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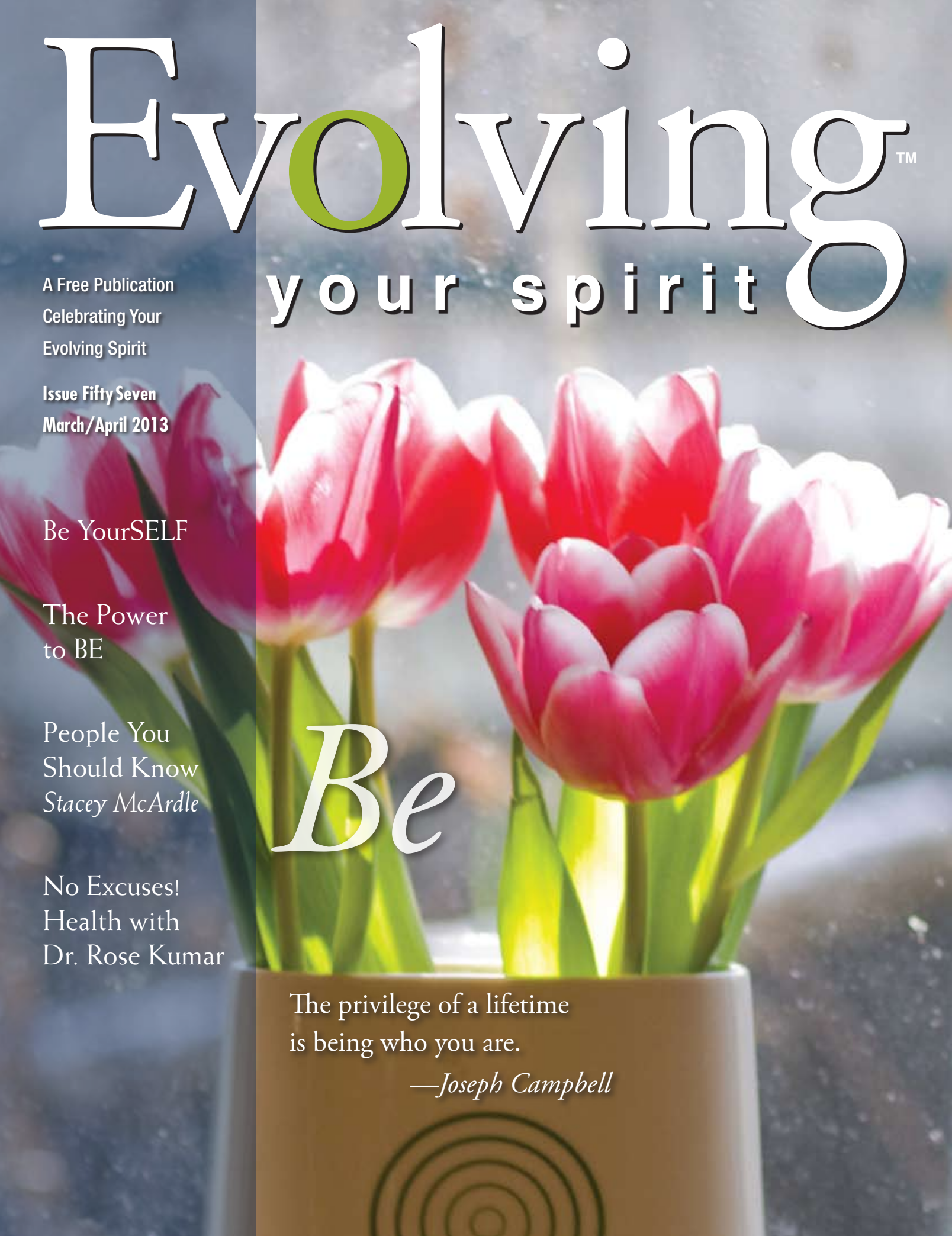
Issue Fifty Seven
March/April 2013

Be YourSELF

The Power
to BE

People You
Should Know
Stacey McArdle

No Excuses!
Health with
Dr. Rose Kumar



Be

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is being who you are.

—Joseph Campbell

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Evolving your spirit

A Free Publication Celebrating
Your Evolving Spirit

Issue Fifty Seven | Mar/Apr 2013

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Please see the Submission Guidelines which are up on our website

Placing an Ad
Contact Debbie at 847-726-2093 or debbie@evolvingyourspirit.com

The next issue of *Evolving Your Spirit* will be available May 15.
Our theme will be *Bloom*.

A complete list of our topics for next year are up on our website in the Media Kit.

Please write in with your ideas and comments to debbie@evolvingyourspirit.com. Thanks!

Check out our Website!

We've got a great *Calendar of Events* up there (you can sign up to receive it monthly as an email!), our new *Online Professional Directory*, all the past issues of the magazine that you can download, as well as info on how to sign up to have *Evolving Your Spirit* delivered to your home if you like.

BE...

Loving this topic. Gives me lots to think about as usual. And this is a focus not on thinking, but on BEing. Can you feel the difference? I think it's important to ponder the difference, and to BE as much as possible. Meditation is a great way to stop the mind chatter and allow yourself to stay in the moment. If you haven't been meditating, why not make a practice of doing it for a bit, if not every day, then several days a week. You might find that it is a place you can learn to go back to and center from more often than you might think.

Enjoy the spring. I think this is my favorite time to be, breathe, and feel the beautiful earth around me as it wakes up from its winter slumber and everything begins to come alive and grow. The fresh smells, and warm breezes are a welcome shift from the cold we've just experienced. Not to mention watching the busy-ness of the birds and wildlife as they hatch their young.

We've got a wealth of great articles for you to enjoy. As always, I'm excited to get your comments and feedback. Just email me at debbie@evolvingyourspirit.com. I'm also excited to report that the radio show is doing great. We've got a lot of regular listeners and they report that they're enjoying it. Take a look at the new quote page as well, advertised on the left of this page. Lots of new stuff in the works, so stay tuned!

Have you noticed that the magazine is in full color now? I'm excited about it, and I feel it brings a lot more life to the pages. I found a new printing resource and the issues are also now available online as page turning files that you can flip through. I hope you enjoy it!

Best,

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Discover the Power *to Be*

by Maggie Wilkins

Can you feel it resting at your core, emanating the essence of who you BE that has always been and will always be? If you are looking for this BE from the mind, you will not find it.

What is to BE?

I feel that *to BE* is to live from *stillness*.

It is living from the awareness that the expression of what always was and what will always be, comes from within you through your individual human expression. This expression is displayed to the world as an aspect of the Creator's love and unique collaboration with your body/mind/soul. You share in waiving the oneness that we are through your actions and words in consciousness. Your life outplay is the residue from this.

No matter who you are or what you know, this BEing is tender and is an infinite stream of love, often showing up as peace or joy in your outer life.

I know this, Being of peace and joy is beyond feeling good or well, even abundance. This BEing of peace and joy holds the essence of acceptance, allowing, embracing what *is* in this moment in your life.

My personal inquiry to BE, started when I was working with Eckhart Tolle, discovering the *power of now*. I became aware that the first step was to hear my mind's noise of judgment about what was happening in my life. The judgment about my feelings concerning "bad things" and the fear of losing the "good things". Once I understood this, it helped me to accept, allow, and embrace what I was witnessing as it was happening. Knowing that at the core there is an essence of *me* or it would not be there. I looked within my life situation and paid attention to what it was showing me. How I was living from a sort of "mind story of conditioning". Since then, it feels like slowly, bit by bit, the infinite being that *I am* began transforming my life to the magic I am living today.

To me, *life* is impermanence, *to BE* is not. Life is unpredictable, to BE is not. Life is pain and suffering, to BE is not. When you find who you BE, I feel you will witness this life in the impermanant, unpredictable, even painful unfolding as a flow from grace, guiding you to make choices that empower your life rather than employ it.

When these or other words bring up judgment or confusion in me, there's a process I like to use. The next time you are aware you are judging something, stop and take a breath, allow the body to slow down, go within for just a moment and *feel*. You are not trying to change anything or fix the thought or feeling. Simply witness what you are feeling in this moment.

Scan yourself to see if there is any discomfort or pain in the body. Stay with the awareness that you have something deep inside that wants to move— from where you are to who you *BE*.

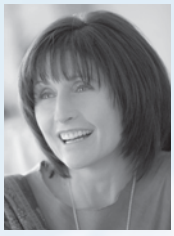
For over 30 years I have been practicing this play between the mind and heart. I found that while techniques such as yoga, meditation and prayer are wonderful, they are not always necessary to live in peace and harmony with who *we BE*. For me, *Living in the moment* unveils who I BE and who I AM is directly connected to the Creator, the master of all things often called God.

I would like to suggest a way that may help guide you to feel and live from who you BE. Why not choose one day a month, and stop everything. I mean everything, no spiritual practice, no worldly requirements. Set this up for yourself ahead of time. One day a month, you don't have to be a good person or act good or eat good or be responsible. On this one day simply BE who you BE in this moment with no rules or "to do" list. Not even your family. Give others in your life the right to have this day to BE as well. That means no phone (turn them off), no TV, no Internet or computers.

When you awake in the morning lay in bed until something deep within you moves you to get up. Your mind

might come in to tell you what you *should* be doing, but please resist this and move your thought to your inner stillness of Being. You might be moved to get up and go for a walk, (yes before you wash or brush your teeth). You might feel moved to dance or write or simply stay in bed and look around. Spend a whole day coming from this awareness. At first you may find your mind feels like it's going crazy— continually telling you to do something or call someone or that you forgot something. Please do not respond (unless it is life threatening). All the power to BE to override the habitual mind power. I suggest being in nature. Do something like taking a slow walk, no running (mind), no hiking (mind). On this day, do much as you can slowly. Cook for your BE, slowly enjoying the smell of the food, enjoying that you are only making this dish for and from your BE. Spend this entire day allowing *what is within* to be a witness to how the tender joy may arise. If the mind wants a job, give it a job that day to collect that data of how you feel and *are* in this day of who you BE.

As I write this from Thailand, I am witnessing that no matter were I go in the world, everyone I meet is speaking the same words. To live who we BE, authentic and true to our inner truth. This is why we are here. I challenge you to waken your BE today. Honor this power. I think it is the greatest gift you can give yourself and the world. Most of all honor the great Creator in the perfect expression it is. Allow… allow… allow… yourself to BE.



Maggie Wilkins was working for Eckhart Tolle when he first published The Power of Now. She now works and teaches in Mai in Thailand, and has started a tour company called Pasada, organizing trips in that region. Her new meditation CD, A Simple Breath and her blog information can be found at www.oneheartwisdom.com.

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BEing Real

Today there seems to be a lot of talk about living what many people call an authentic life. Many say they want to live that way, be who they are, and feel a greater sense of freedom each day. Yet given the first opportunity to show up as that, there are those who instead unexpectedly find themselves conforming to the way another person wants them to be. What happened? Isn't it supposed to be easy to be yourself? Perhaps, not always as easy as you'd like.

Did you know that any time you fall into the habit of becoming who or what you think another person wants you to be, you disconnect from your true self? When this happens it's easy to get off balance and not even know why. Then somewhere inside of you, you may hear echoes of your true inner voice letting you know something is off. It may be telling you, you are not 100% in alignment with your authentic self. Unfortunately, if you loose your center often enough, symptoms can begin to show up in various parts of your life. They may look like resentments, relationship break down, physical illness or perhaps even some level of depression. But, you can make this positive by recognizing that this can serve as a reminder to bring you back to your real self. Perhaps you have been acting more like a chameleon then you know; continuously changing colors to blend in, in as an attempt to be liked or accepted by others. This type of behavior can throw you off by taking you out of the present moment. Then you are either stuck in the past or catapulting yourself into the future, in some futile attempt to control the uncontrollable while spiraling into a vicious cycle. Anytime you are hiding your real self and wearing a mask to please others, you are living from a place of fear.

Fear is quite the powerful emotion. Even though you need to have fear to protect your physical body from harm, your ego can easily get carried away in its' attempt to keep you safe from imagined threats. Most of the time the ego has a difficult time in deciphering real danger from perceived harm anyway. That's because the ego doesn't really know whether you are under attack from a hungry lion or simply stuck emotionally in a negative childhood memory. It just plays out stories that we all too often find familiar, and believe.

These old stories may come from a time in your past when you experienced something negative such as being criticized, shamed or laughed at. When that happened you probably hid away any part of you that might once again cause that same reaction. This means some of the true you just may be hiding deep inside right now. Doing this keeps you from living your life as the whole and integrated person you were meant to be. Then you miss much of the fullness of life the joy that it holds for you each day.

Everyone has had some experience or experiences, whether big or seemingly insignificant at some point that has made them decide they weren't

truly okay. Sometimes this stems from a negative experience when you were young or simply from our western cultures' expectation of who we "should be". I know that I've struggled with hiding away parts of myself. I did it for many years when I never wanted people to know I was bright or smart. I would play small so people wouldn't feel threatened by seeing it in me. I started this around the age of 13. I was transferring into yet another new school. But this one was a bigger challenge, as it was a public school that had many students from a rougher part of Chicago. A neighbor friend had already been attending the school for a number of years. With good intentions, she warned me that many of the children at this new school came from homes in which there was a struggle just to survive. She told me that they didn't like or respect kids who were smart and would probably beat me up if I let them see that. I became very frightened. I certainly wanted to keep from being the victim of some rough and tough after-school brawl.

I decided right then and there to hide away important aspects of myself to fit in, to be accepted and to avoid the dangerous consequences that could take place on the playground after school. What I didn't realize was that I'd continue to tuck away these parts of me for many years beyond that. It took some work and dedication to call back those parts of myself and learn to accept them as me.

I've since learned that all the parts of one's self are important. We need each and every one of them to be able to show up as the whole person we were born to be. We are made out of what we might think of as both good and the bad qualities. Most of the time we want to hide away the 'bad' ones for they don't always feel very comfortable. Yet, we have only placed meaning on them based on our own negative experiences. Some of these same qualities can actually become our greatest gifts when we let them shine.

Perhaps in your life there is something significant; a seemingly smaller incident involving family, friend, peers in school or even your religious institutions that may have easily caused you to unknowingly tuck away important aspects of who you are. You may only be living as half of your true self right now. Have you ever stopped to ask yourself what your life might look like if you lived from a truly authentic place? I suspect it's time for you to show up fully.

Your authentic self is your whole self. It is you: integrated. I think of being authentic as similar to a jigsaw puzzle. It's as if you are made up of many pieces, each one an integral part of the whole of who you are. To show up as the complete picture of who you are, you need all of the pieces in place. It's easy to show up as caring and loving, but we also need the parts of us that might be seen as greedy, selfish or mean as well. They all serve a purpose in making us whole. To show up fully requires calling yourself home. You can do that. It's about shining light on all of the parts of your self. It asks you to make peace with them. Then you can see the big picture. You can find your purpose because all of your puzzle pieces will be in place. Now you are living as the gift that you are. That is living authentically.

In my counseling practice, I recognize how difficult it can be to feel safe in allowing all of yourself to be seen. Problems with intimate relationships, career choice, weight, irritability, addiction, difficult family dynamics, depression and more result from not living authentically. Most people fear what their life might look like if they allowed their real self to come forward. It seems that as humans this is a common struggle. One thing I know for sure is that it is an opportunity for growth. And growth is what life is all about.

You were given this life as a gift. You have a unique essence inside for a purpose that may be beyond what you recognize. When you hide your light the world remains dim. For your light is the truth of who you are naturally, and our world needs you. These are challenging times, and with them, a time for authenticity to rein.

Your invitation now is to light up the world with your Spirit, with the fullness of who you are. Be authentic. Be you. Call yourself home, all of yourself. You bless the world more fully when you're being who you really are. It awaits your full arrival with great anticipation, joy and excitement!

Alyse Rynor, LCSW practices Holistic Psychotherapy in Evanston. She is the founder of Soul Choice Counseling and takes a Mind, Body & Spirit approach to helping you restore balance and wellbeing in your life. Hours by appointment. Insurance accepted. (847) 840-0884 *email: alyse.lcsw@gmail.com*

Web site: www.soulchoicecounseling.com

BE the full expression of yourself

By Julie Murphy Casserly

Contrary to what most of us would like to believe, none of us are perfect. But we are all uniquely built with exactly what we need to have great success in life. Unfortunately, many of us get lost in all of the other stuff happening and we fall into drab— albeit comfortable— existences. We get involved with different jobs, organizations and people, and our views of what we truly desire become skewed. We eventually ignore what our true wants are in favor of what we think our peers are after.

Here's another perspective. Maybe pursuing the things you are only lukewarm about are doing more than just pacifying your true desires. Maybe creating a life based on things you don't want is having a detrimental effect on the life that was meant for you. In short— living this false life you've created might be separating you from the true life you were meant to be living.

How did this happen?

Forcing yourself to fit into a certain mold— with coworkers, friends or family members— has become a normal part of the American existence. Working at a job you don't like. Hanging out with people you're comfortable with but who you might have outgrown. Talking about the things you dislike, yet you do nothing to change your circumstance.

What you're doing is actively pursuing a life that's not meant for you. You feel empty, unhappy or are wondering what life would be if you made different – better – decisions. Unfortunately, those things are associated with being normal. It's status quo to hate your job and complain about your relationships. Disappointment is commonplace and you might feel it has permeated almost every aspect of your life.

What if, however, you decided to stop avoiding the unpleasant feelings and tackle them head on? Instead of stewing in the office that depletes your energy, actively pursue a job— or a career—that excites you. And, you can do this in all the other aspects of your life as well.

Your first steps

The topic of this month's issue is *Be*, and I think it's one of the more empowering concepts in existence. You are at the reigns of your life, and you can be whoever or whatever you'd like. For the next few weeks, why not throw away what you think you "should" be and embrace what you *want* to be. Let go of the habits, thoughts and other actions separating you from your being your best. Embrace being who you are in spite of what those around you think of it. This month, allow yourself to be great.

Julie Murphy Casserly, CFP® , CLU, ChFC, is a 17-year veteran of the financial services industry and founder of JMC Wealth Management in Chicago. Julie helps people understand how their emotional attitudes and behaviors affect how they earn, spend and save. To purchase her award-winning book, "The Emotion Behind Money," sign up for her "Weekly Wisdoms for Wealth" e-newsletter, and to read her blog, please visit http://www.JulieMurphyCasserly.com. Connect with her on Twitter @ JulieMCasserly!

*The tips above may not be suitable for all people, and JMC Wealth Management advises clients on their investment strategies on an individual basis.

Being

From Your Head to Higher Self

by Zubin Sherring

Being – *to be in your own essence and when it is reflected within, it is a "state" of simplicity and beauty, and profoundly godlike.*

To me, this is not a definition but a description. Each of us has our own sense of how we experience "beingness". From a clairvoyant perspective, I have found that over time, meditation gets me to a place of stillness which is located in the center of my intuition. This is available to each of us. It takes intuition and exploration to arrive here and truly feel the depth of your *beingness*. Some of the words that I've heard people use are: 'I feel vibrant and expansive'; 'I feel clear and more centered'; 'I feel like me'; 'I feel like I don't have to solve the worlds problems'; and 'I feel union with all that is'. It is very interesting and enlightening to hear that the state of beingness can be *felt*.

I see there is another part of beingness, and it has to do with the words, "I am". It is who you truly are without the need to define *you* but rather to own who you are. In Biblical stories, Jesus offered that if someone asks you where you come from, tell them you were sent by the Divine, and if asked you who Divine is, say I am who I am. This teaching was taught to connect the person to the kingdom within and let The Divine move through without religious ideology.

In our day-to-day, lives when the feeling of 'being' cannot be felt, there are other emotions that tell you that something is amiss. For example, frustration can be a feeling that tells you that stillness and more breathing spaces are missing. Anger for having been misunderstood can be a feeling that someone is not allowing you to be who you are. Impatience and irritation can be an indication that you are not allowing others to be. Hopelessness can be a sign of attempting to solve problems that are not your own. Depression can be a sign of having lost your inspiration.

Productivity is something that is required from many work places and, unfortunately, it promotes thoughts supporting thinking about producing rather than Being. It is difficult to turn this thinking off without some tools that allow you the separation and neutrality to discern your boundaries and what is pushing on your boundaries. Many people, when they come home from a hard day's work, head straight for the couch to unwind— they need to not think, process, analyze or solve problems. If your need to just *be* is not met by you, it can create disharmony deep within and translate into miscommunication with others close to you. Many find it hard to separate from their work requirements and rest, only to be able to get up and go to work again. Author Tobin Hart writes, "A spiritual life calls upon us to look within and bring to the planet what we find. If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you." To me, this quote resonates with the need to Be to find out that you are already doing the best you can!

As humans, we have figured out that to find balance is a big answer. So we try different activities, new friends in new places and review our priorities. This all can take effort and time. In meditation, it takes less time and is easier to reach that place of spiritual beingness that emanates balance which then can

be felt. Can you imagine a life where you can just be with yourself, with a friend, or with nature? It can bridge the higher self to your heart and create communication. Clairvoyant awareness is what is needed to create this new vision for you and the planet. It is the bridge between the higher self and heart, allowing the divine to live within you.

If you ever want to reach some resolution within yourself and it is hard for you to meditate, pick up some watercolors or coloring pencils and draw. This will allow you to find your way back to a place of stillness and peace to just *be*. Whatever it is, allow yourself to be wherever you are and be one with yourself.

Zubin Sherring is the Directory of the Clairvoyant Center in Evanston. It is a nonprofit spiritual organization for anyone wanting to further their growth through meditation. You can reach her at redrose@clairvoyantcenter.net, or 847-757-2838.

HEAL

Daily Practices for Self Healing

"Take care of yourself as a service you love. This includes you too."

I recently returned from a weekend retreat— a retreat that truly called me to, once again, go inward in order to remember and experience my spirit at its fullest. It's pretty amazing how we forget the beauty of our true nature. I hope to inspire you to look at yourself with gentleness, gratitude and love. Unfortunately, it's very common to go into the darkness, fear, unworthiness and combativeness, only to come out deprived of the experience I call: Heal! Live! Thrive!

Have you ever wondered why some people struggle to heal and others heal easily and effortlessly?

www.thefreedictionary.com defines healing as:

- restoring to health or soundness
- setting right, repairing
- restoring to spiritual wholeness
- becoming whole and sound

Throughout 12 years of practice, I never thought to look up the word "healing". The above definition is so simple, yet so profound! In fact, if back then, you would have asked me what "healing" means, this definition would not even have crossed my mind. At the time, I was only focused on the end result of relieving pain and eliminating physical symptoms. My approach was exhausting and too often resulted in some level of disappointment for the patient and myself. It left my heart unsatisfied. I knew there had to be a much bigger and better way for me to assist people in their healing. I'm glad I followed my heart to discover that way: when one continually practices cleansing, nourishing and nurturing of the mind, body and spirit, healing is automatically unleashed and powerfully expressed with absolute ease.

I've come to the realization that, for the majority of the population, sickness, dis-ease, and pain are all a cry to be whole in spirit once again. They exist to remind us of what is really important in one's self, relationships and life. Getting the job done is no longer as important as spending quality time with your loved ones. Convenience is no longer the knee jerk response. Choosing to take care of yourself as a service to those you love becomes your focus. When people choose to return to the heart— the seat of the spirit— then healing is effortlessly restored and expressed.

This effortlessness is the validation which demonstrates that the human body is hardwired to heal itself. The only time this isn't the case is when there is a lack of consistent practice, an abundance of self-doubt and over-analysis and a deep-seated survival response. Attention then diverts back to comfort and a false sense of ease. This so-called easy path is in truth, the path of suffering and pain. Before merging into the current of effortless healing, we must first paddle upstream: unlearning negative habits, beliefs, attitudes, per-

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37 Women Share Their Journeys From Toxic Relationships to Self Empowerment

"This anthology covers the whole spectrum of relationships from childhood to womanhood. I found myself cheering for these courageous women who shared their stories. I wish I could thank each one for the hope and inspiration they provided."

By local author Pat LaPointe

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sonalities, behaviors, perceptions and actions, while learning and cultivating new mindsets and beneficial practices. Only then do we free ourselves of the illusory shackles of survival and fear that blind us to the possibilities and miracles that are always available. By choice we look upward with faith and trust that all is well.

These are the top 15 practices that I've found that lead to the path of effortless healing:

1. Choose to consciously create healing.
2. Release excuses, over-analyzing, and blaming. It is what it is.
3. Have faith, trust and belief that all is well.
4. Cleanse the mind, body, and spirit.
5. Nourish and nurture your mind, body and spirit.
6. Acknowledge the positive change and growth that is happening.
7. Create your safe, fun and non-toxic environment.
8. Live from heart, inspiration, awareness, nonjudgement, appreciation and gratitude.
9. Take care of yourself and others with gentleness, love and gratitude.
10. Create and share your new story that will inspire others.
11. Exercise your power of choice.
12. Communicate your needs and passions.
13. Allow the love and support of your community to lift you.
14. Align and be guided by the Power that made you.
15. Practice, practice and practice some more!

We now see the beauty and the art of healing. This healing is an opportunity to practice being a conscious co-creator in our own lives— one who is in alignment with something Greater than anything imaginable.

What is it that you see within yourself that you are yearning to set free so that you can be whole and complete right now? Will you be the Michelangelo of your soul?

"I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free."

–Michelangelo

Will you be the artist who practices the art of healing until you have set your angel free? Or will you say, "I do not have the tools. I am not an artist. This is too hard, too slow, I don't have the time. Why is this taking so long? I should be there by now."

Be the artist. Why not refocus your intention and attention by using the following practices to redirect your path from one of struggle to one of ease. Remember, the most beneficial path will always lead you from your head to your heart.

I trust that this information will serve you well. Remember, a better you, a better life and a better world.

Dr. Jaena Stanley-Gonzaga is a Chiropractic Physician and Transformational Wellness expert with over 10 years of professional experience. She utilizes holistic methods and cutting edge healing technologies that address the mental, physical, emotional, and nutritional causes of dis-ease. Stay connected with Dr. Jaena and visit www.simple-balance.com.

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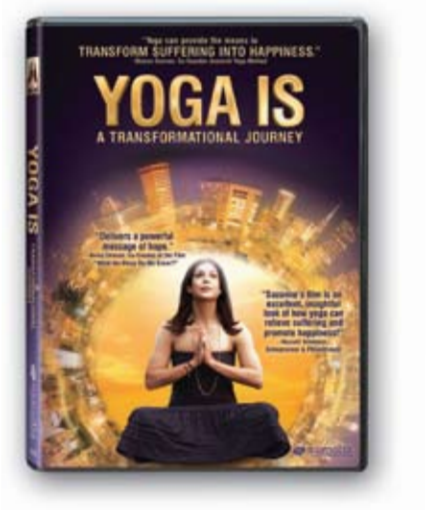
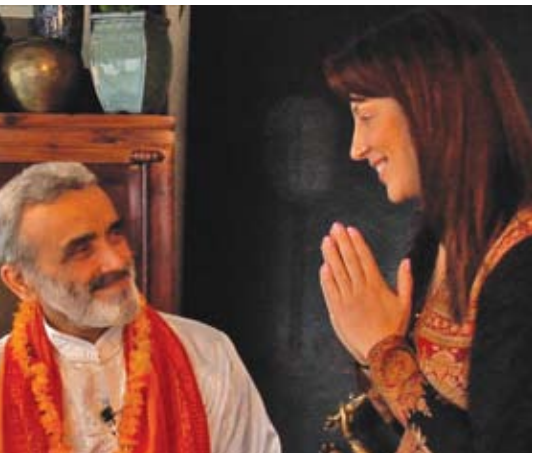


Yoga Is:

A Transformational Journey

One woman's transformational journey to India in search of answers.

by Lisa Gniady



Susan's meetings with yoga masters prompted her to explore more deeply.

The History

Suzanne Bryant's life was changed forever when her mother was diagnosed with terminal cancer. She moved from New York to San Francisco leaving behind her job and life to care for her mother. It was during this time, she came to understand the true power of a yoga practice. Her daily practice brought her to a state of calm and acceptance giving her strength for what she couldn't change.

The Vision

The impetus to make this movie came while practicing yoga in New York, after the passing of her mother. In the midst of sun salutations, as the sun shone through her hands she had a vision of the movie. She saw the project, she saw the people, the idea was born, an "aha" moment. It was as if she was being guided by a higher force, she new she needed to make this movie.

The Movie

Suzanne travelled to India, interviewing gurus, taking yoga classes, and meditating. The movie is broken down into a series of questions: What is yoga? Why are we here? What is our life's purpose.

How do we reach enlightenment? How can I find happiness? And how can we move back from darkness into the light? This movie is one woman's journey of self discovery, but in essence, it is a journey example for all of us toward understanding life, truth and transformation. This movie gives the viewer the opportunity to gain guidance from some of the most prominent yoga teachers and scholars on life's many important lessons.

While traveling with Shyam Das, a devotional singer and Vedic scholar, in Vrindavan, India, Land of Bhakti, Suzanne too came face to face with death. She fell 70 feet down into a well and survived. Sometimes it take a close encounter with our own mortality, to truly embrace this life. On Jan 19th 2013, Shyam Das also passed. In a sense, the interviews and footage of Suzanne's time with Shyam Das in India are a tribute to his life.

I think that this is a "must movie" for anyone looking for clarity and direction in life. Each time I watch the movie I receive a new pearl of wisdom. For all those looking to embark on a trip to India in search of yourself and haven't been able to, you, too can live vicariously through Suzanne.

Suzanne is an inspiration to all of us. Follow your dreams, go one step at a time, but make them happen.

Suzanne Bryant is a Filmmaker, producer, writer and wellness expert. A portion of all DVD sales goes to Breast Cancer Research. Trailer and DVD can be found at www.yogis.com

Lisa Gniady has Yoga Alliance certification to teach Hatha yoga, KRI certified to teach Kundalini yoga, and Indigo yoga certification to teach yoga to children. She offers classes through the Crystal Lake and Cary park districts and teaches Girl Scout troops in the northwest suburbs. She also offers Gong and meditation classes. Lisa can be reached at jlmv99@gmail.com.

Stacey McArdle

Painting After Meditation

I paint immediately after I meditate. Most often I paint without an agenda. Either way, my paintings reflect what I have seen or felt during meditations, during dream states, and what I have seen with my own eyes (as I am also able to see spirit energies with my physical eyes).

In 2010, when I started meditating for the first time, it was suggested by a greater being that I start painting. I listened. I now paint in different mediums: sometimes oils, sometimes acrylics.

I let my soul do the painting (without a plan in place) and the outcome repeatedly represents spirit energies and/or places I have seen during meditations and dream states.

In two instances, the physically deceased have come to me to paint something through me to gift to their families. Both of these experiences were completely mind blowing to me, both from the beginning processes all the way to how the families reacted upon seeing them.

Evolve in Crystal Lake, IL is the first establishment to feature the artwork that showcases my life-changing journeys. My hope is that you are drawn in by the scenes— that they offer an experience, open you and comfort you.

No More Excuses:
Redefining Self Care as a Core Value

By Kalpana (Rose) M. Kumar, M.D

During the winter and early Spring it is not uncommon to hear patients tell me it is too cold to exercise. They promise me when the weather improves they will exercise to restore their health. Upon the arrival of spring and summer, their excuse is 'busyness', stress or hot weather. Their excuses contribute to their ill health. When it comes to healthy or clean eating, many patients tell me their reason for not eating clean is their children's refusal to eat the foods that foster health. They justify their unhealthy choices and lack of self-care with excuses. We are ultimately responsible for our and our children's well-being. Our healthy or unhealthy choices imprint and mentor our children in how they will live and play a critical role in their future health and/or illness.

The epidemic of ADD and ADHD upon us is partly due to our malaise for not wanting to be conscious of what ingredients in our foods cause illness, both physical and mental. Numerous studies have shown associations between ADD/ADHD and processed foods containing sugar, food colorings and caffeine. Over the past two decades, these foods have led to an epidemic of chronic illnesses at a level never before seen in our history. Adults have a misconception that cooking wholesome food takes too much time, that stopping at a fast food restaurant or zapping a ready-made processed frozen dinner in the microwave constitutes a nutritionally sound meal. Cooking wholesome foods is not only essential for our health, it is the most efficient way to reduce health care costs. It brings our families together around the dinner table and can even heal the loneliness and isolation that plagues our society today. The small act of a shared meal can restore and revitalize our family's health, reduce stress and nurture intimacy. In all other parts of the world (except ours) food is known to be central to health. We need to redefine health from the inside out where food, exercise and self-care are all forms of medicine and are the only way we can heal our lives. Locally grown, organic, clean foods are readily available in our society. They are rich in antioxidants and free of pesticides and chemicals that cause most of our diseases today. They need to become our primary method for restoring our health and preventing illness.

We have all the healthcare data, cost savings research and scientific evidence showing that self-care lowers the incidence of illness and reduces health care costs. Rather than waiting for an external fix to remedy the runaway costs of health care, we can choose healthy lifestyles and reduce our use of the modern health care system. This system is designed for 'damage control' that occurs as a result of our poor lifestyle choices. Damage control or sick-care is frightening and expensive and can decrease our mortality but it does so at the cost of our quality of life. Conscious self-care reduces our chances of needing sick-care. Consumers drive the market. Healthy consumers can reduce the cost of health care. This will significantly help our country's economy.

We are all responsible for our choices. Our choices affect the health of our country. We need to make self-care a core value and nurture our health without any more excuses. Ultimately, we are what we eat and our health and vitality is directly dependent upon how we choose to live each day. Making self-care a priority is a choice that will elevate our self-worth, restore health to our families and help our country's economy. We can no longer make excuses to not take care of ourselves. The quality of our life depends on it.

Kalpana (Rose) M. Kumar M.D. is CEO and Medical Director of The Ommani Center for Integrative Medicine, Pewaukee, WI www.ommanicenter.com Author of Becoming Real: Harnessing the Power of Menopause for Health and Success, Medial Press

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An Exhibit of Botanical Art
March 3rd -April 30th
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Drawn to Nature II presents recent works of the Reed-Turner Woodland Botanical Artists' Circle, a local Chicagoland group affiliated with the American Society of Botanical Artists. With a new collection of original botanical art, members return to Brushwood with their second show. The exhibition includes drawings and paintings of plants and wild flowers common (and not so common) to the woodlands and prairies of the Midwest landscape. Here, the artists seek to further the interests of conservation science, botany and horticulture, and to represent the beauty of plants in our lives.

The Group is guided by the parameters and goals of the American Society of Botanical Artists, www.asba-art.org. The ASBA is one of the premier organizations promoting botanical art around the world. Consistent with the mission of the ASBA, the Group works to further the interest in botanical art, conservation science, botany, and horticulture at the local level. The Group also strives to emphasize the beauty and importance plants play in our daily lives by increasing public awareness through education, promotion, and exhibition of its members' art in collaboration with local institutions.

In existence for over 10 years the group meets at the Reed-Turner Woodlands in Long Grove the last Saturday of each month. Members of the public with an interest in botanical art are most welcome. Other artwork can be viewed at: www.reedturnerbotanicalartists.net.

For further inquiries and hours please contact Brushwood at 847.968.3343 or visit www.reedturnerbotanicalartists.net or www.ryersonwoods.org

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Do Be Do Be Do

by Laurie Buchanan

"Service is the rent we pay for living."
—Shirley Chisholm

I'm often asked my thoughts on the difference between *doing* and *being*, and which one I feel is more important.

One of the byproducts of today's fast-paced culture is *busyness*. With our amazing technology we're efficient, productive, and more inclined than ever to use our time to accomplish.

Doing is associated with the solar plexus chakra and is represented by the color yellow. It's external, visible, and active. Numerically speaking, the word "do" vibrates to number 1— the path of the leader. In my experience, leaders tend to be more outward; they stir things up. It's in the act of doing that we serve others.

Being is associated with the crown chakra and is represented by the color violet. It's internal, invisible, and passive. Numerically speaking the word "be" vibrates to the number 7— the path of the loner. In my experience, loners tend to be more inward; they're reflective. When we listen in the quietness of being, we learn what to do.

"There is more to life than increasing its speed."
– Mahatma Ghandi

Interestingly, yellow and violet reside directly across from each other on the color wheel. In nature, a beautiful depiction of this balance is revealed in ametrine — a crystal with a natural blend of amethyst (violet/purple) and citrine (yellow/gold).

In our everyday lives the balance between doing and being is expressed as: engagement/solitude, serving/abiding, real life/reflected life, application/restoration, and work/rest.

Weaving a balanced combination of both threads— doing and being— into our life's tapestry is ideal; they're both important. A balanced life of doing and being nourishes both practice and perspective.

Do Be Do Be Do…

Laurie Buchanan. Board Certified with the American Association of Drugless Practitioners, Laurie Buchanan is a holistic health practitioner and transformational life coach. Her areas of focus are energy medicine, innerhemy, and spiritual awareness. Please visit her website at HolEssence.com and her blog at HolEssence.WordPress.com.

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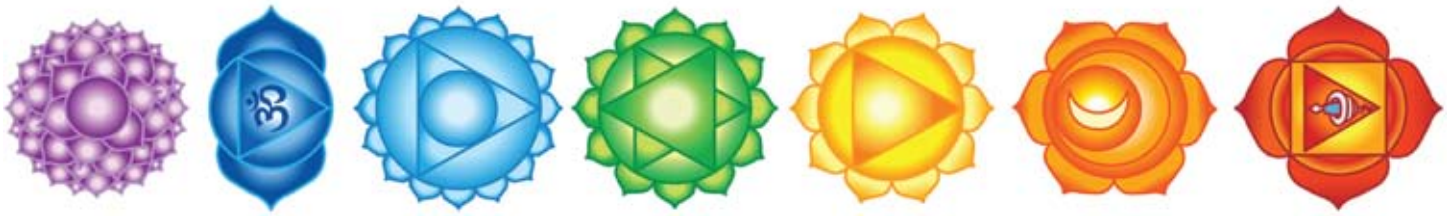

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