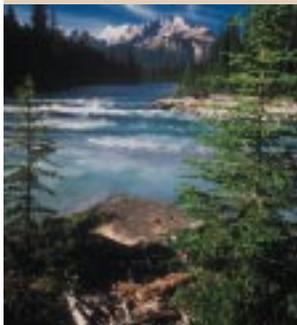


Soul-link, Inc.

"...fostering an awareness of and response to the sacred in nature, human nature and events of everyday life."

Volume 1 Issue 6
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Soul-Link Council

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"Life Is Beautiful"

A few years ago, after being encouraged by several people, I finally decided to see the film, "Life Is Beautiful."

It takes place in the late 1930's and tells the story of an Italian Jew, who, along with his wife and young son, is taken to a concentration camp. In an attempt to keep his son from realizing the horror of their circumstance, he chooses to take a positive attitude thus overcoming what could have been a hopeless and demoralizing experience.

As I reflect on the title and moral of this film, I can see many applications for my life. There is always a gravitational pull toward seeing and being enveloped by the negative. I can easily feel overwhelmed and helpless in the face of life's many tragedies and constant demands. I am prone to missing the beauty that surrounds me--in nature and in human nature.

It has been said that pain is inevitable but suffering is an option. To live is, from time to time, to experience hurt, confusion, disillusionment, etc. There is no escaping pain. How we choose to deal with the hard things of life is what determines whether or not we suffer. In "Life is Beautiful," the main character chose to deal positively and creatively with a very ominous situation. He reached into the deepest place in himself and, though the external circumstance remained unchanged, he lived his life rather than allowing others to rob him of vitality and spirituality.

We always have a choice; we can become bitter or better by the way we enter into our day and our life. We can see the glass as half empty or half full. We can look with our eyes or through them, a concept that poet William Blake wrote about: "We are led to

believe a lie. When we see with and not through the eye."

To see "through the eye" is to see with the eyes of faith. This view enables us to recognize the divine dimension of life and of ourselves and can empower us to live a positive, creative existence. *Tom Stella, CSC*

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Mark Your Calendars and Plan to Attend the Fall 2002 Soul-Link Retreat . . .

Read about how you can participate in a "pilot" Film Discussion Group on August 7, 2002. More detailed information is on page 2.



The next quarterly retreat is scheduled for Sat., Oct. 5, 2002 from 9:00 - 2:30 P.M. at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center. More details will be provided in the near future.

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SUMMER 2002

**Befriending Films:
*The Spiritual Practice beyond
 "Sitting in the Dark"***

Many critics look at a movie's entertainment values: Does it provide a few laughs, good adrenaline-pumping action, and an escape from the humdrum world? Or they comment on its production quality: How good is the acting, the directing, the screen play? Still others concentrate on the film as an art form.

Recently, staff from Spirituality & Health magazine decided to spend a great deal of time going to movies and writing about them. They chose to make a spiritual practice of befriending the films. They learned that movies have a way of becoming what you intend them to be. Wear "spiritual glasses" to the theater, and you will often be surprised by grace.

Some movies are close encounters with the stories of our lives. They help us identify the many voices inside us and delve deeply into our feelings, desires, and passions. Some are rendezvous with the shadow sides of life. They encourage us to take stock of our commitments and they show us how others have dealt with change and loss, success and failure, suffering and death. They open a window into the profound mysteries of life and love, good and evil. Many reveal signs of God's presence in daily life.

If we attend a film, and we do so with open minds and receptive hearts, we remind ourselves to be

hospitable to the movie--approaching it without expectations, just as we would a person we were meeting for the first time.

*--Spirituality & Health Magazine, Fall 2001
 by Frederick and Mary Ann Brussat*

Movies have a way of becoming what you intend them to be. Wear "spiritual glasses" to the theater, and you will often be surprised by grace.

Soul-Link leaders will pilot a session on Befriending Films: "How to Make Viewing Movies a Spiritual Practice."

There will be a "pilot" session offered to demonstrate how we may integrate film media into our spiritual practice. With the idea that some Soul-Link participants might be interested in forming film discussion groups in the future, materials including guidelines for leading a film discussion group will be provided. Please join us for the viewing of the film, "Life Is Beautiful," on **August 7, 2002 at 6:30 P.M. at 1522 Hollyhock Dr. in Colorado Springs.** (A map with directions will be sent in a future mailing). Though there is no fee for this session, space is limited so an RSVP is necessary. You may register for this session by calling the Soul-Link number (719) 473-5852. Leave a message and a Soul-Link Council member will return a call to confirm your registration.

Breathing in, I know that I am breathing in.
 Breathing out, I know that I am breathing out.

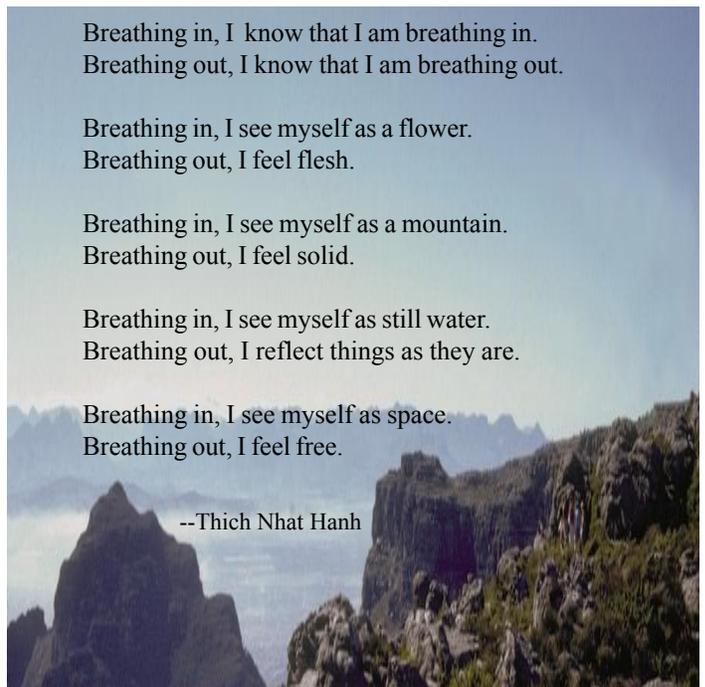
Breathing in, I see myself as a flower.
 Breathing out, I feel flesh.

Breathing in, I see myself as a mountain.
 Breathing out, I feel solid.

Breathing in, I see myself as still water.
 Breathing out, I reflect things as they are.

Breathing in, I see myself as space.
 Breathing out, I feel free.

--Thich Nhat Hanh



Upcoming Soul-Link Activities

June 10	6:30-8:00 P.M.	Potluck & Discussion
July 8	No RSVP needed	" "
Aug. 12	<i>Bring a favorite dish.</i>	" "
July 18**	3:00 P.M. 1522 Hollyhock Dr. **RSVP required Call 473-5852 by July 15, 2002	Soul-Link Picnic & Songfest <i>Entree, beverage, and table service will be pro- vided. Bring a favorite dish.</i>
Aug. 7**	6:30 P.M. 1522 Hollyhock Dr. **RSVP required Call 473-5852 by Aug. 5, 2002	"Pilot" session - Film discus- sion Group: Viewing of the film: Life Is Beautiful
Aug. 20	Thich Nhat Hanh Temple Buell Theatre at Denver Performing Arts Complex	Public Lecture: "Healing Our Pain, Touching Our Joy"

Please keep Soul-Link participant, Mary Will in your prayers. Mary recently suffered injuries including a broken neck as a result of a horse-back riding accident. Luckily, there is no paralysis, but Mary is likely facing a difficult and long period of recovery.



Thich Nhat Hanh to Be in Denver

Tickets are currently available for a public lecture entitled: "Healing Our Pain, Touching Our Joy," which will be presented by Thich Nhat Hanh. The lecture is scheduled for August 20, 2002 and will be held at Temple Buell Theatre at the Denver Performing Arts Complex (13th & Curtis); 7:00 P. M.

Tickets are available at the following outlets:

- online www.ticketweb.com
- Boulder Theatre Box Office on 14th St.
- Journey Books, Colfax St., Lakewood

Tickets are \$30.00 plus some ticket outlets charge an additional handling fee. Seating is general admission. Doors open at 6:00 P.M.

"What I want most is to spring out of this personality, then to sit apart from that leaping. I've lived too long where I can be reached." --Rumi



Soul-Link Picnic & Songfest To Be Held July 18

Mark your calendars and plan to join other Soul-Link participants for a social gathering. A picnic and songfest will be held July 18, 2002 at 3:00 P.M. at 1522 Hollyhock Dr. (*A map with directions will be sent in a future mailing.*)

To facilitate our planning, an RSVP is required. **You may register by calling 473-5852 no later than July 15 and leaving a message.** Your spouse or guest is welcome.

The entree, beverages, and table service will be provided. Please bring a favorite dish to add to our meal. You are also invited to bring your music and musical instruments.

A Spirituality of Imperfection

A spirituality of imperfection suggests that spirituality's first step involves facing self squarely, seeing one's *self* as one is: mixed-up, paradoxical, incomplete, and imperfect. Flawedness is the first fact about human beings. And paradoxically, in that imperfect foundation we find not despair but joy. For it is only within the reality of our imperfection that we can find the peace and serenity we crave.

Traditions as diverse as the Buddhist, the Christian, and the Muslim agree that we speak most truly of the divine and therefore of "the spiritual" by recognizing what it is *not*. Somehow this process of the *via negativa*, the "negative way," in which we wander down divergent paths exploring what something is not, brings us closer to the place where we want to go. For there is a kind of spirituality in the recognition that in our effort to understand spirituality, we have encountered something bigger than our efforts to capture it. We discover a helplessness before the very word, the powerlessness that is necessary beginning of spirituality itself.

T. S. Eliot described the spiritual path of the *via negativa* in "East Coker":

In order to arrive at what you do not know
You must go by a way which is the way of ignorance.
In order to possess what you do not possess
You must go by the way of dispossession.
In order to arrive at what you are not
You must go through the way in which you are not.
And what you do not know is the only thing you know
And what you own is what you do not own
And where you are is where you are not.

Distinguishing spirituality from religion is a slippery task. Those who consider themselves "spiritual" and those who consider themselves "religious" seem to agree that there are differences between them, but those differences are only broadly delineated. Viewing religion, "the spiritual" see rigidity; viewing spirituality, "the religious" see sloppiness. Religion connotes boundaries, while spirituality's borders seem haphazard and ill-defined. The vocabulary of religion emphasizes the *solid*; the language of spirituality suggests the *fluid*.

A modern student of religion and historian, Walter Houston Clark, suggested that religion often acts like vaccination: "One goes to church and gets a little something that then protects him or her against the real thing."

Spirituality points, always, beyond: *beyond* the ordinary, *beyond* possession, *beyond* the narrow confines of the self, and--above all--*beyond* expectation.

Did You Know?

- You can print copies of Soul-Link newsletters & general information about the organization to share with someone who may be interested in Soul-Link activities? Simply visit our web site: www.soullinkonline.org.

- All contributions you make to Soul-Link, Inc. are tax deductible because Soul-Link, Inc. is a 501C non-profit?

Because "the spiritual" is beyond our control, it is never exactly what we expect.

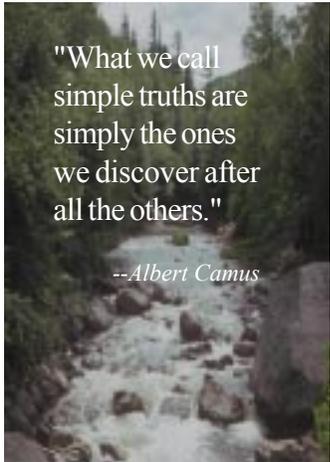
The word *spiritual* originally meant what the most obvious synonyms of *spirit*--breath, wind--signify: something that cannot be seen but that we nevertheless experience.

Spirituality is discovered beyond immediate perceptions. Spirituality always involves both an affirmation--"Yes, there is something here"--and a rejection--"But there is more to it than meets the eye."

Spirituality is not spectacular, but spectacularly simple, and that is why we find it so difficult to define or describe. The profoundly simple is simply ineffable: It literally *cannot* be spoken.

(Excerpts from The Spirituality of Imperfection, E.

Kurtz & K. Ketcham, Bantam Books, January, 1994.)



"What we call simple truths are simply the ones we discover after all the others."

--Albert Camus