

Soul-Link, Inc.

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

Volume 1 Issue 12
Winter 2004

Join us for the Winter Retreat - Jan. 24, 2004



Soul-Link Council

CoCo Soper
Tom Stella
Jeff Tschida
Patrick Smith
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Broken Promises, Shattered Dreams: *"Growing Through Life's Disappointments"*

It has been said that religious people believe in hell and spiritual people have been there. When we encounter life's darker moments, the possibility exists for us to become more wise, strong, loving, and truly holy. This retreat will expose participants to the ways some people have grown through their struggles, and it will invite us to look at how we might embrace with hope, our own difficult circumstances. The retreat will be held on Sat., Jan. 24, 2004, at El Pomar (*Julie Penrose House*) 1661 Mesa Ave. (*near the Broadmoor*). Registration fee, if received by Jan. 20, is \$20.00. Registration for walk-ins the day of the retreat is \$25.00. Both amounts include lunch. You may use the registration form on page 4 of this newsletter or call 473-5852 and leave name and phone number of registrant(s). The retreat will offer presentation, reflection, group sharing, and an opportunity to network with others on the spiritual path. If you have questions about the retreat, please call 473-5852 and leave a message. A Soul-Link Council member will call you.

Tragedy and Suffering: *"From Them Can Come Our Greatest Creativity"*

Tragedy and suffering will come to us. We can not insulate ourselves from them. We cannot avoid them. They come in their own season and in their own time. When they come, they may overwhelm us and immobilize us.

When all is going well, our world is a small, controlled experience bounded by our daily rituals and activities. When tragedy and suffering come swooping in, they shatter our tiny boundaries and break our world into pieces.

For a time, we are living inside a scream where there seems to be no exit, only echoes. The small cares that seemed so important yesterday seem like nothing, and our daily concerns become petty and irrelevant. When we finally reclaim ourselves, as we ultimately do, we are changed. (*Continued on page 2*)



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(Tragedy and Suffering: cont'd from page 1)

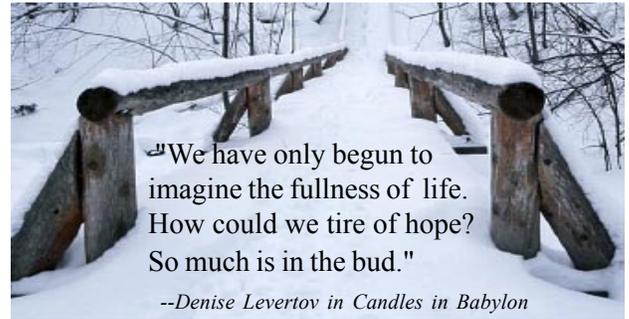
How we respond to tragedy and suffering is one true measure of our strength. We need to see these moments as moments of growth. We need to look upon them as gifts to help us reclaim what is important in our lives.

The human being is a surprisingly resilient organism. We impel toward health, not sickness. Our spirits, as surely as our bodies, will try to heal.

The question we must ask ourselves is not if we will heal, but how. Grief and pain have their own duration, and when they begin to pass, we must take care to guide the shape of the new being we are to become.

So we should not fear tragedy and suffering. Like love, they make us more a part of the human family. From them can come our greatest creativity. They are the fire that burns us pure.

--Adapted from Simple Truths, by Kent Nerburn



"We have only begun to imagine the fullness of life. How could we tire of hope? So much is in the bud."

--Denise Levertov in Candles in Babylon

Soul-Link Program Committee is Formed

A newly formed Program Committee is comprised of Marty Fernandez, Ruth Heine, Ron Marshall, Mary Will, Donna and Charles Kovak, CoCo Soper, and Tom Stella. The Committee is meeting to access current programs offered by Soul-Link, and to brainstorm ideas of what might be. Some of the ideas that will be considered by the group include: A book club, coffee house gatherings, monthly spiritual support groups (men/women/mixed), an educational series, continuing a film group, sponsoring speakers such as Anne LaMott, and reviewing other possibilities that promote wholeness. A meeting is planned for Jan. 12, 2004, to take a closer look at some of the suggestions.

"Shadow-casting Monsters"

Parker J. Palmer in his book, *Let Your Life Speak*, writes about our shadows and how they may be affected by the inner journey:

"If we are to cast less shadow and more light, we need to ride certain monsters all the way down, explore the shadows they create, and experience the transformation that can come as we "get into" our own spiritual lives. Here is a bestiary of five such monsters. I became acquainted with each of them during my descent into depression.

The first shadow-casting monster is insecurity about identity and worth. When we are insecure about our own identities, we create settings that deprive other people of their identities as a way of buttressing our own. There are settings, however, where a sense of self is enhanced by those who know who they are...the people who possess the knowledge that identity does not depend on the role we play or the power it gives us over others. It depends only on the simple fact that we are children of God, valued in and for ourselves.

A second shadow inside many of us is the belief that the universe is a battleground, hostile to human interests. We talk about tactics and strategies, allies and enemies, wins and losses, "do or die." The tragedy of this inner shadow is that it helps

is cooperative, communal. The gift we receive on the inner journey is the insight that the universe is working together for good.

A third shadow-casting monster is "functional atheism," the belief that ultimate responsibility for everything rests with us. This is the unconscious, unexamined conviction that if anything decent is going to happen, we are the ones who must make it happen--a conviction held even by people who talk a good game about God. The gift we receive on the inner journey is the knowledge that we need not carry the whole load but that we can share it with others, liberating us and empowering them.



A fourth shadow within and among us is fear, especially our fear of the natural chaos of life. Many of us want to rid chaos from the world and organize and orchestrate things so messiness will never bubble up around us. The insight we receive on the inner journey is that chaos is the precondition to creativity.

(Continued on page 3)

Upcoming 2004 Soul-Link Activities



- Jan. 12 6:30-8:00 p.m. **Potluck & Discussion**
Soul-Link Center at
2413 N. Cascade Ave.
No RSVP is necessary
- Jan. 24 9:00 a.m. - **Winter Retreat**
2:30 p.m. Information on Page 1
and registration form is
on Page 4. RSVP is
encouraged but walk-
ins are welcome.
- Feb. 9 6:30-8:00 p.m. **Potluck & Discussion**
Mar. 8 Soul-Link Center at
2413 N. Cascade Ave.
No RSVP is necessary

Resources for the Spiritual Journey

BOOK REVIEW: Let Your Life Speak by Parker J. Palmer, Jossey-Bass Publishers
Parker Palmer presents an insightful and moving meditation on finding one's true calling. Let Your Life Speak is an openhearted gift to anyone who seeks to live authentically. The book's title is a time-honored Quaker admonition, usually taken to mean "Let the highest truths and values guide everything you do." Palmer reinterprets those words, drawing on his own search for selfhood.

Shadow-casting monsters, cont'd from page 2)

A final example of the shadows we may project is, the denial of death itself. Within our denial of death lurks fear of another sort: the fear of failure. Often, we try to keep resuscitating things in our lives that are no longer alive. Projects and programs that should have been unplugged long ago are kept on life support to accommodate the insecurities of one who does not want anything to die on his or her watch.

The gift we receive on the inner journey is the knowledge that death finally comes to everything--and yet death does not have the final word. By allowing something to die when its time is due, we create conditions under which new life can emerge.

(Adapted from Parker J. Palmer, Let Your Life Speak)



"The Spiritual Practice of Shadow"

The spiritual practice of shadow encourages us to make peace with those parts of ourselves that we

find to be despicable, unworthy, and embarrassing -- our anger, jealousy, pride, selfishness, violence, and other "evil deeds." In Christianity, shadow aspects show up as the seven deadly sins. Moslems talk about nafs as our lower selves, and Buddhists refer to negative emanations of mind. Societies and cultures also have dark sides.

The spiritual practice of shadow aims at wholeness by unifying the dark and the light inside and around us.

Spiritual practice: Make a list of the shadow aspects of yourself, your household (i.e. selfish, greedy, proud), group (exclusive, self-satisfied), or community (tendency to demonize enemies, oppressive). Practice recognizing the shadow in the news reported on television or in your newspaper. Figure out some ways to bring the shadow into the light. By owning your shadows, you embrace your full humanity.

(Excerpts from Spirituality and Health Magazine)



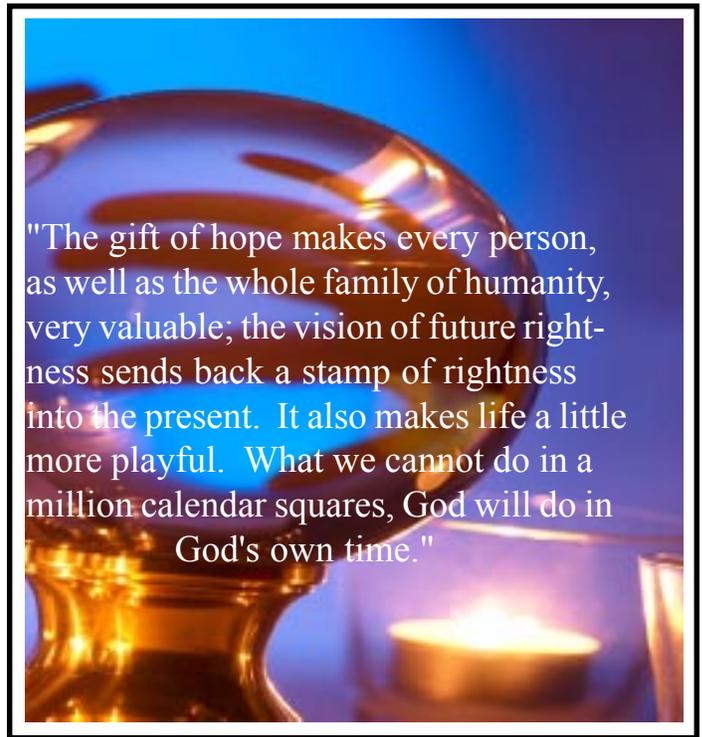
"Zen teachers often use the image of "taking tea with the demons." Fear -- to name merely one demon -- grows huge as we flee from it, but, when we turn and face it, it shrinks."

(From The Barn at the End of the World, by Mary Rose O'Reilly)

SOUL LINK

Together on the Spiritual Path

This new logo for Soul-Link was designed by Andy Finn, a local owner of a graphic arts business. Several designs were submitted for review by the Soul-Link Development Committee and Board. The design chosen reflects connectedness and movement on the spiritual path. Many thanks to Andy for sharing his time and talent with us!



Another Book Review: Hope Begins Where Hope Begins

Author, Michael Downey, examines the dynamics of hope in our time. He finds that many people are unable to move into the future with clear conviction. Some of the hindrances to hope include the interruptive character of history, discontinuities between expectation and event, and the ways suffering disorients and baffles us.

Even within the Christian community, "hope seems to be something like a proverbial 'middle child' sandwiched in between affirmations about the priority of faith and the excellence of love." Using poetry, stories from his personal experience, and theological musings, Downey salutes hope as the driving force of all human initiative, a central theme of the Bible, and a way of making good in life. Hope stirs in the heart when we serve others. And it is its selflessness that makes this virtue so significant.

(Reviewed by Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat for Spirituality and Health Magazine.)

Winter Retreat, Jan. 24, 2004 - Registration at 9:00 A.M. Retreat session 9:30 A.M. - 2:30 P.M.
Broken Promises, Shattered Dreams: "Growing Through Life's Disappointments" -- El Pomar,
(Julie Penrose House) 1661 Mesa Ave (near the Broadmoor).

(Clip and return with your check made payable to: Soul-Link, Inc.)

Mail to: Soul-Link, Inc. 2413 N. Cascade Ave, Colorado Springs, CO 80907

Registrations received by **Jan. 20:** \$20.00 incl. lunch
 Registrations on day of workshop: \$25.00 incl. lunch

No. of persons attending _____ Amount enclosed _____

Name _____ Phone No. _____

Name _____ Phone No. _____

Name _____ Phone No. _____

Please list any special dietary needs _____