

# 15

YEARS OF LIGHT



HEALING ENVIRONMENTS  
15TH ANNIVERSARY

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Healing Environments publications over the last fifteen years:





# 15

## Years of Light

*Healing Design*

*A Healing Environments Publication*



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HEALING ENVIRONMENTS  
DESIGN TIMELINE  
OVER THE LAST 15 YEARS

PUBLICATIONS

1996	TEA RITUAL ONENESS
1997	HOPE COMPASSION / HOSPICE HEALING HOME
1998	MISSION CREATIVITY
1999	INTENTION FORGIVENESS WORK MILLENNIUM FIFTH ANNIVERSARY CALENDAR
2000	GRIEF ANIMALS ART AND HEALING
2003	STORYTELLING ISSUE LOVE DESIGN SYMBOL PRAYER

DESIGN PROJECTS

MARIN GENERAL HOSPITAL, MARIN MARIN MEDICAL LIBRARY & CANCER RESOURCE & RECOVERY CENTER MAITRI: RESIDENTIAL CARE FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH AIDS, SAN FRANCISCO FIFTEEN RESIDENT ROOMS TWO LIVING ROOMS DINING ROOM BREAKROOM AND NURSES' OFFICE MEDITATION ROOM INTERIOR ENTRANCE
HEALING ENVIRONMENTS DESIGN SHOW HOUSE, PALO ALTO BRANDY MOORE - RAFIKI HOUSE, SAN FRANCISCO TWELVE RESIDENT ROOMS LIVING ROOMS / GROUP THERAPY ROOMS THREE DINING ROOMS AND KITCHENS THREE HALLWAYS
JORDAN HOUSE, SAN FRANCISCO COMMUNITY LIVING AND GAME ROOM MENLO PARK CANCER AND SUPPORT CENTER, MENLO PARK GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL THERAPY ROOMS
SAN FRANCISCO AIDS FOUNDATION, SAN FRANCISCO CLIENT SERVICE WAITING ROOM CONSULTATION ROOMS
THE WEST CLINIC, MEMPHIS THE WINGS RESOURCE ROOM WAITING ROOMS CONSULTATION ROOMS CHEMOTHERAPY TREATMENT AREAS & RECOVERY ROOMS ST. LUKE'S, SAN FRANCISCO EMERGENCY ROOM WAITING AREA

HEALING ENVIRONMENTS  
DESIGN TIMELINE  
OVER THE LAST 15 YEARS

2002            A GIFT OF LIGHT  
                  HEALTHCARE  
                  CHANGE  
                  JOURNEY

2003            DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

RITA DE CASCIA-A PROJECT OF THE S.F. CATHOLIC  
CHARITIES, SAN FRANCISCO  
THE FAMILY ROOM  
SUTTER VNA, SAN FRANCISCO  
BEREAVEMENT ROOM  
HOSPICE BY THE BAY, SAN FRANCISCO  
GROUP THERAPY ROOM AND SANDTRAY ROOM  
HOSPICE OF NAPA VALLEY, NAPA  
CONSULTATION AND GROUP ROOM  
U.C.S.F., SAN FRANCISCO  
PEDIATRIC I.C.U. BREAKROOM

2004            MEMOIR  
                  TENTH ANNIVERSARY  
                  TRANSFORMATION ISSUE

2005            HEALING ELEMENTS OF DESIGN

KAISER PERMANENTE, WALNUT CREEK  
ONCOLOGY DEPARTMENT  
WENTWORTH-DOUGLASS HOSPITAL, DOVER, N.H.  
MEDITATION ROOM  
PALLIATIVE CARE CONSULTATION ROOM  
AND OFFICE  
PAIN CLINIC WAITING ROOM  
ONCOLOGY CLINIC WAITING ROOM  
PATIENT PALLIATIVE CARE ROOM  
PORTSMOUTH REGIONAL HOSPITAL,  
PORTSMOUTH, N.H.  
MEDITATION ROOM  
SOLARIUM  
FAMILY PALLIATIVE CARE LOUNGE  
I.C.U.  
ONCOLOGY CLINIC WAITING ROOM  
SHORT TERM STAY CLINIC  
MARIN GENERAL HOSPITAL, MARIN  
MURAL AND PEDIATRIC TREATMENT  
ROOM  
ST. FRANCIS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, SAN FRANCISCO  
MEDITATION ROOM

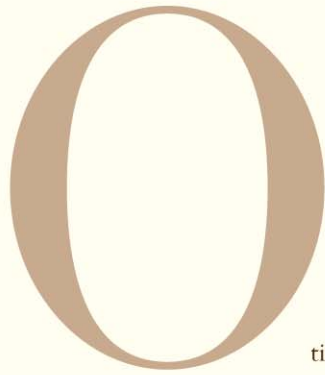
HEALING ENVIRONMENTS  
DESIGN TIMELINE  
OVER THE LAST 15 YEARS

2006	CHILDREN'S ISSUE LOVE IS FOREVER TAKE PEACE MY WISH FOR YOU	HYDER FAMILY HOSPICE HOUSE, DOVER, N.H. MEDITATION ROOM
2007	GIFT PACKAGE THE JOURNEY WAITING FOR SPRING	ALTA BATES SUMMIT COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER, BERKELEY CONSULTATION ROOM NURSES' BREAKROOM COMMUNITY HOSPICE HOUSE, MERRIMACK, N.H. MEDITATION ROOM
2008	FOR MOM EMBRACING AUTUMN COURAGE A BEACON OF HOPE EL AMOR ES PARA SIEMPRE TAKE CARE BEFORE I DIE STRENGTH BEAUTY SOLITUDE FORGIVENESS HOPE	KAISER PERMANENTE, HOSPICE DEPARTMENT SAN FRANCISCO BEREAVEMENT THERAPY ROOM SUTTER VNA, SAN MATEO BEREAVEMENT THERAPY ROOM SUTTER VNA, EMERYVILLE BEREAVEMENT THERAPY ROOM
2009	MAPPING THE JOURNEY HEALING ENVIRONMENTS JOURNAL 15TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE	U.C.S.F. SAN FRANCISCO MEDITATION ROOM KARA: GRIEF SUPPORT AND EDUCATION, PALO ALTO FOUR CONSULTATION ROOMS AND A GROUP THERAPY ROOM KORET FAMILY HOUSE, SAN FRANCISCO ART FOR THEIR TWENTY-FOUR BEDROOM FACILITY AND LIVING ROOMS ZEN HOSPICE PROJECT, SAN FRANCISCO EDUCATION CENTER FAMILY SERVICE AGENCY, SAN FRANCISCO TWO THERAPY ROOMS FOR SENIORS



DEAR FRIENDS OF  
HEALING ENVIRONMENTS,

*November 14th, 2009*



IN THIS OUR fifteenth anniversary, we have a great deal to celebrate! We have been blessed with a magical, mystical fifteen year journey.

We never could have dreamed that at this point in time we would have created more than thirty healing environments in hospices and hospitals from California to New Hampshire. Or that we would have created, with Sam Smidt's visionary genius, over fifty beautiful publications which have reached well over twelve thousand people in fifty states and sixty countries – including Nepal, Kuwait, New Zealand, Tanzania, Finland and Brazil.

We cannot take credit for this. There is no question that our work has been guided by angels. From our creations to the patients and caregivers who have received them. We have been blessed to have served as pipelines for the divine.

Angels have guided us to poems about death, quotes from the Buddha, and countless passages of hope and consolation.

At a stoplight, I have reached down and opened a brand new book directly to the world's most comforting poem about death by the Shakespeare of India, Tagore.

I have stood before a bookcase and reached for a book I have never read and opened directly to page 146, to find a much-needed quote from the Buddha, defining maitri, or compassionate friendship.

In compiling *Transformation*, our tenth anniversary issue, I have found thirty of its forty-seven excerpts in exactly one hour, opening thirty different books found in ten minutes in a bookstore, each time opening directly to the passage that later appeared in print.

And angels have guided the suffering to us.

Joanne, who lost her husband, only child, and sister in one year— who in the

depths of despair on Christmas Eve opened our poetry package for the first time to read the meditation of an Italian monk written in 1513 in Italy on Christmas Eve, helping her find peace.

Our first tiny book, *Love is Forever*, came off the press the week that nine year old Patrick was run over by a Christmas float in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. At his wake, Sister Nina passed hundreds of the little books to red-eyed mourners who wept at its words of comfort.

An Appalacian cancer support worker called to tell us that her patient, a young mother with five children, dying of breast cancer, so poor that her family feared they couldn't afford to bury her — This young woman, on receiving our *Memoir* issue exclaimed, "This is free? This is the most beautiful thing I have ever seen!"

I have seen a child curl up in the arms of a dying father on a sofa in a meditation room we created in a hospice. I have seen a nurse enter a hospital meditation room five minutes after we completed it, to grieve for a lost patient. We have received word from the daughter of a dying patient in a palliative care room we designed that the beauty of the room was of great comfort to her and reminded her, with its beautiful blues and framed nautilus shells, of the sea.

Thanks to our design committee in the sky.

We never could have dreamed that we would open an East Coast resource center to serve the Seacoast of New Hampshire. Or that Traci would consult with hospital architects and designers in Canada and Japan. Or that she would speak to forty midwestern Catholic hospital CEOs. Or that she would appear on a panel at an international conference on hospital design in Amsterdam.

We never could have dreamed that we would get a letter from Prince Charles' secretary asking for our materials, or a letter from Dame Cicely Saunders, founder of the hospice movement in Britain, or a congratulatory email from Oprah's Dr. Mehmet Oz. Or that the head of the Smithsonian would pay for 500 copies of Hadleigh's *For Mom*, to give to all of his employees for Christmas.

Never in our dreams could we have imagined that UCSF's Family House would purchase two thousand copies of *Love is Forever* in English and Spanish to give the families of all their young patients. Or that Deborah Szekeley, founder of the Golden Door and Rancho La Puerta, would place our publications in all of her guest rooms.

Never in our dreams could we have anticipated that the Journal of the San Francisco Medical Association, *San Francisco Medicine*, would ask us to write an article for their special Art and Medicine issue. Or that Traci would receive San Francisco's Jefferson Award for Public Service.

No business plan could have predicted any of this. Only an angelic one. We do not take credit for any of this. We are only immensely grateful that we have been used and guided to comfort the suffering.

Now, sadly, our journey has taken a turn down another road. Like the rest of the world, our wings have been clipped by the economic crisis. We can no longer afford to create beautiful new materials and soul-healing environments.

But gratefully, joyfully, we have a remarkable body of work and a beautiful website created by Sam's daughter, Becca, and a surplus of back issues. Hopefully with funds coming in for reprinting, we can continue to comfort the suffering far into the future.

We are extremely grateful for all your support over the past fifteen years.

Now we need each one of you to become an ambassador for our work. When you meet a suffering friend or colleague, tell them about our website. Tell your doctors, nurses, hospitals and hospices about us. Pick up this flame and pass it on. As the mystical Sufi poet, Rumi, said:

*The tender words we said to one another  
Are stored in the secret heart of heaven.  
One day like the rain they will fall and spread  
And our mystery will grow green over the world.*

Take heart. With your help, together we will continue to comfort the suffering.

Peace, love and gratitude,  
Kate



*Dear Traci and Kate,*

*How do we begin to thank you for the overflowing cornucopia of beauty, truth and inspiration you sent us? Through your exquisite creations, your hearts are in our home, and we have the overwhelming joy of getting to know you better and better by imbibing the depth and breadth of your profound wisdom and kindness with every word we read.*

*I am consumed by the exquisiteness of each piece — many I have never seen before, and am moved beyond tears by the tenderness, power and poignancy of each treasured artistic expression of hope and love.*

*Surrounded by your creations, I feel that I am slowly walking, step by step, into a fragrant meadow, taking in anew the sun, the rain, the wonder of each multifaceted creation. I am content and enticed to be here for a long time, in awe of how this came to be. You have provided Ron and me with a lifetime of treasured knowledge and aesthetic perfection.*

*Ron and I hope you know how welcomed and affirmed you made us feel when we met. You are Healing Environments. You both create, through your Being and your Design, the physical and emotional space that safely supports the openness to move into the depths of our being to find the comfort, love and truth that allows us to rest in our authentic Self. Healing Environments is a timeless place where expanded space and truth vibrate. You both live in that space and so you are able to manifest it in this world. God Bless you, and with great gratitude we say Thank You.*

*We so treasure knowing you both.*

*Eileen*







*Healing Environments  
invites you to take a free  
set of our past issues...  
and to order up to 100  
of each at no charge  
for patients, workshops,  
waiting rooms, retreats...*

*Together we will comfort  
the suffering...*



## HEALING ENVIRONMENTS

How can we do justice to over fifty publications? We can't. All we can do is share some of the creative process which led us to produce them. There is no question that we have been guided in their creation. The process has been too effortless, too inspired — not to have had help from our “editorial committee in the sky.”

What follows are a few of our stories. There are dozens more. We wish we could tell them all, but these few will make you realize what a mystical, magical journey we have been on for the past fifteen years.

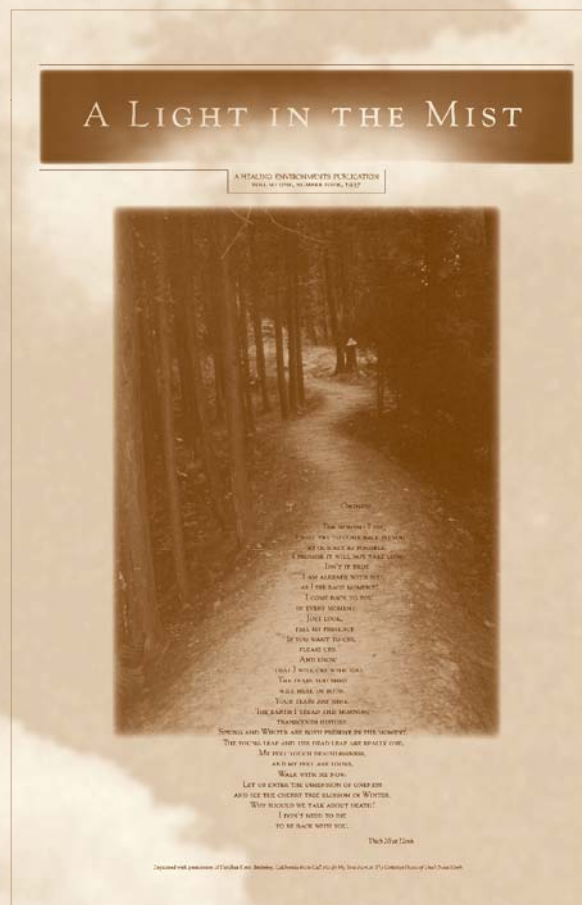
HEALING ENVIRONMENTS

*Together we will comfort the suffering*

## ONENESS

*Oneness* was inspired by our first group experience of sudden, tragic death. Sam's beloved assistant, Archie, lay down on his family's sofa Christmas Day and never woke up. A twenty-eight year old with an undiagnosed infection in his heart.

We were struck dumb with the incomprehension of it all. How could we make sense of the senseless? Thich Nhat Hanh's beautiful poem bridged the dichotomy of life and death for us and introduced us to the healing reality of transcendence.

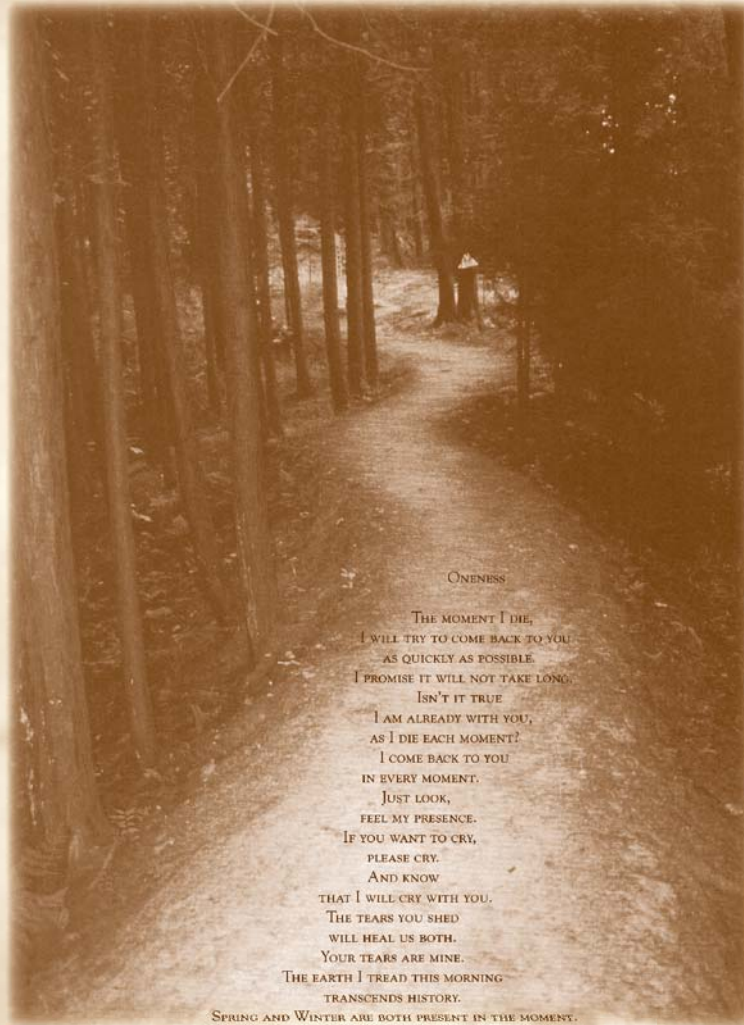


↑ TEXT FROM COVER FOUND ON PAGES 16-17



# A LIGHT IN THE MIST

A HEALING ENVIRONMENTS PUBLICATION  
VOLUME ONE, NUMBER FOUR, 1997



## ONENESS

THE MOMENT I DIE,  
I WILL TRY TO COME BACK TO YOU  
AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.  
I PROMISE IT WILL NOT TAKE LONG.  
ISN'T IT TRUE  
I AM ALREADY WITH YOU,  
AS I DIE EACH MOMENT?  
I COME BACK TO YOU  
IN EVERY MOMENT.  
JUST LOOK,  
FEEL MY PRESENCE.  
IF YOU WANT TO CRY,  
PLEASE CRY.  
AND KNOW  
THAT I WILL CRY WITH YOU.  
THE TEARS YOU SHED  
WILL HEAL US BOTH.  
YOUR TEARS ARE MINE.  
THE EARTH I TREAD THIS MORNING  
TRANSCENDS HISTORY.  
SPRING AND WINTER ARE BOTH PRESENT IN THE MOMENT.  
THE YOUNG LEAF AND THE DEAD LEAF ARE REALLY ONE.  
MY FEET TOUCH DEATHLESSNESS,  
AND MY FEET ARE YOURS.  
WALK WITH ME NOW.  
LET US ENTER THE DIMENSION OF ONENESS  
AND SEE THE CHERRY TREE BLOSSOM IN WINTER.  
WHY SHOULD WE TALK ABOUT DEATH?  
I DON'T NEED TO DIE  
TO BE BACK WITH YOU.

Thich Nhat Hanh

Reprinted with permission of Parallax Press, Berkeley, California from *Call Me By My True Names: The Collected Poems of Thich Nhat Hanh*

## ONENESS

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I WILL TRY TO COME BACK TO YOU  
AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.  
I PROMISE IT WILL NOT TAKE LONG.  
ISN'T IT TRUE  
I AM ALREADY WITH YOU,  
AS I DIE EACH MOMENT?  
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THE YOUNG LEAF AND THE DEAD LEAF ARE REALLY ONE.  
MY FEET TOUCH DEATHLESSNESS,  
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WALK WITH ME NOW.  
LET US ENTER THE DIMENSION OF ONENESS  
AND SEE THE CHERRY TREE BLOSSOM IN WINTER.  
WHY SHOULD WE TALK ABOUT DEATH?  
I DON'T NEED TO DIE  
TO BE BACK WITH YOU.

*Thich Nhat Hanh*



Dear Kate and Traci,

Your publications, your  
passion felt through words  
and actions have inspired  
and uplifted me through  
the years.

Now that I am accompanying  
my ex-husband, dear  
companion in life, to his  
final refuge, I am nourished  
and sustained by your  
unflinching dedication.

Please accept my profound  
gratitude.

Chris



# HOPE

When we developed the large journal format, one of our favorite things became the choice of images and quotations for the cover. This beautiful quote by Thomas Wolfe speaks hopefully and comfortingly of death:

*“To lose the earth you know,  
for greater knowing;  
to lose the life you have,  
for greater life;  
to leave the friends you loved,  
for greater loving;  
to find a land more kind than home,  
more large than earth—”*



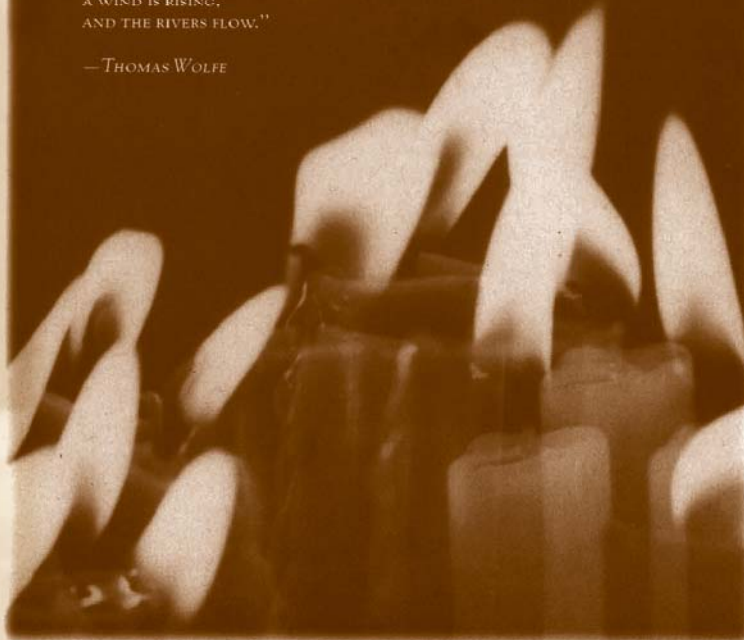
# A LIGHT IN THE MIST

THE JOURNAL OF HOPE

A HEALING ENVIRONMENTS PUBLICATION  
VOLUME TWO, NUMBER TWO, 1997

SOMETHING HAS  
SPOKEN TO ME IN THE NIGHT,  
BURNING THE TAPERS OF  
THE WANING YEAR;  
SOMETHING HAS  
SPOKEN IN THE NIGHT,  
AND TOLD ME I SHALL DIE,  
I KNOW NOT WHERE.  
SAYING:  
"TO LOSE THE EARTH YOU KNOW,  
FOR GREATER KNOWING;  
TO LOSE THE LIFE YOU HAVE,  
FOR GREATER LIFE;  
TO LEAVE THE FRIENDS YOU LOVED,  
FOR GREATER LOVING;  
TO FIND A LAND MORE KIND THAN HOME,  
MORE LARGE THAN EARTH—  
"—WHEREON THE PILLARS OF THIS  
EARTH ARE FOUNDED,  
TOWARD WHICH THE CONSCIENCE  
OF THE WORLD IS TENDING—  
A WIND IS RISING,  
AND THE RIVERS FLOW."

—THOMAS WOLFE



THE FOUR THINGS THAT MATTER  
MOST: A BOOK ABOUT LIVING  
BY IRA BYOCK, M.D.

T

HESE FOUR simple statements are powerful tools for improving your relationships and your life. As a doctor caring for seriously ill patients for nearly 15 years of emergency medicine practice and more than 25 years in hospice and palliative care, I have taught hundreds of patients who were facing life's

end, when suffering can be profound, to say the Four Things. But the Four Things apply at any time. Comprising just eleven words, these four short sentences carry the wisdom of what people who are dying have taught me about what matters most in life.

*Transformations*

Whenever we are able to open up and become vulnerable and honest with ourselves, we allow the opportunity for profound transformation. People who acknowledge that their lives may soon be over tend to have little patience with pretense, including their own. In the naked honesty that accompanies death's approach, many people feel a need to apologize for having been self-centered, irresponsible, or just plain wrong.

Most people who are dying still have the capacity to change in ways that are important to them. Their transformation can also make an enormous, and lasting, difference to the people around them. Even the least introspective person may begin to look inward. Serious illness can allow people to experience the immediacy of life. Hard, angry, suspicious people (who, it seemed, would stay that way to the bitter end) often soften, becoming vulnerable and even trusting. I look at these changes not as deathbed conversions, but as quantum leaps in personal development—opportunities to achieve a state of mind and an intimacy with others that might not otherwise come to pass.



We know that our family and friends are the most important parts in life, but we tend to get distracted, enmeshed as we often are in the work and family responsibilities that fill our daily lives. Saying the Four Things before we or they confront eternity is a way to honor and affirm the primacy of our relationships. The Four Things help us align our words and deeds to what matters most.

### *Filling the Void*

Transformations of this magnitude in response to saying the Four Things are not isolated or rare.

One day, I told Steven's story during a lecture at Johns Hopkins University. Afterward, a large, middle-aged black man came toward me as I was leaving the auditorium and surprised me by abruptly embracing me. At first I was taken aback. People were filing from the hall and here I was enveloped by an obviously emotional man, twice my size. He explained that he served as a chaplain at an inner-city public hospital in Baltimore and needed to tell me his story.

Like many of the most affecting stories that I've heard over the years, it was about transformation at the very end of life.

A few months earlier, the chaplain had been paged to the bedside of a 33-year-old man who was dying of AIDS. Just two hours earlier the patient, Antoine, had found out that he had a teenage daughter and that she was on her way to the hospital to see him.

"I was terrified about saying the wrong thing," said the chaplain. "I thought, 'Why me? What can I possibly do that would be of any help?' Then I remembered about saying 'the Four Things.' I was present for Antoine's and his daughter's meeting and used the Four Things to guide their visit. Antoine needed little encouragement, or help, to ask, 'Can you forgive me?' and to say, 'Thank you for coming to see me,' and 'I love you' to this frightened, anxious 15-year-old girl.

And Chantelle, who really does have her father's eyes, was able to say, 'Thank you for being my father. Of course, I forgive you.' and then, 'Daddy, I love you too.'"



“They visited for just over an hour, each hungry to ask questions and tell stories. There were lots of tears; it was hard to separate the tears of sadness from those of joy. Ultimately, Antoine’s fatigue and breathlessness forced their visit to end. They kissed each other as they said good-bye.”

Listening to this story, I was trembling, but the chaplain wasn’t done. “I checked on Antoine later that evening and found out he had died within three hours of the visit.”

This work will keep you humble.

*[www.TheFourThings.org](http://www.TheFourThings.org)*

Resource: Transformation Issue



## JOURNEY

When a friend of Kate's took a life-altering turn in his life, we were struck by the metaphor of life as a journey – and the role that illness plays in our spiritual growth.



TEXT FROM COVER →  
LIFE IS A JOURNEY

# A LIGHT IN THE MIST

THE JOURNAL OF HOPE

A HEALING ENVIRONMENTS PUBLICATION  
VOLUME SEVEN, NUMBER ONE, 2002

L I F E I S A  
L I F E I S A  
J O O U R N E Y



PHOTOGRAPH BY BARBARA WARD-VAGO



TRANSFORMATION  
BY KATE STRASBURG

LIFE IS A JOURNEY. A journey filled with challenge. A journey filled with growth. For some of us, the journey leads us, or a loved one, to a life threatening illness. When faced with such a challenge, it may comfort us to remember that the Chinese character for crisis is composed of both danger and opportunity, or as the ancient I Ching instructs us, chaos paves the way for creation.

Given sufficient courage and grace, we may use this opportunity to discover a new way of being—a deeper or higher level of consciousness—one that invites us to see things more clearly, to hold our loved ones more closely, to use our gifts more wisely. We may in time come to see this challenge as a mysterious gift. As Carlos Castenada once said, “Death is an advisor looking over our shoulder showing us how to live.”

For some of us this illness will serve as a wake-up call to honor those parts of ourselves which have been silenced, a turning point to discover and pursue the dream which we have forgotten or never known, or an invitation to explore who we are and why we are here. For others, illness calls us to the greatest challenge and the greatest gift of all—transcendence—and to a realization that there is an inner reality which transcends exterior circumstances. In the midst of pain and loss there may be joy and gifts of incalculable beauty, for the power of the human spirit is greater than death itself and love transcends both time and space.

To all of us — life offers the gift of transformation.

Source: Transformation Issue



## MISSION

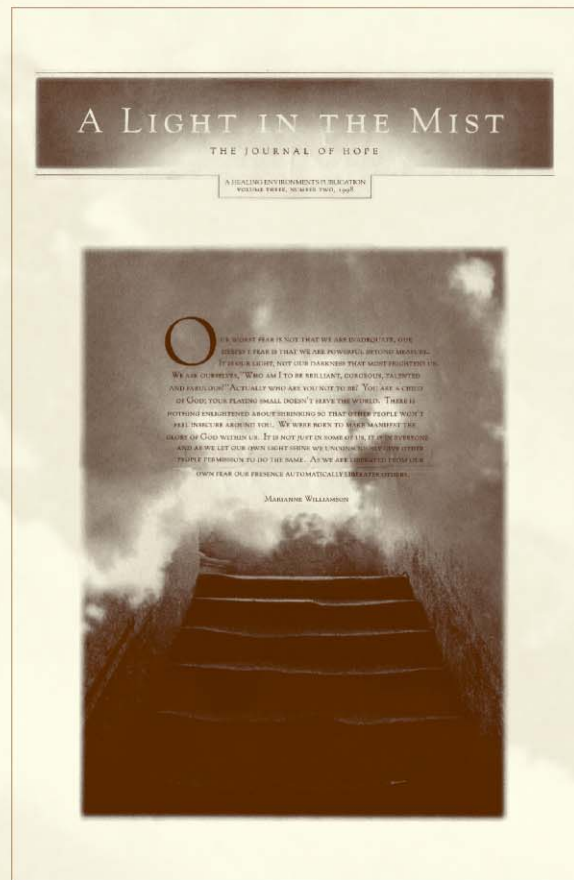
One of Traci's and my greatest hopes is that people, seeing what we have been able to do, will follow their hearts to help the world also. Aristotle said that one's life's mission lies at the intersection of one's gifts and the world's need. We firmly believe that finding a way to help others feeds one's soul and heals life's pain. It certainly has done that for both of us and we feel immensely blessed.

In this issue we hoped to help others find their way.

### TEXT FROM COVER →

OUR WORST FEAR IS NOT THAT WE ARE INADEQUATE, OUR DEEPEST FEAR IS THAT WE ARE POWERFUL BEYOND MEASURE. IT IS OUR LIGHT, NOT OUR DARKNESS THAT MOST FRIGHTENS US. WE ASK OURSELVES, "WHO AM I TO BE BRILLIANT, GORGEOUS, TALENTED AND FABULOUS? ACTUALLY WHO ARE YOU NOT TO BE? YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD; YOUR PLAYING SMALL DOESN'T SERVE THE WORLD. THERE IS NOTHING ENLIGHTENED ABOUT SHRINKING SO THAT OTHER PEOPLE WON'T FEEL INSECURE AROUND YOU. WE WERE BORN TO MAKE MANIFEST THE GLORY OF GOD WITHIN US. IT IS NOT JUST IN SOME OF US, IT IS IN EVERYONE AND AS WE LET OUR OWN LIGHT SHINE WE UNCONSCIOUSLY GIVE OTHER PEOPLE PERMISSION TO DO THE SAME. AS WE ARE LIBERATED FROM OUR OWN FEAR OUR PRESENCE AUTOMATICALLY LIBERATES OTHERS.

-MARIANNE WILLIAMSON



# A LIGHT IN THE MIST

THE JOURNAL OF HOPE

A HEALING ENVIRONMENTS PUBLICATION  
VOLUME THREE, NUMBER TWO, 1998

OUR WORST FEAR IS NOT THAT WE ARE INADEQUATE, OUR DEEPEST FEAR IS THAT WE ARE POWERFUL BEYOND MEASURE. IT IS OUR LIGHT, NOT OUR DARKNESS THAT MOST FRIGHTENS US. WE ASK OURSELVES, "WHO AM I TO BE BRILLIANT, GORGEOUS, TALENTED AND FABULOUS?" ACTUALLY WHO ARE YOU NOT TO BE? YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD; YOUR PLAYING SMALL DOESN'T SERVE THE WORLD. THERE IS NOTHING ENLIGHTENED ABOUT SHRINKING SO THAT OTHER PEOPLE WON'T FEEL INSECURE AROUND YOU. WE WERE BORN TO MAKE MANIFEST THE GLORY OF GOD WITHIN US. IT IS NOT JUST IN SOME OF US, IT IS IN EVERYONE AND AS WE LET OUR OWN LIGHT SHINE WE UNCONSCIOUSLY GIVE OTHER PEOPLE PERMISSION TO DO THE SAME. AS WE ARE LIBERATED FROM OUR OWN FEAR OUR PRESENCE AUTOMATICALLY LIBERATES OTHERS.

MARIANNE WILLIAMSON

## HOW TO FIND YOUR LIFE'S MISSION

1) Ask the universe to guide you.

2) Review your life.

What is your greatest passion?

What gives you the most joy?

Is there any way in which this gift might be used to serve others?

We often overlook our own gifts. To us they seem so commonplace.

A woman in New York who had a gifted green thumb became a plant doctor, making housecalls to tend ailing plants.

Which of the world's many needs speaks directly to you? How might you find (in the words of Aristotle) the intersection of your passion with the world's need?

That is your mission.

Has life perhaps offered you a gift in the form of extraordinary pain?

Pain which has opened your eyes and your heart to one small corner of the world's needs?

Can this pain be the grain of sand which becomes a pearl?

Can you transform tragedy into epiphany?

We recently met a woman who had not one, but two children seriously brain injured in separate accidents. Unable to find the nurturing care which she wished for her son, she is in the process of spending her life's savings to create a haven for six similar souls.



3) Tell your story.

Could others benefit from hearing your story?

Could they learn from your experience?

Could it help them gather strength for the journey?

A woman whom we just met suffered a debilitating depression.

Ten years later she wrote a book about her struggle and, together with her photographer son, mounted an exhibition of her poetry and his photographs, sharing her experience on a national tour.

4) Practice limitless thinking.

Do you find yourself saying, “If only I had more time, more money, more talent, more education?” Believe me, if you are motivated by the desire to do good, the universe will give you what you need.

You do not need ten years, or a million dollars, or the gift of genius, or six initials after your name to leave the world a better place than you found it. Although Traci and I are gifted visually, neither of us has a design degree. Yet patients are deeply touched, and design professionals have been struck, by the freshness of our approach. We design from the heart as well as the eye.

5) Brainstorm without bounds.

In our bi-weekly newsletter meetings we take off the lid and soar. We allow ourselves to dream, to reach for the stars. We never criticize or limit one another with negative thinking. The results are magical. The outcome is far greater than the sum of the four of us. We truly feel we are lifted to heights beyond our comprehension.

6) Manifest through visualization.

I recall clearly the day two years ago that Traci said, “The newsletter is wonderful, but what I want and need is to make a difference in a patient’s surroundings. To create an actual healing environment.” Last week Traci completed her second pro bono design installation of a residential care facility for people living with AIDS in San Francisco.

The clarity and passion with which she envisioned her dream made it happen.

7) Start small.

One of our favorite success stories is that of Project Open Hand in San Francisco. Years ago its founder started making home cooked meals in her kitchen and delivering them to people suffering from AIDS. Today Project Open Hand serves 10,000 meals a day to AIDS patients throughout the city.

8) Create a model.

Al Tarlov, former head of the Kaiser Family Foundation, once told me, "If you want to change the world, create a beautiful model."

Angela Theriot, wife of the owner of The San Francisco Chronicle, lay on a gurney in a hospital hallway and swore that if she survived she would make hospitals more homelike, caring places. The result was Planetree, an experiment which has been successfully replicated across the country. Our own showcase of ideas in Palo Alto is based on this concept. A model is worth a thousand words.

9) Grow organically.

Business plans have their place, but in order to attain unforeseen heights, one must be open to inspiration and serendipity. Had we slavishly attempted to structure our growth, we never could have anticipated the delightful and awesome turns Healing Environments would take.

Who could have predicted that in our first year we would be visited by fourteen Japanese healthcare designers? Michael Lerner, head of Commonwealth and my former mentor, once said, "Offer your gifts to the universe. Do not waste your energy beating down doors. Those in need of your services will find you." Commonwealth never has advertised its cancer retreats, yet each one has been completely booked. Healing Environments has had a steady stream of visitors without any advertising and has experienced phenomenal growth in the circulation of its newsletter.

10) Turn obstacles into launching pads.

Over the years one of the lessons we have learned is to trust in and listen to the process. If something is being particularly troublesome, what lesson is to be learned? What change in direction is called for?

For example, in this issue of the newsletter we had planned for months to have a map of the country with letters from readers surrounding it. Week after week I had trouble selecting the letters. Suddenly it dawned on me: This doublespread would serve a far greater purpose by helping others learn from our journey.

11) Break out of the mold.

Have you ever seen a truly original movie and realized suddenly the degree to which Hollywood films follow predictable formulas? Each of us has a unique vision, a unique gift to offer to the universe. The degree to which you can find your own voice and express its message will determine the extent to which you can transform the world.

12) Be true to yourself.

When I had just graduated from college and told a close friend I wanted to go to India to start a Mother Teresa-like mission her response was, “That is a beautiful dream and a most worthwhile cause, but is it YOUR mission?” At Healing Environments we are often given opportunities to team up with others to accomplish good, but we must consistently ask ourselves, “That is a worthwhile cause, but is it OUR mission?”

13) Trust your intuition.

One of the greatest gifts Michael Lerner gave to me was to trust my intuition. I grew up in an extremely rational and intellectual home. The fact that Michael, with his Harvard and Yale degrees, found value in my intuition astounded me.

Let me share a humorous anecdote which vividly describes the magic which can happen when one takes this risk. It was the eve of our first fundraiser. As Traci and I rushed around town running errands, my eye was caught by an attractive man in bermuda shorts and topsiders.

“Oh, look at that intriguing man, Traci! If I had an invitation I’d invite him to our fundraiser.” “Here’s one,” she replied. “I’ll just tear off the address label. Drop me off and circle around the block.” A few minutes later I picked her up, laughing. “Well, Peter would have loved to come, but he has a sailing



date for the weekend. He might fund us, however. He's Executive Director of the Santa Clara County Community Foundation!"

14) Honor the mystery.

One of the limitations of the modern scientific method is that it leaves no room for mystery. One of the most fascinating talks I ever heard was given by Willis Harman, formerly with the Stanford Research Institute and, at the time, director of the Institute for Noetic Sciences.

Harman reminded us that prior to Descartes, science believed in the unity of all matter. Doctor Harman pointed out that all of the parapsychological phenomena, which are scoffed at by the scientific community, such as prescience (foreknowledge) and extra sensory perception, can be explained by that ancient concept of interconnection. Modern theoretical physics proposes several mathematical formulas which explain them as well.

Would you rather live in a world limited by the borders of our understanding or explore the mysteries beyond our horizons? Would you rather accept a narrow slot in society's preconceived organizational structure or break the mold, express your unique gifts and be all that you can be?

15) Give thanks for the joy you are to receive in serving.

*March 22, 2002*

*Dear Kate and Traci,*

*I continue to get such heart filling sustenance  
from your inspiring newsletter. I have used  
quotes you print for inclusion in my art and  
Donor Recognition.*

*Best to you all and thank you for your  
excellent work. I have passed many copies along.*

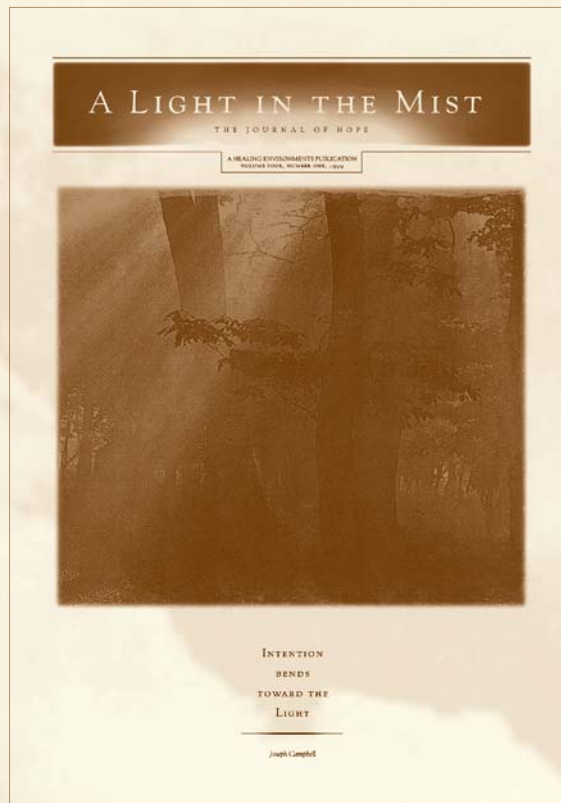
*Christina*

## INTENTION

I was fascinated to hear Shakti Gawain speak once about the different forms that meditation can take. When she mentioned that work could be a form of meditation I realized that A Light in the Mist has been exactly that for me.

Traci and I believe that if your intention to find a way to help the universe is clear, then miraculous forces come into play to help you.

TEXT FROM COVER →  
INTENTION BENDS TOWARDS THE LIGHT.  
-JOSEPH CAMPBELL





# A LIGHT IN THE MIST

THE JOURNAL OF HOPE

A HEALING ENVIRONMENTS PUBLICATION  
VOLUME FOUR, NUMBER ONE, 1999



INTENTION  
BENDS  
TOWARD THE  
LIGHT

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*Joseph Campbell*

CREATIVE VISUALIZATION:  
USE THE POWER OF YOUR IMAGINATION  
TO CREATE WHAT YOU WANT IN YOUR LIFE  
BY SHAKTI GAWAIN

WE HAVE ALL had experiences of being connected with our higher selves, although we may not have conceptualized it in that way. Feeling exceptionally high, clear, strong, “on top of the world,” or “able to move mountains,” are indications of being connected with your higher self; so is the experience of “falling in love”...when you feel wonderful about yourself and the world because your love for another human being is causing you to connect with your highest self.

When you first become consciously aware of the experience of your higher self, you will find that it seems to come and go rather sporadically. At one moment you may be feeling strong, clear, and creative, the next moment you may be thrown back into confusion and insecurity. This seems to be a natural part of the process. Once you are aware of your higher self, you can call on it whenever you need it, and gradually you will find that it is with you more and more of the time.

The connection between your personality and your higher self is a two-way channel, and it's important to develop the flow in both directions.

Receptive: When you quiet your personality during meditation, and come into a “being” space, you open the channel for higher wisdom and guidance to come to you through your intuitive mind. You can ask questions and wait for answers to come to you through words, mental images, or feeling impressions.

Active: When you are experiencing yourself as the co-creator of your life, you make choices about what you desire to create, and channel the infinite energy, power, and wisdom of your higher self into manifesting your choices through active visualization and affirmation.

When the channel is flowing freely in both directions, you are being guided by your higher wisdom, and based on that guidance, you are making choices and creating your world in the highest, most beautiful way.

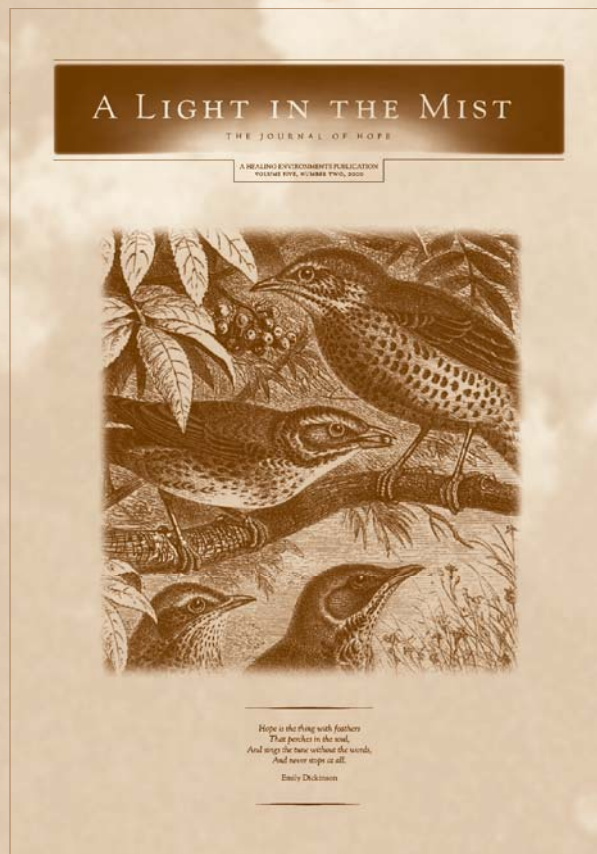


## ANIMAL ISSUE

Traci was bereft. She had been forced to put her beloved Great Pyrenees, Sumo, to sleep. Sam, Traci and I shared our stories of love and loss in the animal kingdom.

As we realized their importance to us, we decided to address the healing role animals have for us all – whether sick or well.

TEXT FROM COVER →  
HOPE IS THE THING WITH FEATHERS  
THAT PERCHES IN THE SOUL,  
AND SINGS THE TUNE WITHOUT THE WORDS,  
AND NEVER STOPS AT ALL.  
-EMILY DICKINSON





# A LIGHT IN THE MIST

THE JOURNAL OF HOPE

A HEALING ENVIRONMENTS PUBLICATION  
VOLUME FIVE, NUMBER TWO, 2000



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*Hope is the thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul,  
And sings the tune without the words,  
And never stops at all.*

Emily Dickinson

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## THE PEACE OF WILD THINGS

WHEN DESPAIR FOR THE WORLD GROWS IN ME  
AND I WAKE IN THE NIGHT AT THE LEAST SOUND  
IN FEAR OF WHAT MY LIFE AND MY CHILDREN'S LIVES MAY BE,  
I GO AND LIE DOWN WHERE THE WOOD DRAKE  
RESTS HIS BEAUTY ON THE WATER, AND THE GREAT HERON FEEDS.  
I COME INTO THE PEACE OF WILD THINGS  
WHO DO NOT TAX THEIR LIVES WITH FORETHOUGHT  
OF GRIEF. I COME INTO THE PRESENCE OF STILL WATER.  
AND I FEEL ABOVE ME THE DAY-BLIND STARS  
WAITING WITH THEIR LIGHT. FOR A TIME  
I REST IN THE GRACE OF THE WORLD, AND AM FREE.

—WENDELL BERRY

## ART AND HEALING

This is Sam's favorite cover. His creative genius is evident in his combination of the photograph of the hand and its drawing. It is no wonder that he is considered one of the country's foremost graphic designers. His work is in the permanent design collection of San Francisco's Museum of Modern Art.

Ten minutes after we met Sam, he said, "I get it. You're all about transformation." Sam gives form to our vision.

TEXT FROM COVER →  
INSIDE YOU THERE'S AN ARTIST YOU  
DON'T KNOW ABOUT... SAY YES  
QUICKLY, IF YOU KNOW, IF  
YOU'VE KNOWN IT FROM BEFORE THE  
BEGINNING OF THE UNIVERSE.  
-RUMI





# A LIGHT IN THE MIST

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VOLUME FIVE, NUMBER THREE, 2000

## Art and Healing



Inside you there's an artist you  
don't know about...Say yes  
quickly, if you know, if  
you've known it from before the  
beginning of the universe.

*Rumi*

## CREATIVE FUN BY SAM SMIDT



S AN ARTIST, I want to relish every hour,  
every moment of the creative experience.  
It's not work, it's play. It's fun. The day I  
consider what I do is work is the day  
I will give it up.

In fact, the times that I am away from my “funstuff” are the very times that are likely to be depressing.

Here are the steps I take when involving myself in a creative project:

1. I try and learn as much as I possibly can about the subject I will be working with.
2. Then, I forget about it.
3. Blank paper is scary stuff, so I get my feet wet by scribbling on it immediately.
4. The more I scribble, the deeper I go into relaxation. Sometimes, I draw or write for hours. A lot of it doesn't make any sense, but I know there are ideas buried deep in this sea of nonsense.
5. Guess what? Eureka! I strike gold. Ideas are born! I can feel the exhilaration. The spirit is satisfied. I am happy. I am winning at the great game.
6. The game continues. Manipulation. Experimentation. The hand becomes magical as though a mysterious force was guiding it.
7. Production. The idea takes shape. Reality emerges as form becomes visible.
8. Start a new project. Another game begins.

IN THE DARK ROOM THERE'S A BLUE SKY  
A MUSIC RITUAL BY SAM SMIDT

I HAVE ALWAYS considered music as one of life's special gifts that deserved my undivided attention. Extraneous ambient noise that gets in the way of listening lessens the enjoyment of the musical experience for me.

Composers and those who perform their music are artists who deserve our respect. In some cases they are historical legends.

Because of this philosophy, I've fallen into a ritual that provides me with as close to an ultimate experience as possible.

During a typical day, in my spare moments, I mentally review my record collection and select a recording that I would like to hear that evening.

Tonight it shall be Montserrat Caballe singing arias by Bellini and Donizetti.

In the evening, when the house is quiet and it's time to relax, I slip into my little, dark room and warm up my audio equipment.

As an audiophile purist, I have always preferred the vacuum tube electronics. The tubes tint the blackness with the subtle glow of Rembrandt.

I pour myself a bit of rare, single malt scotch (a gift from my pal Wayne, a fellow audiophile). The music begins softly and then the purity of Montserrat's voice cuts through the black space like a knife.

The bass violins send a thrill through my bones.

As the music continues on, imagery moves through my mind — and the concerns of the day dissipate into the darkness.

When it ends, I discover that the total recording lasted less than an hour, but it gave me a spiritual experience that will always be with me.



GIFTS OF THE STREET  
BY SAM SMIDT

T

HE MAJOR REASON my studio is in downtown Palo Alto is that it's a perfect walking distance from my home — about three miles. If I stretch out I can make it in forty minutes, but more realistically, I stop for coffee, and it takes an hour.

Exercise is the wrong word for it. Exercise implies a measured workout, but there's no work involved in this kind of walking. It's fun. It's my idea of a good time.

My walking has taken on a new twist, it's become an art form in progress. Walking has everything to do with light. A glare on wet pavement. Sunlight trickling in through trees and bouncing off car windshields. The reflection of an ominous figure in a window pane.

Many times I carry my camera. I have no plan or objective. I take pictures of forms and shapes that I'm attracted to. A manhole cover with a streak of pink paint sprayed on it. A bottle cap resting on blades of grass. I seem to be attracted to visual phenomena that are unplanned, that just happen.

Walking is different from driving a car or riding a bicycle — or even jogging for that matter. Walking provides one the opportunity to stop and examine details. Actually, the slower one travels, the more one is likely to experience the sensory pleasures.

Walking was not always my first priority. For some reason I could always find a meeting I had to make, a reason I needed the car, or I'd misplace things unintentionally that took time to find until there wasn't time to walk.

I first discovered the real benefits of walking at the Pritikin Institute many years ago. There, walking is everything, you get up at 6 a.m. and walk, exercise, and walk some more. All day long, everyday, along streets and beaches until you feel something is missing unless you're walking. After the Pritikin experience, I knew walking was the key to maintaining my physical health, but ultimately, it was most important to my mental well-being.

THE ZEN OF CREATIVITY:  
CULTIVATING YOUR ARTISTIC LIFE  
BY JOHN DAIDO LOORI

T

HE HUMAN form is absolutely magnificent when it is fully engaged. Most of us stumble through life using only a miniscule fraction of our potential. Joriki taps into our physical, mental, and emotional reserves, and opens our spiritual capacities.

One way that our spiritual power begins to manifest is through the emergence of the intuitive aspect of our consciousness. This is one of the reasons why Zen and creativity are so intimately linked. Creativity is also an expression of our intuitive aspect. Getting in touch with our intuition helps us to enter the flow of life, of a universe that is in a constant state of becoming. When we tap into our intuition, whether in our art or simply in the day-to-day activities of our lives, we feel a part of this creative continuum.

Single-pointed concentration develops our intuition. We become more directly aware of the world. We notice in ways that are not clearly understood, but are very accurate.

When the totality of our mind is focused on a single point, its power becomes staggering. Building concentration is just like any other kind of discipline. If we want to build muscles, we lift weights. Soon our muscles respond. To play the piano, we repeat the same exercises over and over. Eventually our fingers fly over the keys. It's the same with movement, with art. Repetitive practice builds our ability and skill. It's no different with meditation.

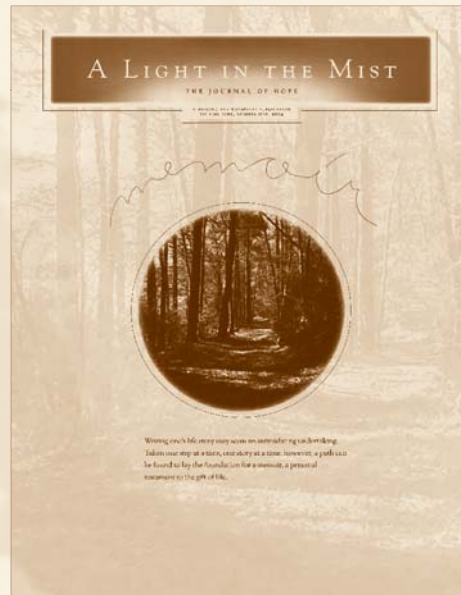
## MEMOIR

Somehow we stumbled upon the need to help our readers create memoirs, or ethical wills, for the families they had to leave behind. A cancer support worker called us from Appalachia. She had just given the memoir issue to a young mother dying of breast cancer, leaving five young children behind. So poor, the family feared they couldn't pay to bury her. When she saw the memoir booklet she exclaimed, "This is free? This is the most beautiful thing I have ever seen!"



TEXT FROM COVER ↑

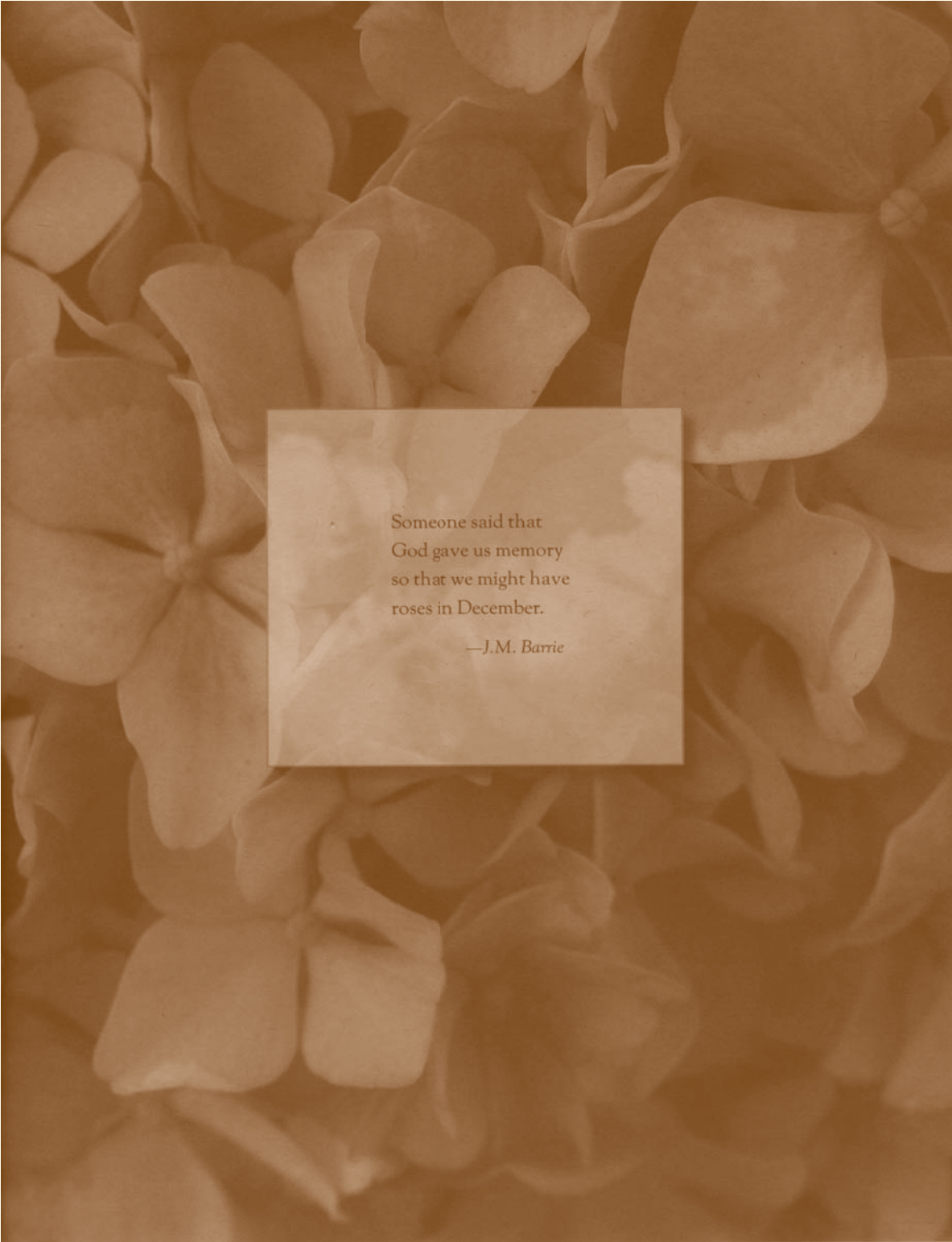
SOMEONE SAID THAT GOD GAVE US MEMORY  
SO THAT WE MIGHT HAVE ROSES IN DECEMBER.  
-J.M. BARRIE



TEXT FROM COVER ↑

WRITING ONE'S LIFE STORY MAY SEEM AN  
INTIMIDATING UNDERTAKING. TAKEN ONE STEP  
AT A TIME, ONE STORY AT A TIME, HOWEVER, A  
PATH CAN BE FOUND TO LAY THE FOUNDATION  
FOR A MEMOIR, A PERSONAL TESTAMENT TO THE  
GIFT OF LIFE.





Someone said that  
God gave us memory  
so that we might have  
roses in December.

—J.M. Barrie

# A LIGHT IN THE MIST

THE JOURNAL OF HOPE

A HEALING ENVIRONMENTS PUBLICATION  
VOLUME NINE, NUMBER ONE, 2004

*memoir*



Writing one's life story may seem an intimidating undertaking. Taken one step at a time, one story at a time, however, a path can be found to lay the foundation for a memoir, a personal testament to the gift of life.

*I received "A Light in the Mist" today and I was transformed by it. It inspired me to begin drawing and writing again and I did so with a fervor that I had long lost after my HIV diagnosis three years ago. When I finally laid my pencil down 6 hours had past in an instant. I had poured forth all that I had held trapped inside me so deeply and tightly. For the first time since being diagnosed I felt light and hopeful once again. Such an amazing grace you have given me. I feel divine once more. Many blessings to you and all those you touch.*

*Dennis*