order to remember who we really are. That way, we get to experience what we are not, too. (Yeah this one can really get the mind in a tangle!).

The 'ego' is not a thing. It is not real, and has no power. It is simply an instrument with which we are enabled to have the human experience. The best thing we can do with the ego, is recognise it's nature (a set of ideas, mental constructs and defence mechanisms); set about noticing the 'wounds' of the ego which give rise to our wounded thinking; feel it all and heal it all.

During this process we allow ourselves to become more and more vulnerable, like tiny children, and more and more open to our essential nature – joy, wonder, delight, F.U.N., beauty, peace, light, radiance. Awful becomes awe-full.

We open more and more to the *direct experience* of Love's Presence. We become freer to reach out to another human being beyond our inhibitions and doubts. Compassion burns alive once more, and we feel less inclined to hurt other human beings by reacting from our fear and insecurities, which dissolve as the truth of our essential nature as human beings emerges.

The truth is that Heaven has been here all along. It is now. All we have to do is take the first step in opening our minds and hearts to receiving it here, now. I cannot say how this works. I have experienced, and am still experiencing this process.

I have felt terror turn to faith; hate become acceptance, then compassion; I have stood in forgiveness which is letting go; I have been healed of diabetes, arthritis, and seen others healed; I have seen another human being go from feeling tortuous agony, her face contorted and distorted with pain, to pure light, radiance and utter beauty in a split second of letting go. A total transformation in one split second reflected absolutely in the physical.

And even still, with all the wondrous marvels I have experienced, the minds chews ever on the ideas, and deeply buried unconscious beliefs. So, one day I decided to stop believing in God 'who' I was actually quite attached to. This might shock some people. I found it really scary. Then, in the moment I said "yes" to this idea, I remembered that beliefs are simply thoughts and ideas.

In letting go of these thoughts and ideas about God, I was once again allowing myself to consciously step into the direct experience of God. And it started straight away, in ways that were actually quite absurd on occasion.

To be honest, it has always been happening. My thoughts and ideas and fears were just blocking the experience for a lot of the time. Or flavouring the experience. We all create our own experiences in life. We can choose how to experience any given moment. We *do* in fact, we just choose unconsciously. Without awareness, we suffer what is. With awareness, we can accept what is and celebrate it, whether it be joy or pain.

When we start to celebrate life in this way, old pain starts to dissolve and a joy beyond our comprehension takes it's place. This sometimes happens in the very moments of devastation/disaster that we actively fear, and avoid at all costs (literally at great expense). There is a certain indefinable/indestructible peace in 'losing' everything. It can only be experienced, not described /believed. There is also absolute liberation in the moments we realise we are not our things, we are not our bodies, we are not our names.

In fact, it is in these moments that we wake up, we awaken a little to the experience of who we really are. And there is only one, with a gazillion different thoughts and ideas, and an infinite variety of forms.

OK. So if this has blown your mind, fantastic. If you think it is a load of codswallop, fantastic. If you *believe* a word I say, throw this book away right now. If something I have expressed has struck a chord of truth, then test it out, play with it, create your own experience, and *allow your children theirs*.

You can't teach your small children anything about God, because they still remember and know God, and are still relatively in touch with their own divine nature. Teach them about religion if you must, and add tolerance of other, different, religious faiths. Allow their own spirituality to develop naturally. Allow them to express themselves. Listen to them. Respect what they have to say. Allow them the space to experience it all and share it with you.

The Prayer

Teach me to love in the face of fear,
My own or another's.
Teach me to open, when I feel afraid that in opening
I will disappear into the nothing.
Teach me to breathe, when I constrict into mind -
To reach once again the space of my soul.
Teach me to dive into the void –
Fearless, rejoicing, free.
Teach me to drink of the cup which I have chosen
Of my free will,
And relish the nectar of life,
In whichever form Life presents in this moment.

Teach me to seek the eternal, sacred peace within,
At the moments when I fear conflict will tear apart
The very fabric of my existence.
Teach me to surrender my pride, and gracefully,
Gratefully receive the support of everything
And everyone around me.

Teach me to release completely, those whom I think
I love the most and cannot do without;
To free them from the illusions of my mind,
Into the vastness of the Love that is We.

Teach me of humility, so that I may receive
The Grace of each breath, and so, feel the dignity
Of a human being the liver of a soulful life.
Teach me of creation, that I may find
Ways of being which work, for all those
Who share the space I am in.
Teach me of thirst, of fire,
Of insatiable hunger for knowledge,
Of just is.

Teach me of stillness, so I can feel Life and I
Subtly weaving the fabric of Who I Am
Becoming all that I can be.
Teach me nothing, so that I may learn

Uniquely.
Share your wisdom with me,
So that we may learn together.
Teach me to dance to the rhythm of
Your heart and mine, entwined.

Dreams And Imagination

Do you live the life of your dreams? Have you made many of your dreams come true? When last did you examine your long forgotten childhood dreams? Did you give up on them ages ago, leaving them to gather dust in the furthest reaches of your mind, because you decided you or they weren't good enough? Or you don't have enough money to live them? Or you're too old to dabble in dreams?

Take a few minutes to just write a few lines (pages if that works) on the dreams you *have* fulfilled, from the simplest ones to the grander visions. Dreams can be infinitely simple. You may have longed for a pair of red shoes when you were nine. Now you may have nine pairs of red shoes in your cupboard, and have forgotten to appreciate the miracle of it.

Once you feel complete, take out one *unfulfilled* dream. Dust it off on the page by writing about it – you can be completely honest and free here. No-one is going to see this but you. You can burn it when you are complete, or not. Go really wild - describe colours, textures, specific details, everything! Let the pen move across the page until you feel completely satisfied that you have left no detail out.

Congratulations! You have just taken the first step in manifesting this dream. “Nonsense!” you say? “I don't have this kind of money.” “I'm far too old.” “I'm not talented or qualified enough!” “I'd make a total fool of myself if I even SPOKE about this!”.

Say hello to your ego. The basic construct upon which the ego is built is the idea that “I am not enough”. This decision is taken when we are incredibly young and recognise our dependence on “other” for our survival. The mind is a necessary tool for the human experience. Unfortunately, the decisions it makes are often re-enforced so well that it becomes the reason we sell our dreams out, or make them into grandiose schemes which gratify (for a few seconds) the ego “I”, the little “me” who feels powerless and not enough just as we are.

“When I win the Lotto and have R20 Million, then I can start to help people with it!”

“Sigh!”

And in the meantime we get away with being mediocre. Leading mediocre lives devoid of purpose and fulfilment. Chasing the almighty and elusive buck to compensate for the emptiness we feel when we live the life of the taker, instead of that of the born givers we all are. Most dreams at the level of their essence are about making the difference we were born to make.

The truth is we make a difference just being alive, here, now. Fat, thin, ugly, pretty, clever, stupid, kind, mean. Any which way I am or think I am, I **cannot ever** be anything other than what I really, truly am which is a spark of God, a facet of God playing a role in the human experience. We are so ***blind***, we only have the tiniest, teeniest inkling of the infinite majesty of who we truly are.

We are afraid to taste that, test that, spread our angel wings and leap from the nest, to simply fly free. We would rather huddle in our nests, or perch twittering on the edges, frantically postponing the inevitable. I don't believe a single bird, EVER, has taken wing and failed or fallen. Some may have been pushed out of their nests by others, or knocked from them before their time, but once ready, I believe it is innately impossible for a bird to fail to fly. Birds fly. Period. They take wing, they give it all they've got and they fly.

They don't throw a party, get a license, pat each other on the back. No, they just get on with it and continue to fly.

I have confronted the illusion that I need money to make a difference in the world – I don't. I just have to be awake, be myself, stay aware of the connection of everything and everyone. And have fun! Just one glorious smile from a new baby and *everything* is well in the Universe; all is light; all is joy and peace in that blessing of a moment. THAT is a human being.

We are all born human beings. We become humans doing and strive to be humans having. What an illusion! We have it all backwards.

Herein lies the Kingdom of Heaven. A child's eyes. A child's laugh. The graceful way of flowers in the wind. We are beloved – all one of us.

The truth is when we are operating from this kind of innocence *nothing* needs doing to make our dreams come true. If we can imagine it, we can create it. I have learned this from my children, and a couple of true stories describe this far better than I can.

Jason had a dream – going to his Matric dance in a yellow Lamborghini. He did. Tiffany had a dream – to own a horse. She does now. Vicky had a dream - getting a sewing machine for her birthday so she can design and create dresses! It's done. And not one of these things cost even *one cent*. They came about through a combination of faith, and the children doing what needed doing in their natural integrity without any expectation.

I have photographs.

The Hole

Once, upon an endless beach
Sat a child with hair of gold,
Trying to fill a hole in the sand
As in a fable she'd been told.

To and fro she ran in vain,
Her eternal supply the rolling sea.
Each time, slowly, her effort sank
Away, away. Relentlessly.

"Stupid sand, stupid sea!"
She cried with childish pride,
And as she turned, the hole was filled
By the creeping, rushing tide.

Education

Qualifications vs. Passion and creativity

What is the purpose of school and education? Is it to empower our children to know themselves and develop healthy relationships with appropriate boundaries and behaviour towards their fellow human beings? Is it to encourage them to find and follow their passion, to allow them to learn and discover that which serves them in mastering their own unique energy so that they may live full, free, satisfying lives?

Or is it to pump them full of the 'knowledge' required to 'make it' in this material world. Why are some schools 'better' than others? Some people pay small fortunes so that their children can carve their way into the world of the privileged, perpetuating the have/have not angle which has clearly not worked for aeons.

Others have either not the awareness or the means to do anything other than hand their children over to the nearest institution, driven by strangers, and enforcing systems that were originally created by industrialists and politicians who were more concerned with retaining power and position and creating a controllable "work force" than anything else.

We forget that we as a whole have created and/or upheld these institutions through our own compliance acting from our ignorance and conditioning.

We forget that we as parents and people *do have a choice*. It is parents who are willing to be awake and take responsibility for what we create and uphold, that will have the capacity to change what clearly doesn't work in the education systems today.

How many people do you personally know who truly loved school? How many brilliant minds did not fit in at school and yet went on to change our world?

Albert Einstein was called uneducable by his teachers, so his mother kept him home and allowed him to learn. Imagine that.

School Systems and Ritalin

How many children do you know or know of today who have to be drugged just in order to be at school?

Anyone who investigates the numbers of children on Ritalin (a scheduled prescription drug) in the education system, has **got** to be shocked.

A young mother told me the other day four out of thirty two children in her son's *junior* primary class were **NOT** on Ritalin! And it was a requirement that he be on the drug in order to attend the school. The teachers own two children are both on Ritalin, and so she is caught in the cycle too.

This young mom tried taking it one day and said she had exactly the same experience as she had when she tried crack cocaine.

And then we feed our children chocolate cereal with their morning pill to "take the taste away". Is this the bitter taste of our own guilt perhaps, or simply our feeling of powerlessness?

And we feed them on take-away and processed foods to stimulate the appetite the drug takes away. How many children now have ever eaten something they actually grew in a garden?

Encourage your child to establish a small circular vegetable garden one metre in diameter, and just witness their delight when they eat something natural that they have nurtured and cultivated from a seed or seedling.

Some people say they have used Ritalin with discretion and had useful results. Fantastic. But look at the FIGURES people. Surely we can see that it is necessary for the system to adapt to the children, not the other way around!!!

There is a lot of information available on this worldwide trend. If your child is affected, it is your responsibility to wake up and conduct a *thorough* investigation before you make choices regarding the rest of their lives.

Don't just take the experts' advice. The experts *never* agree. Then, new experts always override what the old experts said. And someone is paying that expert's salary. Someone who stands to gain from their expert advice.

I suggest we stop looking at what we think is 'wrong' with our children, and start to look at how systems are no longer serving our children, and thus humanity as a whole. Are the majority of people in this world simply breeders of workers who are raised to uphold systems and structures which are failing as I write?

I suggest we start focusing on what our children have to offer as the unique and amazing individuals that they are. When will we stop labelling and changing them, and allow them to express themselves and their unique talents and abilities into this world? When will we start to look beyond our projected dreams, expectations and ambitions, and see the potential human beings they really are – and act on that when making choices?

Why are we shocked when children take it upon themselves to kill other children at our schools? All we have to do is open our minds, open our eyes, open our ears, and open our hearts. Just look at the society we have created for them to live in. Just listen to what they have to say – the wisdom of the children can change the world if we but have the humility to hear it. If we just wake up.

We can no longer hide. We live in a time of reckoning. And who we have to answer to is ourselves, each other and our children. It is time for us to truly wake up; to own the fact that we have actively or passively created this society, this world. It is time for us to see what we have created, and upheld, through the eyes of the innocents, and *feel* the cost of the taker's world we live in. We, being the takers in our unconsciousness.

We can no longer blindly bull ahead and leave it for future generations to deal with. The prize which the human race is vying and grasping for is nothing less than extinction! All 6.5 billion of us. We know from studying nature that if any one species gets too populous or dominant for its environment to sustain, they all die. What makes us think humans are any different? We are 21st century dinosaurs on hot bricks.

Roger Waters, in his album "Amused to Death" says "Moslem or Christian, Mullah or Pope, Preacher or Poet, who was it wrote? Give any one species too much rope and they'll fuck it up." Sad, and true. Yes, the planet is stirring, people are starting to wake up. We don't have forever to do it for *this* Earth, for *this* planet, for *these* children here, now.

Alternatives

Recently I went through what I perceived at the time as a devastating experience – the man I got divorced from, and the father of my daughters, stopped paying school fees in order that he may drive a Landrover (his dream car). The girls were at a Waldorf School, in part to keep my youngest daughter off Ritalin, and because I felt their holistic approach was the best way to serve my daughters educationally. It was expensive. I was responsible for 50% of the cost of their education, and had a bursary for one child.

I also had another, older child to educate for which I was entirely financially responsible. I attempted legal action through the maintenance courts.

He was completely supported in his choice by the inadequacy of the justice system, and managed to evade a court order for school fees to be enforced. There was no option but for the school to eventually ask me to remove my children. We were devastated. As were their friends and teachers. As I left the admin offices to fetch them from their classes, I had no idea how we would manage.

By the time we left the premises, we had gone from weeping to laughing, to both at once. The outpouring of love and compassion and hugs from pupils, teachers and staff was mind blowing. If nothing else, the girls knew that they were well loved. Even though I worked full time, I could not afford to put both girls through an even half-way decent public school, and there was nowhere else to go. I resigned, and came home to home school, keeping only one small part time job to sustain us.

This has been another incredible journey, although it took quite a long time for me to get my mind around the reality and take the necessary steps to support us in this direction. As usual, when I surrendered to letting Grace guide the process, I found we were supported in acquiring a decent curriculum and workbooks. As we have progressed, I have found the girls maturing amazingly in their attitude to schoolwork.

Plus they have time to devote to their particular passions – horses in one case, and dress designing in the other. It also happened (thanks Dad!) that my son got a student loan and started his university degree by correspondence, also studying full time at home.

Not for the faint of heart, though, being a mother-teacher. There is no separation of roles for the children, and they already know all of the mother buttons well. So I was assured of another stretch in the awakening game, with the best teachers in the Universe. I have no idea how it will all turn out. I still have no court order for school fees 18 months later.

I do know that my attitude towards school and education has changed radically. The children read voraciously (Tolkien and Harry Potter being firm favourites) and retain information regarding what they are interested in amazingly well. The latest development is a hands on course in organic permaculture, as a wonderful woman has recently begun developing gardens on the farm where we live. Recently, Tiffany (13) spoke up at a public meeting protesting a development in the conservancy, and her comments were listened to, and heard by the people present.

I encourage parents to start to communicate with each other and the teachers. It doesn't help to make the teachers wrong. It works to start educating ourselves, creating supportive and pro-active groups who are willing to meet with teachers to discuss what is happening and come up with workable solutions. To develop new ways of being in relationship with education. To establish and accept fundamental new ideas on which to base our education systems in the future.

CREATIVITY	vs.	INTELLECT
Inspiration		Intention

Inspiration = in spire (spire = tallest part of a building like a church) = feel inside the higher self = connect with infinite intelligence within

There is nothing wrong with intellect. It is useful and purposeful in the human experience. It is the springboard from which we acquire knowledge about the world we inhabit, and apply that knowledge to create results. This often entails quite a bit of effort and struggle when we become bogged down in this as the only way to operate, and we can set ourselves up in many ways.

In this mode of operation, we are self-reliant, we are reliant on worldly things, we believe in facts and figures and limitations. We even get caught up in the idea of intention, and that is just a form of wishful thinking. We can *act from* clear, purposeful intention, which is a useful tool in creating effective results in the world.

Creativity however, is the *ocean* into which we dive when *inspiration* is the leading force. When inspired, we enter the realm of infinite intelligence, and we notice that we are always in the presence of miracles. When creativity is open, we are open and receptive to the highest part of ourselves, within.

I always chuckle to myself when I hear people say “look within” or “go within”. I mean how can we possibly “look” or “go” within – I’ve tried it, I go nowhere and see nothing. However, I *have* found that when inspired, I see *from* within, and come *from* within.

When we act in inspired ways (enthused = filled with spirit/God) we create miracles. This occurs with absolute ease and grace. In this (natural) state of being, we are simply moved to act by the Divine (Infinite Intelligence) within, and paths unfold in mysterious and beautiful ways way beyond anything our minds/intellect could even conceive of. Gives new meaning to the words “The cheese moves”.

The intellect is limited to what we know – hence we find ourselves saying things like “You will not believe what just happened.” “That’s incredible”. “Never!” When inspired, we recognise and feel that we are connected in ways that the finite mind is incapable of imagining. We “read” each others minds, we “bump into” the perfect person/s to advance our current project or purpose, we telephone each other at opportune moments.

And this is limitless, and I repeat, our *natural* state of being. This kind of synchronicity is like a clear map – we only have to be awake to it. It is important to realise that synchronicity is simply synchronicity – It is a clear message that we are on track. If we get attached to marvelling at it and attaching meaning to synchronicity, we can easily lose the plot. We can lose sight of the simplicity of miracles, and the vastness of the potential that we are. Together, inspired, we are unstoppable.

Often, when creativity is blocked, the voice of self doubt sabotages us literally at every turn. I christened my ego “Thomas” to remind myself of this. That is when we stop following the inspiration, and get bogged down in worldly ‘facts’ and ‘figures’, effectively blocking our own progress.

Luckily, there is plenty of support out there. Remember, inspiration is our natural state of being. Just watch small children – they *are* the miracles. We achieve the most miraculous feats of our lives before we are five – we learn to crawl, walk, speak, jump, run and interact with others) all with *no instruction whatsoever*.

Did you know that the act of crawling is wholly motivated by the feeling of pure frustration?

Babies from as early as around six months old begin to become aware of objects as separate from themselves (develop subject/object consciousness), and cannot reach the object of their desire lying on the belly. Their frustration is *complete* and they feel it **completely**. This motivates their efforts to move their bodies forward in utter determination and with complete focus in the natural crawling motion.

Children whose parents can’t be with the intensity of this frustration and constantly ‘help’ them, often don’t crawl at all. Sad, considering that crawling stimulates the same parts of the brain which are later used for reading and mathematical reasoning. Worse, the child is given the immediate and perhaps long term impression that frustration is to be avoided at all costs, often eventually exhibiting neurotically frustrated, demanding, ‘spoiled child’ behaviours. Instead of feeling independent, capable and free.

We can *cripple* our children with unconscious 'kindness'. All emotion is purposeful. E-motion = feeling which engenders motion or moves a person to action. That is the true purpose of feelings. Feelings fully and freely felt (without thoughts, judgements or ideas attached) motivate us to act in a manner which is *true to ourselves*.

In this way, anger, which we are conditioned to believe is bad, and which we are taught to suppress from a very early age, is a very useful tool. Obviously, we need to look at this. Suppressed anger causes all sorts of blocks and even disease; expressed anger is healthier than suppressed anger; anger simply felt fully, free of judgement or projection, is clarifying and can motivate us to act in magnificent ways.

So too, when we are tempted to feel forsaken, let us remind ourselves and each other, that *everything* indeed happens for our own sake, and by that I mean we have created this, whatever it may be, for the sake of ourselves. Together, inspired, we are unstoppable.

Entertainment

This species is indeed slowly amusing itself to death. Sport is the religion of the 21st Century. Entertainment has replaced having fun, and it is expensive. Of course. Because we have given away our ability to have fun and expect to be entertained instead. So we make some people very rich in our apathy. I have no issue with watching movies, playing sport, whatever people do for entertainment. But when we become dependent on these forms of entertainment, and forget how to have simple FUN, there's a problem.

T.V. = zombification. T.V. can render even *children* unconscious. Watching hours of repetitive cartoons and other mindless junk saps their vitality. It is said we use more brain cells sleeping than we do watching T.V. And yet, we as parents even encourage it, so we can 'get things done'. Tiny babies are plonked in front of T.V.s so that we can keep the pace of our hectic lifestyles. I don't have a T.V. in the house and we don't miss it. When there is something to watch we trek up to the farmhouse and watch there, and we are far too lazy to make the trip for something less than worthwhile.

I'm not saying it's all bad. There are some wonderful contributions to be enjoyed – I love Spongebob Square Pants. But once a week works, not several hours at a stretch. As my daughter pointed out today, when something is no longer a privilege, it loses it's flavour. Children can easily adapt to selective T.V. watching. It is when the set is left permanently on that the problem comes in. Switch it off.

And, as much as computers and technology have to offer, the same applies. Too much is damaging. Let your children socialise with real people in real time and develop real friendships, not indulge in the virtual reality of Facebook and Mixit. Empower them to use these tools, and not lose themselves to them.

Take a blanket outside, have a picnic, lie in the sun with them and watch clouds. Chase butterflies. Blow bubbles. Run around crazily. Make mud pies. You will have happy, re-energised children, instead of grumpy little zombies. And that goes for the parents too.

Gratitude

Thank you for your time and attention. Reading this book is one thing. Being inspired by even one idea in it, is another. Acting on that inspiration is the first step to creating a miraculous unfolding in your life and your children's lives that will *ricochet* out into the world by *your* actions. It is possibly the first step you can take in creating a world that works for everyone, everywhere; A world that is inheritable to our children.

Only *you* can take that first step. The saying "charity (love) begins at home" is true. Only you can be willing to take any idea and make it real in this world. An idea is just an idea until someone takes action with it and makes it real.

If you have seen even one truth here, please take it, own it, act on it, take the necessary steps in your life to enable you to make the difference you were born to make.

Do the work (of being conscious) – in whatever form you choose.

Share the work – communicate it into your world.

Serve the work – assist others by supporting them to see the truth, and take the steps necessary to enrich their lives, and their children's lives.

The work entails no effort and struggle, just faith, courage and surrender. Each time pain arises, love is rising behind it, so all that is required is to allow the love to expunge the pain, leaving you to rest in joy.

Yours sincerely,

Janet O'Donoghue

nta@eastcoast.co.za

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Wake-Up-Mom-Dad-Wake-Up/131669743516366>

Kahlil Gibran : On Children

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them,
but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children
as living arrows are sent forth.
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite,
and He bends you with His might
that His arrows may go swift and far.
Let our bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;
For even as He loves the arrow that flies,
so He loves also the bow that is stable.

BE CONSISTENT WITH YOUR WORD	LISTEN
QUALITY OF ATTENTION	TRUTH TELLING
TRUTH HEARING	BREATHE
CHILDREN LEARN BY EXAMPLE	HEALTHY BOUNDARIES
RE-COMMIT	YOU CAN SAY NO

Journal Pages

Okay, I am giving this seemingly pointless exercise a go:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

[illegible]

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 30 evenly spaced horizontal black lines running across the width of the page, typical of notebook or legal stationery. The lines are uniform in thickness and spacing, providing a guide for writing. There are no margins, text, or other markings present on the page.

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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