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Letters, articles, news items and other contributions for *Towards Wholeness* should be sent to the editor, Rosalind Smith, 4 The Walks, Stanton, Nr. Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, IP31 2BX. Telephone: 01359 252248. Email: RosSmith@btinternet.com **Deadlines: February 1st, June 1st & October 1st.**

For information about the Friends Fellowship of Healing contact the Clerk: Cherry Simpkin, 78 Courtlands Avenue, Lee, London SE12 8JA Tel: 020 8852 6735 Email: cherrysim@btinternet.com

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FFH/QSH Web-site: www.quaker-healing.org.uk

Clerk: Cherry Simpkin, 78 Courtlands Avenue, Lee, London SE12 8JA
Email: cherrysim@btinternet.com Tel: 020 8852 6735

Assistant Clerk: Anthea Lee, 24 Lea Close, Bishops Stortford, Herts. CM23 5EA
Email: Anthea-George-Lee@scethin.fsnet.co.uk Tel: 01279 656707

FFH Membership Secretary: Ruth Martin, 96 Busbridge Lane, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1QH. Email: ruth.quakerhealer@talktalk.net Tel: 01483 422881

Treasurer: John Smith &

Editor of Towards Wholeness: Rosalind Smith, 4 The Walks, Stanton, Nr. Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP31 2BX.
Email: RosSmith@btinternet.com Tel: 01359 252248

Postal Prayer Groups Coordinators: Elliot Mitchell, 87 Ravelston Rd, Bearsden, Glasgow G61 1AZ. Email: elliotjames33@yahoo.co.uk Tel: 0141 9424431
and Muriel Robertson, 51 Highmains Avenue, Dumbarton G82 2PT
Email: murielQ@blueyonder.co.uk Tel: 01389 763963

Immediate Prayer Group: Rosemary Bartlett, 10 Cavendish Mews, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 1PW. Tel: 01625 526067, – or Joy Simpson Tel: 01594 841800

Prayer Group for the Mother and her Unborn Child: Sylvia Edwards, 17 Sedlescombe Park, Rugby, Warwicks. CV22 6HL
Email: edwards.ancot@virgin.net Tel: 01788 521923

Quaker Spiritual Healers Membership Secretary: Geoffrey Martin, 24 Kingsley Road, Bedford MK40 3SF. Tel: 01234 267360
Email: Geoffrey@healing-hands.fsnet.co.uk

Claridge House, Dormans Road, Dormansland, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6QH.
(Manager: Alison Green, Deputy Manager: Keith Marsden) Tel: 01342 832150
Email: welcome@claridgehouse.quaker.eu.org
Website: www.claridgehouse.quaker.eu.org

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IF YOU ARE THINKING OF MAKING A WILL...

Have you considered leaving something to the FFH?

A specimen form of words could be:

"I give and bequeath (state what...) to the Friends Fellowship of Healing (being a Charity registered under the Charities Act, No. 284459), to the registered address of the Charity as recorded with the Charity Commission at the time that this bequest comes into effect, AND I DECLARE that the receipt of this legacy by the then proper officer for the Fellowship, shall be a complete discharge to my Trustee(s) for that legacy."

NEWS

QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS' EVENTS

QSH 'Training' Course: Oct 13th-17th

*Led by **Cherry Simpkin** and **Margaret Western**
and*

QSH Support Weekend: Sept 12th-14th

*Facilitated by **Anne Simpson***

Both these events are at Claridge House, Lingfield. Further details on page 19.

Please book directly with Claridge House, Tel: 01342 832150

Email: welcome@ClaridgeHouse.quaker.eu.org

Friends Fellowship of Healing Spring Gathering: 8th-10th May 2009, will be held at Wesley College, Bristol, which is set in lovely grounds, and easy of access by road and rail. More details in the Autumn issue of *TW*.

Calling all FFH members and healing groups:

So many of us have benefited enormously from staying at Claridge House, where the staff work so exceptionally hard to make it such a welcoming and refreshing place. In these penurious times many Friends are sending in regular monthly donations and these are all gratefully received. There is, however, something else we could do to support the trustees and staff. Some of you may have seen the beautiful picture of Claridge House's open, yellow door (sent to Meetings as well as inserted into the Spring issue of *TW*). The caption reads 'Welcome to our peaceful haven'. This image could serve as a focus for our loving and supportive thoughts, rather like the way the Fountain group works. If all FFH groups, and indeed all of us, could send regular Light to Claridge House through the front door, I'm sure we'd make a huge difference to the staff and all who stay there.



Friends are beginning to consider whether we have anything to say about ageing. *Quaker Faith and Practice's* Advice is well meant and practical, though rather with the tone of the welfare person to the older 'client'. I wondered whether that was my only reason for disliking it, but eventually realised that it also has a significant lack. It urges older people to show courage, make arrangements to avoid being a burden, and so on, but where is the advice to younger people to respect and care for the older ones?

As we have been swept along by the current of change, we can easily miss how much has happened. When I began teaching in 1945 after the war, we took for granted that the older colleagues who had survived to draw their full half-pay pension at about sixty two would enjoy a few comfortable years but would die within ten years after a quite short illness. No doubt other readers of *TW* can come up with comparable memories. If we look back through its biographies and novels, to the nineteenth century, the many deaths that then distressed people came from infections or other brief vaguely labelled complaints. Or often from the consequences of their furious pace of overwork. And the further back we look the shorter the usual life span, even without the great killers of famine, plague and war. But our generation has turned out to be the great exception, a historical anomaly. We are living, along with others in some prosperous parts of the world, to see not merely grandchildren but the generation after that, which would have been almost beyond imagining in the past. It is as if we had been granted a second life span.

All this may sound fine. We retire, often before sixty, and set out on whole fresh careers, from running Quaker committees to travelling round the world. Many people have a healthy and adventurous twenty years, enriched by new and continuing friendships. But nothing comes without its price. In time we find ourselves less mobile and altogether slowed down. In the past, pneumonia, 'the friend of the aged', or some other infirmity the doctors had no means of treating, would have taken over and removed us fairly smartly. But doctors now can treat most complaints and seem able to defer death. Even this later stage can be acceptable, if we have kept our 'faculties' and are reasonably free from pain, and especially if we still have some family and social circle, though it quickly becomes very different if we are poor and isolated. It is the changes of this later stage which call for new thought and new solutions. We need to be practical, to recognize that we are not immortal and take whatever precautions we can to ease our decline.

Some of the current tension over the ending of one's life would be lessened if we could be clearer about one matter. Our fears are not usually about death,

or even infirmity. At the end of a long life death can be welcome, but survival in unrelieved pain is a great source of anxiety. It seems to be assumed that only cancer sufferers are entitled to effective pain relief. Am I right in thinking that still for many doctors pain control is a minor matter, and that some people could still have a useful and even enjoyable quality of life if their doctors took pain seriously enough to give comfort and ease without waiting for it to become extreme or terminal? Friends could well bring into the open this question of pain control.

One problem is that of the over-conscientious doctor, prepared to use all the resources of present day medicine, which can often keep us alive but do not prevent pain and incapacity. We can all help ourselves by making our wishes clear about what we wish to be done in extreme or terminal conditions. It is not enough merely to tell our family or even our doctor that we do not, for example, want resuscitation after a stroke, or even a car accident, our wishes should be in writing, and this is best given legal force with one of the Advance Directives from Dignity in Dying. When this paper has been filled in it should be shown to the G.P. and if he is a good one he will keep a photocopy of it and enter your wishes on your medical record in his computer. And if you feel that something could happen to you suddenly you can keep one of the little cards provided in your wallet or diary in the hope that a paramedic will find it there. There are many issues here for a later life group to consider.

Ageing is not so much one big problem as an accumulation of small handicaps and shortages, each seeming trivial to the onlooker, but to the sufferer an irritation and an embarrassment. It is worth looking at some of these. For example, we have probably been feeling some guilt about cars, and have been trying to walk or cycle. But if a car helps us to keep independent mobility and even be useful to others, then this guilt is unwarranted. But even though we may be right to keep a car, do we need to cling to that evidence of our earlier skill, the manual gearbox, with the hundreds of tiring movements it forces us to make during a journey? Or if we want to go on gardening can we still handle our favourite tools? In our kitchen, are we keeping some well loved mixer or cooker, even though it is heavy or awkward to use? Another of the annoying signs of our decline is that we can't manage the small maintenance jobs about our house and have to leave things undone, or make complicated arrangements with family members, or neighbours, or, even more difficult, with some handyman, if we are lucky enough to find one.

Most of us have strong feelings about the loss of independence from having to give up some activity like these, but as many are deeply distressed when they can no longer prepare their own food, whether from arthritis, or Parkinsonism or just plain weakness. When interesting and tasty food has been a major

pleasure the descent to ready meals or some modern form of ‘meals on wheels’, is felt as a serious loss both of pleasure and dignity.

But by this time bigger questions are piling up. Should we be moving to a ‘more convenient’ house or flat? And what about family? In these days of small dispersed families the chances are that any sons or daughters are scattered, sometimes not just around this country but far further afield, where the time and cost of travel makes quick visiting impossible. Or if we have a connection somewhere in this country, will they propose that their older relative, who seems to them to have no commitments, should move to where they “can keep an eye” on them without interrupting their own jobs or interests?

In earlier life, a move could be an enjoyable challenge, the chance to tame a different house and explore a new countryside. But moving later on, when we are less mobile, means disorientation and the loss of familiar contacts, both with people and places, from libraries to shops with known and helpful assistants. And so tensions arise as the younger people feel that their willingness to help in the only way they think possible is being rejected for what seems merely a sentimental attachment.

There is good sense in the present willingness of the welfare services to provide the kinds of care which make it possible for people to stay in their own homes. The contents of these, from the furniture and pictures to the books, and right down to the cutlery, are not simple objects. They are the carriers of memories, without which we are not ourselves. This is especially true where death has already been taking away the visible and audible presence of the people who had formed our lives. It may be practical to urge a move into a retirement home, and take ‘a few personal treasures’, but the separation from all the things that are bundled up for disposal can be a kind of amputation. And underlying all this is the tremendous cost, the subject of many an anxious family debate, and often cause of friction.

These are merely examples of later life difficulties brought about by new social conditions and extended life spans. Because we are in the middle of what seem small adaptations it is easy to overlook how fundamentally they are reshaping people’s lives. There may well be as good a case for a group study of the new and, I think, unprecedented changes in family life, as there was for Quaker contributions to earlier traditional and public problems.

... We cannot live in the afternoon of life according to the programme of life’s morning.

Carl Jung

DRAW BREATH

*Breathe in the quiet purpose of this place:
Through outward stillness, seek a calm within.
Here we may find forgiveness and forgive:
Here feel the healing miracle begin.*

*Breathe out the busy world, the teeming mind,
The follies, fears and failures of the week:
Breathe out contention, pettiness and pride,
And wait in trust for 'that of God' to speak.*

*Breathe in communion, friend with quiet friend,
Each drawing closer in this timeless hour.
As all our different needs and gifts are drawn
To the source of comfort, love and power.*

*Breathe out at last to God the heart's full thanks
That we have seen this vision, know this grace:
Renewed through love, let us that love extend
Through all our daily life beyond this place.*

Eleanor Royston Jones – known as Biddy
(found amongst her papers after her death)

As Quakers, and/or spiritual healers, we may not always remember that we are using our bodies in a special way when in Meeting. This is also true when involved in our healing work – hands-on or distant. We may believe instead that it is just about thinking or feeling spiritually, rather than anything physical. However, of course, we start by entering a ‘change of consciousness’ state – a meditation mode. This may have become so natural and easy, that we have forgotten how we go through a process of relaxing our body, slowing our breathing so that it deepens, and feeling in touch with the Divine. We will each have some method of attunement which allows us to enter into full conscious awareness and intentionality. We become very alert with our intuition heightened. Personally, I call this, “having my antennae aquiver.” So, it is very much a physical process. After this we feel, or visualise, our body becoming a ‘channel’ for the healing and creative power of the Holy Spirit. This allows us to become aware of those for whom we are praying, or who are joining with us in a truly gathered Meeting. It becomes, therefore, a holistic process, involving body, mind, feelings and spirit, with us perhaps using much more of our body than we realise. I *need* that bodily bit to remain grounded and earthed. Otherwise I sometimes feel I might ‘float off!’ Being aware that my feet are firmly on the ground, in touch with the earth energy, makes me feel solid and secure. So, before I start healing, or when I first enter Meeting, I particularly pay attention to what my body is doing – untensed, limbs free and not crossed, everything comfortable, back straight to assist deep breathing.

Praying or meditating with a deepened awareness of my own body is something I first learnt to do through reading *Prayers of the Cosmos*. This little book was written about sixteen years ago by Neil Douglas-Klotz and is still in print. Neil translates the Pater Noster prayer and the Beatitudes directly from their original Aramaic – that is, Jesus’ own language – and in the way that Middle Eastern people would have prayed in his time. It is thought that using the original Aramaic will be nearer to the true meaning, rather than the Greek, Latin, or Hebrew translations, which have come down to us in English. Aramaic is a very beautiful language and there is an accompanying tape to the book, so one may learn to chant it. I also learnt to do this when Neil visited St James’, Piccadilly.

In each chapter, just one line (e.g. ‘Our Father, who art in heaven’) is translated with the meaning of the Aramaic concepts being explained. After this there is the relevant Body Prayer for this line. This allows one to enter into the experience of the beautiful words as a contemplative spiritual practice. Bodily prayers are still the traditional method of praying in the Middle East. Included

are body awareness, breathing, intoning sound, chanting and singing.

Aramaic does not separate life into compartments, e.g. spiritual or mundane aspects, or differentiate between the transcendent or immanent God. Rather, it includes our whole being in our wholeness and Oneness. These concepts will be familiar to most Quakers. None of the Semitic languages (of which Aramaic is one) separate body, mind, feelings and spirit, but explore every concept holistically as Jesus did. This becomes much clearer in Neil Douglas-Klotz' translation, so one can understand better what Jesus really meant. Then, by using the body prayer provided, it is possible to experience the rhythm and breath of the words in a truly authentic way.

Praying by using our whole body is very different from the mere, rather mechanical reciting often found in Christian churches. It is more akin to the whole-hearted singing one can do when breathing and moving correctly. It is also what Quakers experience in the deep stillness of Meeting. I, personally, feel this is enhanced collectively when most people are sitting in a relaxed but alert way (as one learns to do in meditation). However, chanting, intoning and singing are, of course, missing. (Although one can always go to a local church for a good sing!) So, often, in my quiet times alone, I am now in the habit of using Body Prayers – breathing through the words, chanting and intoning them. I find this enhances my distant healing – helping to connect me.

I was, therefore, delighted to discover recently that Neil Douglas-Klotz has produced yet another book, (he's written many since *Prayers of the Cosmos*) which has accompanying Body Prayers with an eighty-minute long CD. It is called *Blessings of the Cosmos* and subtitled *Wisdom of the Heart from the Aramaic Words of Jesus*. There are twenty such sayings: 'Come unto me, all ye that labour', 'Ask and it shall be given you', and so on. I have started to work through each one, chapter by chapter, in my daily mediation time. This hopefully will refresh and enhance my Body Praying – my body, mind, feelings and spirit praying.

References: *Prayers of the Cosmos*, Neil Douglas-Klotz 1990, ISBN 0-06-061994-5
Blessings of the Cosmo, Neil Douglas-Klotz, 2006, ISBN 1-59179-417-x

Life, at its deepest level, is not about the accomplishment of things in themselves so much as the manner in which we do them.

Judy Clinton

The computer swallowed Grandma

The computer swallowed Grandma
Yes, honestly, it's true!
She pressed 'Control' and 'Enter'
And disappeared from view.

It devoured her completely,
The thought just makes me squirm.
She must have caught a virus
Or been eaten by a worm.

I've searched through the recycle bin
And files of every kind;
I've even used the Internet,
But nothing did I find.

In desperation I asked Jeeves
My searches to refine.
The reply from him was negative,
Not a thing was found online.

So, if inside your 'Inbox'
My Grandma you should see,
Please 'Copy', 'Scan' and 'Paste' her
And send her back to me!

*This is a tribute to all the Grandmas who have been fearless
and learned to use the computer.*

*We do not stop playing because we grow old;
We grow old because we stop playing.*

Anon

Meditation allows space between our thoughts, and the more we practise meditation the more the space increases. The concept of space is interesting – for example it is the space between musical notes that makes the music, and it is the space in a bowl that is filled with possibilities. Practising meditation, however, can be challenging even for experienced meditators. If our lives are in hiatus then our thoughts and feelings mirror that and penetrate the space. The Buddhist technique of Mindfulness can help work with this by using the mind to still the mind and so regain the space between the thoughts.

I was reminded of Mindfulness when doing some research for teaching meditation classes. On reading Jack Kornfield, Rob Nairn and, of course Thich Nhat Hanh, I started to practise Mindfulness; finding the technique to be both effective and consistent, I then introduced the technique in the classes to similar effect. I started facilitating meditation courses some four years ago to provide adjunctive support for my homoeopathic and healing clients to enable self-healing; and for this too Mindfulness ticks all the boxes. Mindfulness not only gives us a technique to still the mind in *and out* of meditation, but in so doing it also develops self-awareness and acceptance of whatever comes up internally and externally. Mindfulness is a Buddhist technique which is also termed Right Meditation. In essence it is non-judgmental awareness of the present, and the bridge to Mindfulness is focusing on the breath. Focusing on the breath keeps us in the present.

Meditation is disrupted by sensations (such as a persistent itchy nose), and/or thoughts, some of which lead to feelings. By practising Mindfulness while meditating we observe and focus on the persistent itchy nose and the intrusive thoughts and in so doing they disappear. This bypasses a battle of wills – the will to meditate and the will of the busy mind. The mind likes to be busy and the mind does not like to meditate, if we engage in the battle we will always lose.

It helps, I think, to understand how the mind works. In any given situation it scans what is before it – a thought, a feeling, an experience, an item, a television programme – the list is endless. It then evaluates what it has scanned, and then it reacts with commentary. We have hundreds, if not thousands, of thoughts in a day. Most of these have no importance to us because we have no attachment to them. These ones are easy to let go in meditation. The ones our mind focuses on are those we are attached to. For example: I have a thought that the carpet is green. I can let that go. I then have the thought that the carpet has a stain which I cannot eradicate despite my best efforts. That thought has attachment – I react, I start to think of other cleansing solutions that I may have missed, and the meditation is disrupted.

The beauty of Mindfulness is that it uses the mind to observe the mind. A thought comes up which we scan but without evaluation or judgement, and without that component the thought simply disappears. So, to pursue my example; I accept the carpet is stained and stay with that thought only, and the thought disappears because there is no reaction to feed it. It is the attachment and subsequent reaction to a thought or sensation that overtakes the meditation.

Acceptance is the key. If we can accept whatever comes up in meditation by way of thoughts or feelings, then we can achieve stillness and eventually compassion. By practising Mindfulness outside of Meditation we not only enhance our meditation practice, but it also enables us to stay present and avoid serial multi-tasking. The seminal work on this is *The Miracle of Mindfulness* by Thich Nhat Hanh. Most of us have experienced driving from A to B and on arrival not remembered any aspect of the journey. Using Mindfulness while driving, and therefore being aware, through our senses, of what is happening in the present – such as watching other road users, feeling the steering wheel in our hands, hearing the noise of the engine, viewing the surrounding scenery, we remain in the present and probably drive more calmly if not safely. Thich Nhat Hanh recommends practising Mindfulness while drinking a cup of tea, washing dishes, and taking a walk. All of which I find enormously beneficial for staying in the present and managing a busy mind. Of course, this can be extended to practising Mindfulness while engaged in all of our daily activities, and this is the ultimate aim.

On further research I learn that Mindfulness is being used with Cognitive Behaviour Therapy by some psychiatrists and psychotherapists to help depression and other mental health issues. This does not surprise me. Both personally and professionally, I have seen how Mindfulness has helped in the acceptance of thoughts and feelings that arise, and this gives insight into how flawed thought patterns can govern us. I should add here that it is possible with Meditation for buried experiences to come to the conscious mind, and for some this is very painful and may require professional help, as well as Mindfulness, to resolve them.

Essentially the practice of Meditation is not linear or goal orientated, as that whole concept is mind-fodder and leads to expectation, evaluation and commentary. That said, however, in conclusion, Mindfulness enables us to realise that we are much more than our thoughts and feelings. Practising Mindfulness and allowing whatever comes up to arise and dissolve, leads ultimately to self-acceptance. This in turn leads to healing and compassion, and with compassion comes the awareness of the truth of the space between our thoughts.

I was walking through the rooms of a large rambling house. Each room was empty, cold, hostile. But I had to go on, opening door after door, each room leading into the next one. I felt trapped, unable to find the way out. And behind me, drawing closer all the time, moved some dreadful, unimaginable creature born of darkness and fear, stalking me through the never-ending sequence of rooms. And I knew that at any moment the door through which I had just passed would open again behind me, and I would feel the creature's breath upon my neck, in terrifying proximity. My whole being shuddered with the primitive horror of knowing one is the victim of pursuit. I was too frightened to risk turning round to face up to whatever threatened me. I woke up in a cold sweat of terror.

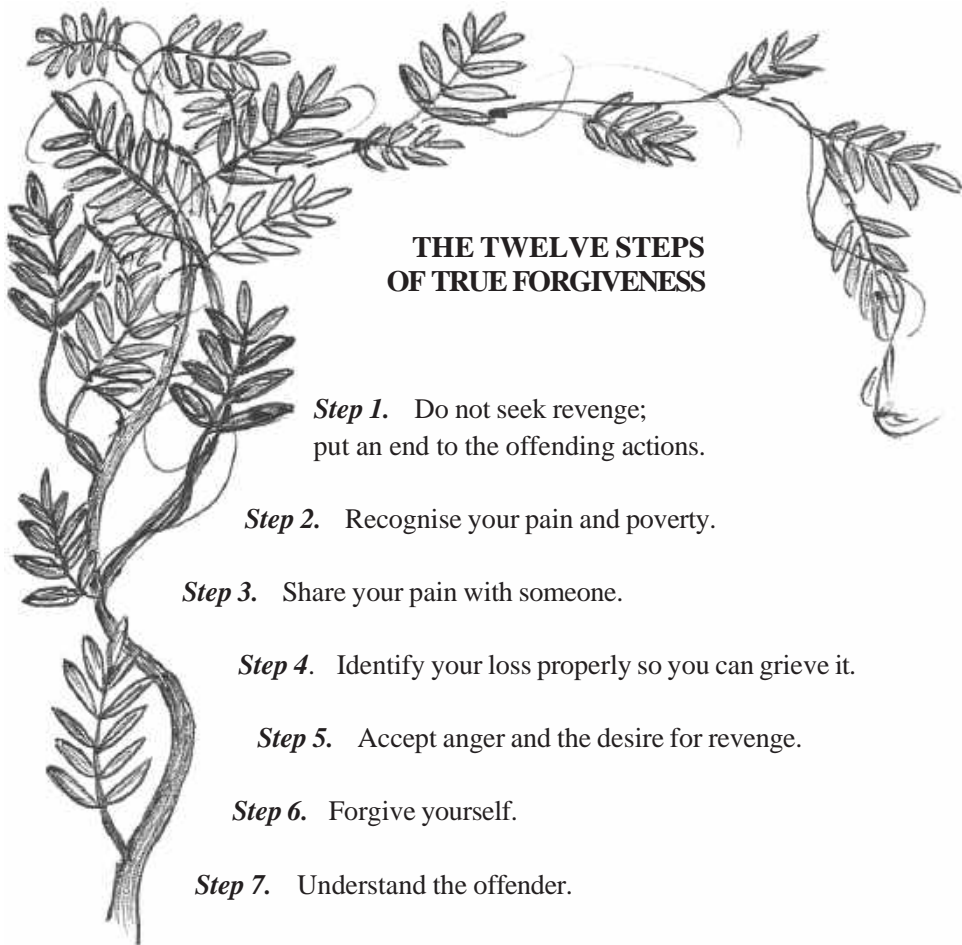
This same nightmare, these images of fear, haunted me from early childhood. When would I ever be free?

In my middle twenties, I started attending philosophy classes at the School of Economic Science in London, and studied the work of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky – their teaching of 'the Fourth Way', which is a method of working on oneself to raise one's level of consciousness, and gain an awareness of one's place in the universe. My whole life seemed to open out. I made many new friends who shared my interest in spiritual matters, and I developed a great deal more confidence in myself, and felt that life on earth had a very definite meaning and purpose.

But during my first year of studying these teachings, once more the old familiar nightmare returned to haunt me. Yet again I found myself walking through those empty echoing rooms. Again I was afraid, there was nowhere left to run to. Then, slowly, I turned round, prepared at last to confront my fear. I watched the door as it slowly opened, and instead of a creature of unspeakable horror, I saw it was a friend who came walking through. The relief was stupendous. I woke up at once, with a wonderful feeling of release, as if an intolerable burden had suddenly tumbled from my shoulders.

I never visited those rooms again in sleep, or dreamed of my pursuer. But the memory of that wonderful moment of glad awakening is with me still ... to have looked fear in the face, and found it had been a friend all the time.

(Dreams can be so helpful: they can inform us, warn us, help and heal us. Do any other readers have healing dreams they would like to share? Please send to the editor – details on inside back cover.)



THE TWELVE STEPS OF TRUE FORGIVENESS

Step 1. Do not seek revenge;
put an end to the offending actions.

Step 2. Recognise your pain and poverty.

Step 3. Share your pain with someone.

Step 4. Identify your loss properly so you can grieve it.

Step 5. Accept anger and the desire for revenge.

Step 6. Forgive yourself.

Step 7. Understand the offender.

Step 8. Make sense of the offence in your life.

Step 9. Recognise that you're worthy of forgiveness,
and already forgiven.

Step 10. Stop trying so hard to forgive.

Step 11. Open up to the grace of forgiving.

Step 12. Decide whether to end or renew the relationship.

John Monbourquette



From Stephen Feltham, Bournemouth Meeting

‘The Healing Touch of Poems’ – the poems published in the Spring issue of *TW* (No. 120) were written for one of my daughters a few years ago. At the time she was at university and as is typical went through the ups and downs that young people find themselves in when away from home and experiencing the pressures of exams, no cash and less than ideal living conditions. I received a few ‘tearful phone calls’ and in addition to the love and cuddles one wants to send down the telephone line I thought “what else can I do?” It was during one of these times that I wrote the poem **ANGER**. On another occasion following a similar tone with the conversation I wrote **CALM**. The poems were sent surface mail and later, when I visited her digs I came to appreciate how valuable a simple thing like a letter is. It can be very healing to receive correspondence. Emails and phone calls are OK, let’s not knock them. But the anticipation and joy of opening a letter sent out of love, with love, and received in love is great indeed. It is a heart warming thing to see such letters cherished and saved and, moreover, kept close at hand to be read and reviewed several times over. Both sender and recipient gain much.

The two poems **Anger** and **Calm** were just the initial parts of a trilogy. They were compiled into three postcard type ‘poempics’ and mounted in a picture frame that has now been displayed in the several sets of digs, flats and finally in her own homes over the years. They meant something when they were written and continue to be meaningful not just between a father and his daughter but for others as well. Such is the power of the written word. It is so healing. And so, with love, the final part of the trilogy:

*Just think of all the anger or calm that you have ever shown, and
Of all the hates and loves and feelings you have known.
Yesterday’s lows and highs are but preparation for tomorrow’s joy
that is yours to own.*

From Mary Barnes, Drimnin, By Oban

I was happily enjoying the article by Michael Lewin in the Spring issue of *TW*, which seemed to exactly mirror my continuing journey towards wholeness, when I was brought up short by a phrase near the end.

This was ‘restricting our development is not really an option that we should consider, for we may very well come to resent this lack of courage within ourselves, in later years when it is too late to make important changes.’



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I am 77 and hope to go on developing and changing for as long as I live in this body. To imply that I may be too late to go on living and adapting and changing from now on, was like getting a sudden slap in the face.

I imagine that the article was addressed to people who have never thought of living in this way. A very odd premise! I'm sorry if I 'took it the wrong way', but I think there may be others, like myself, who need their self-confidence boosting to the end of their lives, who could also have been affected like myself.

Now for a return to the state of being which is one I do achieve, on and off, all the time. I say 'on and off' quite deliberately. Once I have found my inner self and dwelt there, even when other parts of me take over for a while, I know that if I stop and allow it to happen, I can return there – and start to continue growing once more.

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There was once a wise woman travelling in the mountains who found a precious stone in a stream. The next day she met another traveller who was hungry, and she opened her bag to share her food. The hungry traveller saw the precious stone and asked if she might give it to him. She did so without hesitation.

The traveller left, rejoicing in his good fortune. He knew the stone was worth enough to give him security for a lifetime. But only a few days later he came back to return the stone to the woman who had given it to him.

"I've been thinking," he said, "I know how valuable the stone is, but I'm giving it back in the hope that you can give me something even more precious. I want you to give me what you have within you that enabled you to give me the stone."

Author Unknown

A REMINDER... that a bursary fund is available for those **FFH** members who would like to attend any **FFH** gatherings, and courses, or short stays, which may be held at Claridge House, or other venues. Reductions on the prices of these events are discretionary taking into account the individual circumstances of each person.

Applications need to be made through an overseer of your Meeting, which should then be forwarded (either by post or phone) to the Treasurer of the **FFH** (name and address, etc. on the inside back cover of **TW**).

CLARIDGE HOUSE PROGRAMME

Bursary assistance available, depending on individual personal circumstances. Please enquire when booking. For booking details – and other tariff, including daily rates and special breaks – please contact Alison Green or Keith Marsden, Claridge House, Dormans Road, Lingfield, Surrey, RH7 6QH.

Tel: 01342 832150. Email: welcome@ClaridgeHouse.quaker.eu.org

Website: www.claridgehouse.quaker.eu.org

July 18th-20th REIKI III

(£170)

Reiki III is for those Reiki II practitioners who wish to have their Reiki energy raised to level III. Those who wish to be further attuned as a Reiki teacher will be able to attend a course on 25th-27th July. *Jill Cooper is a Usui and Karuna Reiki master and EFT practitioner.*

July 18th-20th TOOLS FOR TRANSFORMATION

(£170)

The weekend explores the problems experienced on the Journey of Inner Transformation and the tools needed to become aware of, and overcome, these problems. The Journey will be explored using a new slant on the Quaker Method. You will learn about new problem-solving tools that will equip you for further inner work. *Brian Ackroyd is a Buddhist and Healer, experienced professional therapist and counsellor.*

July 21st-25th PLACES OF WORSHIP VISITS (£330: includes cost of visits)

What is Worship? How is it worked out and experienced? Over our four days together we will visit and learn about four places of worship: a Synagogue, a Church/Cathedral, a Mosque and a Quaker Meeting House. For more details please contact *Keith Marsden, Deputy Manager at Claridge House, who will be leading these visits.*

July 25th-27th SPIRITUALITY & SELF-ESTEEM – a workshop for women(£170)

An opportunity to share spiritual stories, to explore self-doubt and to affirm our worth. A time to celebrate women's sacred wisdom. *Deb Steele is an experienced counsellor and facilitator and an ordained interfaith minister.*

August 1st-3rd CIRCLE DANCING

(£170)

We will dance a rich mix of delightful dances from many cultures. The glorious ethnic music; serene; yearning; playful; uplifting; will kindle our innate expansiveness and open our hearts. We will intersperse the dancing with meditation and Chi Kung, to help us relax into the dance. Some circle dancing experience would be useful.

Eve Corrin, an experienced teacher of Circle Dance, Alexander Technique & languages with extensive involvement in meditation and Chi Kung.

YOGA TO BEAT FATIGUE

August 4th-8th midweek course

(£290)

August 8th-10th weekend course

(£170)

(Please see June 2nd-8th for details)

August 11th-15th ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE – beginners & refreshers (£290)

The Alexander Technique is a skill for life, which improves health, balance and co-ordination in everyday activities and can enhance your performance in the arts and sport. Using guided activities, hands-on work and discussion we explore the simple principles involved. Please bring comfortable clothing. *Jill Payne teaches the Alexander Technique in Beckenham.*

August 15th-17th REIKI I (£170)

Reiki has become known around the world for its ability to channel healing energy, both to those who practise it and those who are recipients. An introductory weekend course to one of our most popular forms of healing. *Jill Cooper is a Usui and Karuna Reiki master and EFT practitioner.*

August 18th-22nd EYE HEALING RETREAT (£290)

This workshop will give us tools to rediscover ourselves and to move us along a healing journey towards improving the health of our eyes. We will use sound, movement, stillness, relaxation and meditation, as well as specific Bates exercises to make our eyes stronger and to increase our inner power of self-healing. *Paula Luís, an experienced Sound Therapist, Reiki Master, Circle Dance Facilitator, Shamanic and Awareness Healer.*

August 22nd-29th LATE SUMMER BREAK

(4 night midweek stay £210, Daily rate £57)

With **circle dance teacher Brenda Kelly in residence** from the 22nd-25th, there will be the chance to dance to a variety of traditional music: Israeli, Russian, Balkan and Greek. No previous experience required. *Brenda Kelly is a very experienced teacher with a passion for dance.*

August 29th-31st YOGA AND AYURVEDA (£170)

An opportunity to explore the wisdom & healing benefits of Yoga and its sister science Ayurveda. Sessions will include physical Yoga working with the breath, relaxation, pranayama and meditation plus talks on the basic principles of Ayurveda, establishing your constitution and an appropriate lifestyle routine. A non-slip yoga mat is required. *Bill and Gill Feeney are experienced Yoga teachers.*

September 1st-5th THE SOUL OF SOUND AND THE SOUNDS OF THE SOUL (£290)

Self-discovery journeys through sacred sounds. The healing sounds and vibrations of the Tibetan Singing Bowls, Drum and Gongs will guide us through our inner world, to lead us to the answers we need to achieve a more fulfilling life. Cleansing and balancing the chakras is also included in this work. *Paula Luís, an experienced Sound Therapist, Reiki Master, Circle Dance Facilitator, Shamanic and Awareness Healer.*

September 5th-7th IN PRAISE OF SLOW (£170)

The 'cult of speed' dominates much of our lives. Carl Honoré's work, however, documents the many challenges to this. We will look at and experience ways of

finding balance and peace in our fast-paced and changing world. **Georgia Sumner**, *experienced meditator and teacher*.

September 5th-7th TAI CHI / CHI KUNG (£170)

Experience relaxation of mind and body and the rejuvenation of attitude by practising movements from the Tai Chi form. Arouse the chi energy with Chi Kung. Find the peace of meditation. **Barbara Gordon**, *an experienced teacher and facilitator who has been teaching these exercise forms for many years*.

September 12th-14th Support Weekend for QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS

See page 19.

September 15th-19th BUDDHISM an introduction (midweek course £290)

Buddhism is becoming increasingly well known in the west today. This introductory workshop covers the key Buddhist concepts. During the weekend we explore the origin of Buddhism, its ethical foundation and enlightenment – the goal of the Buddhist path. The course will include an opportunity to experience a variety of simple meditative exercises. **John Preston**, *previously ordained Buddhist monk*.

September 19th-21st MEDITATION to quieten the mind (£170)

Meditation is an effective way of counteracting stress and increasing the sense of personal well being. Using primarily Buddhist approaches, the course is designed for those who have not meditated before or who have only limited experience. Sessions include periods of seated practice using ordinary chairs. No special postures are used. **John Preston**, *previously ordained Buddhist monk*.

Sept 22nd-26th SELF HEALING WITH REIKI II for people with ME/CFS (£290)

For those with mild to moderate M.E./C.F.S., who are already attuned to Reiki at Level 1. Attunement at Level 2 will increase your connection to the Reiki energy. With the emphasis on self-healing, you will learn about specific symbols and techniques to broaden and enhance your Reiki practice and further support you on your healing journey. **Emma Saunders LeBlanc**, *a former lecturer who has had ME, is a Reiki master/teacher*.

September 26th-28th EXPLORING THE INTERIOR CASTLE (£170)

Although written in 16th century, St. Teresa of Avila's book the *Interior Castle* can still help us to understand our deepest selves and our relationship with the Divine. This weekend we will explore how the insights in this religious classic can help us on our spiritual journeys today. **Cherry Simpkin** is *Clerk of the Friends Fellowship of Healing and a healer and trainer with Quaker Spiritual Healers*.

September 29th-October 3rd AND THE WORDS BEGIN TO FLOW (£260)

The making of poetry has been likened to the upsurging of words in a Quaker meeting. Under the guidance of Quaker poet Gerard Benson, we will read, wait and write together. Bring your insights, concerns, pen and notebook. The community we form will embrace both experienced and inexperienced writers. **Gerard Benson**, *Quaker poet and editor, is the experienced and gentle facilitator for this short midweek course*.

October 3rd-5th LIVING MORE FULLY BY FACING OUR DEATH (£170)

This workshop is for people of any age, any state of health, who hope to have a few years ahead of them. We will come face to face with the ending of our lives, then turn back to see how this helps us to live more fully. *Frances Crampton, Quaker, transpersonal counsellor, Myers Briggs practitioner and a QSH healer.*

October 3rd-5th THE HOLISTIC ARTIST WITHIN (£170)

We will take small steps towards the discovery of the true, inner creator in us by using watercolour on wet paper. The elements of colour, light and darkness can be all that we need to create a vibrant and beautiful mood of the Soul in all its quietness and simplicity. Previous painting experience not necessary. *Katriina Grant trained at the Tobias School of Art where she now teaches.*

October 6th-10th and October 10th-12th YOGA TO BEAT FATIGUE

(Midweek course £290) (Weekend course £170)

(Combine the courses for an additional £11 for Friday lunch.)

Gentle yoga courses suitable for all abilities. We will include fatigue-busting methods such as special breathing techniques, meditation and health boosting yoga postures. Also suitable for those with moderate ME/CFS. *Fiona Agombar, author of Endless Energy, qualified as an instructor with the Yoga for Health Foundation.*

October 13th-17th Training Week for QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS

See page 19 (Midweek course £255)

October 20th-24th HEALING RETREAT (Midweek course £290)

An informal retreat on a healing theme involving talks, discussion, meditation, personal and group healing. There will also be quiet and free time for personal reflection. *Jim Pym, author of Listening to the Light, is a spiritual healer and meditation teacher with over 40 years experience.*

October 24th-26th Spiralling in CIRCLE DANCING (£170)

As the year draws in, we celebrate gathering, gratitude and grounding. Dances of gathering, harvesting all the experiences of our year. Dances of gratitude for sun father, earth mother, our life and our journey. Rhythmic and contemplative dances in spiral form, taking us into the deep inner peace of the centre. *June Watts, international Circle Dance teacher for many years, author of 'Circle Dancing – Celebrating the Sacred in Dance.'*

October 27th-31st EXPLORING OUR INNER WORLD THROUGH WRITING & SHARING (Short midweek course £260)

This workshop aims to provide you with time and space in which to explore your inner responses to yourself, your life and the spiritual dimension. This will be done through a carefully structured mix of silence, stimulating exercises and optional empathetic sharing. Suitable for all writing abilities. *Judy Clinton is a Quaker, facilitator and writer with much experience in the counselling, healing and social work fields.*

October 31st-November 2nd CHEERFUL HELLOS ON HALLOWEEN (£170)

Bright words, light words – banish the darker places as the evenings draw in. Come and write what you will. **Ted Walter**, a poet and creative writing tutor for over 25 years.

November 7th-9th QUAKER FELLOWSHIP FOR AFTERLIFE STUDIES (£170)

John Poynton, a past President of the Society for Psychical Research, will speak on the life and vision of his friend Michael Whiteman who built a philosophy largely out of his own spiritual and psychic experiences. And in a session entitled What Canst Thou Say?, introduced by members of QFAS, we will look at examples of day to day contact with other dimensions and share our experiences. From gentle promptings to peak experiences, from telepathy between family and friends to communication with loved ones who have passed on, the spiritual world influences us as we go about the daily tasks of our material lives. **John Poynton** is an emeritus professor of biology.

November 10th-14th THE POWER OF NOW (£290)

Living in the present moment is a concept in the writings of Eckhart Tolle that has become very popular over the last few years. Exploring his material as well as that from various respected, older, sources, we shall use this time together to move further forward into understanding and dwelling in this ‘Now’. **Rosalind Smith** is a FFH/QSH healer, trained counsellor and facilitator.

November 17th-21st REIKI SHARING (£260)

This special short mid-week break, offered to those at any level of Reiki, is a wonderful opportunity to share the experiences of giving, receiving and sending Reiki in beautiful and peaceful surroundings. **Jill Cooper** is a Usui & Karuna Reiki master.

November 21st-23rd QUAKERS AND “THE LIFE THAT NEVER ENDS” (£170)

“Death cannot kill what never dies” said William Penn. His words have comforted Quakers and others in time of bereavement. This weekend we will attempt to move beyond doubt, and raise awareness that we live in more than just a physical world. **Cherry Simpkin** and **Rosalind Smith**, both members of FFH and healers with QSH.

QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS EVENTS – 2008 at Claridge House, Lingfield

Oct 13th-17th QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS’ ‘TRAINING’ COURSE (£255)

This is a training course in practical healing that gives those who are interested in becoming members of Quaker Spiritual Healers the opportunity to explore their own potential in a safe and supportive atmosphere. No experience necessary, only a desire to help. Applicants should be sympathetic to Quaker values and have been attending a Quaker meeting for at least a year. This course does not necessarily lead to full membership of the QSH. **Led by Cherry Simpkin and Margaret Western**. Please book directly with Claridge House.

Sept 12th-14th QSH SUPPORT WEEKEND (£120)

A weekend gathering for full or probationary members of Quaker Spiritual Healers, offering an opportunity to develop further one’s understanding of spiritual healing with others on the same path. **Facilitated by Anne Simpson**. Please book directly with Claridge House. Tel: 01342 832150 Email: welcome@ClaridgeHouse.quaker.eu.org

THE GIFT OF TEARS

Judy Clinton

I cried in the bath this morning. I cried because my old family home doesn't exist any more, because my mother had to go into a nursing home when she didn't want to, and because she's so frail now and not the strong mother she once was. I cried because her sister is suffering great pain and is fading away from life. I cried because my elder son had found life so hard that he had drunk himself out of it. And I cried for all those other losses of my life, and for the suffering of the world; our imperfect and suffering world.

Later I noticed that my body wasn't as stiff as it had been over the past few days. I didn't feel so frenetic. I had a peace within me that had been absent for quite a long time. I noticed the sunshine on the walnut tree in our garden and the deep shadows on the fence behind it. A blackbird's song penetrated my being and I heard its beauty. I felt the warmth of the sunshine on my body as I hung out the washing, and I was glad of it. The phone rang and it was my other son, thrilled that he might have landed a part-time job which would free him to pursue his other interests as well as earn his way in the world. His enthusiasm caught at my heart-strings and I thrilled with him, delighted that things could be working out so well. He talked with youthful confidence and energy of his plans and hopes for the future. I felt great happiness for him. I went for a walk up on the hill and heard the larks singing and saw lambs nuzzling at their mothers' teats. I delighted in the billowing white clouds in the piercing blue sky above. I gazed at the rolling green hills and the distant blue ones beyond. I felt the cool breeze waft against my face. And a great stillness came upon me in which all the sorrow of life, and the joy of it, were intertwined.

I realised how important it had been for me to have released my tears of sorrow at the beginning of the day. How much tension I'd caused in my body and disorder in my feelings by suppressing it all. How deep runs the imperative to be cheerful and to 'get on with life', to deny the sorrow within me, to refuse to be a misery for others, to be detached from my sorrow – and all those other messages that make me feel that somehow if I give way to tears and vulnerability I have failed. It is possible to cope too well. Tears of sorrow are nature's way of healing my wounds, of keeping my heart open and of allowing me to keep on living, to keep on loving. Praise be for tears!

FFH GROUP CHANGES

Colwyn Bay	ceased
Taunton	ceased
Yealand	Hazel Nowell, Well House Farm, Wyresdale Rd, Lancaster LA1 3JL

THE PLACEBO EFFECT, AND THE POWER OF INTENTION

Rosalind Smith

Is popping pills the answer to all our ills? There has been a lot of press coverage in recent months about the high dependency on medication, especially for conditions such as depression. Many anti-depressants today are selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIS), which appear to boost the amount of serotonin, the brain chemical associated with mood. There is evidence to support the idea that, in cases of severe depression, these drugs do work, and are beneficial.

However, there is also good evidence that placebos work too. There seems to be a connection between the *idea* that something will do us good, and the actual fact of it's doing so. It would seem that it's not that anti-depressants don't work but that placebos can work just as well. Interesting! It points to the old saying 'It's all in the mind'. We *expect* the pill to work, and so, it does. Perhaps this is not always the case, and there will be many people whose lives have been, and are, blighted, because they have been unable to find the right medication for their condition. But with a mind-set such as 'This pill will work, I know it will. I have faith in it' then we must surely be more than half-way there. Conversely, with an underlying feeling that 'This pill probably won't do much good, I don't really have faith in anything helping me', then it's unlikely that there will be any improvement at all.

So how linked is our expectation of what a pill can do for us to a positive affirmation such as 'I am expecting this to make me whole again?' A current best-seller in the non-fiction lists is *The Secret* by Rhonda Byrne (see Book Reviews), in which the whole message of the book is that whatever we ask for and *expect* to have or receive, will be given us. Jesus said: "Ask and ye shall receive" sometimes quoted as "Ask and *believe* you have it and you shall receive." This puts the onus squarely onto our own shoulders, so to speak. We become responsible, almost, for the results not only of the pills we might be taking, but also for fulfilling our own requests.

The results of drug trials for anti-depressants have proved ambiguous, apparently. A study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* concluded that there is a bias toward the publication of positive results, while negative results tend to be left unpublished. Be that as it may, I have no grouse about anti-depressants because I know several people whose lives have been completely turned around for the better once they started

taking them. And, of course, there's no way of knowing whether results would have been different if they had, unbeknown to them, been given placebos.

Any pill, or potion, represents hope to one who is in the depths of despair, or suffering pain of any sort. Studies with other conditions have also proved that placebos can work e.g. with irritable bowel syndrome, headaches caused by stress, and pain. They can't cure diabetes, or arthritis, or cancer, but they can alleviate the side effects of these conditions. They can't mend broken limbs, but perhaps can alleviate the associated pain. The main requirement is that the patient puts their trust in them, much as a person who puts their trust in their physician or surgeon is likely to make better progress than one who doubts their skills.

The positive statement, that life is going to improve, that illness is going to depart, that financial problems are going to resolve themselves, that relationships are going to mend, is wonderful – if we can hold to it through thick and thin. And, in so many cases, with this sort of willpower, many, if not all, situations *do* improve, do look better when viewed from this angle. But, many would agree, it's sheer hard work to keep this going all the time – we're not all Pollyannas. We have to *teach* ourselves the facility of expectation, and keep on learning it over and over again, until, as negative and untoward events happen in our lives, we can step aside and think along the lines of 'Ah, but I won't allow this in my life/body/relationship/job – and I expect and *know* that everything will turn out right'.

The keys are expectation and intention. And whether we want to change things by using these alone, or by taking pills as well, whether they are chemical based, homeopathic, or placebos, it seems that the greatest power we have over ourselves resides within our own minds.

*There is a law in psychology that if you form a picture
in your mind of what you would like to be,
and you keep and hold that picture there long enough,
you will soon become exactly as you have been thinking.*

William James

Meditation is the art of nothingness. It is the ability to enter into a state of unaffectedness by the stimuli of our senses and our emotions. Sometimes it is necessary to adopt a vehicle to acquire a meditative state. Firstly however, one may consider the question “Why?”

We are beset with toxins. Toxins are poisons and our bodies and our souls thrive better without them. Meditation assists the body and soul to exude these toxins by enabling a condition whereby these things just slip away and are released. For this reason, meditation is a good practice.

According to Sogyal Rinpoche (Buddhist master and author of the *Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*), one of three ways to enter a state of meditation is via a mantra. The ‘Love of Vowels’ is an approach utilising the mantra as a vehicle and was developed to be specifically meaningful, memorable and thus easy to practise.

The method developed from an inquisitive approach to chant. A mixture of Gregorian sounds and the ‘Big Om of Tibet’ seemed to be what appealed to me and so it was what I developed. It sufficed and entertained for a short while but there was no depth or substance and a meditative state was not really achieved. A mantra was felt to be an option but needed to be memorable and have meaning. There is no explanation as to why vowels were chosen, they just were.

For me, approaches to meditation need a degree of self training. Yes, there are innumerable books on the subject, but reading is not developing the practice, it is merely acquiring a little information, perhaps even knowledge. But, like bicycling, reading a book does not really provide the same experience as falling off, or the exhilaration of feeling the wind in your hair.

My experience of meditation seemed to follow three stages. (i) The act of assuming a position of relaxation and ‘drawing down’ one’s consciousness to a state of preparedness for meditation. This was very much a physical activity. (ii) The act of stilling the mind and preparing one’s thoughts and feelings for a state of readiness for the final stage of meditation. This was very much a mental activity. (iii) The emptying of the mind of all thought and activity and the permitting of whatever flow of senses, thoughts and emotions as would naturally arise. This is a spiritual activity. It is not to be confused with that mental state, typically experienced during stage two, where the mind is busy sifting and sorting all clutter and agitation that has been allowed to accumulate and is, to one degree or another, a form of mental agitation, or fretfulness and worry.

My need for a mantra sprung from my inability to leave stage two. I found that my mind was beset with a million thoughts coming and going at the speed of electricity and the stillness I sought evaded me. A technique to assist the acquisition of stillness would perhaps be beneficial.

Many folk have engaged in chant and found that the repetition and resonance of the sound have a tempering effect upon the frantic energy within their minds, and so I adopted such an approach. However it was not meaningful and seemed to be noise for noise's sake. I eventually arrived at vowels by chance, and by association, the vowels became a mnemonic. However, there was no special direction I adopted in selecting the words: they just seemed to come to mind. Upon reflection however, and bearing in mind the general tenet and purpose of the meditative process one is likely to be drawn to positive and spiritual associations. It is far more probable that themes based upon love, kindness and compassion are more conducive to meditation than such topics as war, conflict and aggression. (Although I have no doubt that the masters could derive an acceptable state from such issues.)

My chosen words were as follows:

- A** Altruistic
- E** Encompassing
- I** Infinitesimal
- O** Omnipresent
- U** Utopia

My general theme for the mantra was 'Love' and the explanation for why these words, each starting with a vowel, were germane to my theme is also as follows:

Altruistic: The principle of living and behaving for the benefit of others. To me this is a grand form of love and embodies the Buddhist concept of 'mudita' that is the joy felt in the well-being and good fortune of others. Altruism is a good thing, and is an act of Love.

Encompassing: I cannot perceive that altruistic love is anything other than totally encompassing. The subject of that love, whether I, family, friend or stranger, should be totally enveloped. Love that envelops is a good thing.

Infinitesimal: Altruistic and encompassing love cannot pick and choose. It cannot say 'I love your body but turn your face away'. It cannot say 'I love your laugh but hate what you say'. It cannot be general and more or less love, except for that detail or this. Altruistic and encompassing love penetrates to every infinitesimal detail and just loves. (Nonetheless, I do not confuse love with endorsement nor the encouragement of unworthy behaviour.)

Omnipresent: Altruistic, encompassing and infinitesimal love is always present. It never wanes, takes a break or a holiday, or waxes and wanes. Omnipresent love is a constant and is a good thing. It is comforting to know it is there.

Utopia or Utopian: Literally, utopia means ‘nowhere’. It, in this context, is equated with nirvana, the state of supreme happiness. It recognises the state of cessation of individual existence (especially the absence of ego), and this can be likened to some meditative states.

During my meditation I am ‘aware’ of the meaning of the words. I do not memorise or repeat them but retain a consciousness of the concepts and the totality of their meaning in relation to my theme of Love.

The image shows a musical staff with five lines. Below the staff, the words of the mantra are written in a columnar fashion, grouped into syllables. Arrows indicate the flow of the chant from left to right. The words are: a, e, i, o, u, u, al, tru, is, tic, en, com, pass, ing, in, fin, i, tes, imal, om, ni, pres, ent, u, to, pi, an, an. The first five words (a, e, i, o, u) are on the first line. The next five words (u, al, tru, is, tic) are on the second line. The next five words (en, com, pass, ing, in) are on the third line. The next five words (fin, i, tes, imal, om) are on the fourth line. The next five words (ni, pres, ent, u, to) are on the fifth line. The next five words (pi, an, an) are on the sixth line. The words are arranged in a way that they can be read in a continuous flow from left to right.

I have no shame or embarrassment in admitting that I know nothing of music. Nonetheless, I trust that my representation here conveys the tones and tenor of my chant.

My meditation method employs a repetitive approach that I allow to vary if the leading takes me that way.

- 1 Assume a posture of comfort and ease.
- 2 Chant the mnemonic: ‘a + e + i + o + u’
- 3 Chant the words
- 4 Modify the mnemonic: Aim +eem + i’m + om +oom
- 5 Chant the words
- 6 Repeat as often as you feel.

My experience with this mantra is that the repetition and the resonance of the chant eased my journey into stillness. It was a healing experience.

After a while I tend to fall silent and am aware that I am entering into stage three of my meditative practice. All is still and I am untroubled by memories and physical stimuli. Typically my eyes are open and my breathing is steady and slow. The stillness that I now enter into has been my goal and it is within this state, when I am free of the encumbrances of thought and physical sensation that healing can begin. My body is restful and my mind is at peace. I am able to un-crimp my muscles and my emotions, and whatever it is that has clung to the toxins in my life relaxes and they drift away. What is left is a comfortable emptiness that is filled by the love I wish to share. But what is also created is a 'readiness void' within me. We all need this piggy bank of emotional space in anticipation of that rainy day when the stresses and strains within our lives and those of our family and friends and other acquaintances, need healing.

Whilst I am sure that what I have described will be recognised by many as a practice akin to the repetitive practices involving prayer, etc., occurring in many religions, for me this was a novel and self-discovered practice. Its adoption enabled me to transfer from stage two of the meditative process of stilling the mind and to transfer into the stage three of spiritual awareness and mental calm. Here I was no longer troubled by thought and mental activity but merely experienced the theme of love and the reflections that the theme permitted and in so doing prepared body and soul for healing of self and others.

MARRIAGE SEMINAR

*While attending a Marriage Seminar
dealing with communication,
Tom and his wife Grace listened to the instructor,
"It is essential that husbands and wives
know each other's likes and dislikes."
He addressed the man,
"Can you name your wife's
favourite flower?"
Tom leaned over,
touched his wife's arm gently
and whispered,
"It's Homepride, isn't it?"*



REPORTS

FFH SPRING GATHERING
at NODDFA, Penmaenmawr,
North Wales, 2nd-4th May 2008



FFH members enjoying the sunshine at Noddfa, North Wales

The whole Noddfa experience is one of peacefulness and loving care by the nuns who run it. I felt myself relax and smile inside as I came in the door. A perfect place to think about past lives and karma . Beautiful grounds with the mountain rising up behind and views of the sea from the front.

Anthea Lee explained Past Life Therapy showing the healing power of understanding traumas in past lives and of forgiveness of others and ourselves. Later, most of us elected to try a regression under Anthea's guidance, some having quite moving and dramatic memories which could be seen to be affecting present lives. She gently suggested how to deal with these revelations.

Cherry Simpkin spoke about the belief in Karma helping us to grow spiritually by learning from the events of present and past lives – correcting past mistakes or making the same ones again until we learn. Most importantly, to find our purpose in this life which is to connect with the Universal Purpose in whatever way is meant for each of us. To grow and help others to grow.

Now, Biodanza! That was something! Elizabeth Barnett had us really letting ourselves experience our bodies by responding to the passionate South American music and each other in our own way, released from inhibitions.

This was a deeply psychological as well as physical experience and finally brought us all together in a close embrace of body and spirit.

Our evening ‘Jolly’ brought forth some funny poems and nothing funnier than Muriel Robertson’s ‘chicken trick’. I am going to try to do it at home. It needs a pink towel and the patter to go with it. We enjoyed our togetherness.



I was fortunate to have my birthday on the Sunday, ‘Happy Birthday’ sung to me at breakfast and a card I shall treasure which all had signed. I couldn’t have had more congenial company and a more nurturing place – despite my contretemps with the free-range cockerel.*

Later our Meeting for Worship was joined by one of the sisters and was deeply gathered. Some of us stayed on to the Monday enjoying time to browse. A memorable and special weekend with the tender care of the nuns enabling us to benefit from the experiences offered by our speakers and organisers which brought us all together.

Joy Simpson

** There was a very beautiful cockerel and three hens, who had the run of the grounds. Unfortunately, the cockerel took exception to being photographed, and he decided to let Joy know about it!*



This Is It; the Art of Happily Going Nowhere by *Maurice Fullard Smith*, published by Darton Longman & Todd 95pp £5.95 ISBN 0-232-52693-1

As a former bookseller specialising in the general field of ‘spiritual books’ and a published author, I can truthfully say that I seldom come across one that makes me feel, “I wish I had written this”. This short book is one of the few.

In just 95 pages, Maurice Fullard Smith sums up the spiritual journey, and clearly shows that in reality there is no journeying to be done. However, unlike many contemporary authors who take this attitude (of which there seem to have been quite a number recently) he does not put the reader down by making us feel that we have wasted our time in whatever traditions and practices we have followed. He is fully aware that he has spent time in seeking, and is honest enough to admit it. This seeking is also part of what and who we are.

He is a mystic, who at all times respects the personal experiences of his readers. His purpose is to gently suggest ways in which we can take the final step into peace of mind and the mystery of Wholeness. This is the way of acceptance, and of true silence. His chapters are short, and he encourages us to take time over reading them, contemplating with the heart rather than filling the head with yet more thinking. Yet this is not proscriptive writing, rather he gently reminds us of what we already know.

There are dozens of examples I could quote, but the following gives a good idea of his style and his compassion. In the chapter called ‘The Power of Weakness’, he suggests that we emphasise words like ‘let’ and ‘allow’ in our thinking and observe the effect that this has on our lives. He then says;

“Take a moment aside now, please. I really do mean *now*, this very minute, please. Just allow a few very long moments to pass as you realise that . . . *you . . . are . . . being . . . breathed*. A higher power is at work in and around you. All this is happening without fuss or noise. Stay still. For this moment there is peace.”

As I say, I wish I could have written this book. Or perhaps I don’t, for then I would not have had the joy of reading it.

Jim Pym

The Third Jesus by *Deepak Chopra* Rider 2008 241 pp. £11.99
ISBN 978-1-846-04111-2

Having published over forty books, the author writes with his usual clarity and with the authority of having done the necessary research. He divides the life of Jesus into three dimensions: first, that of his healing; secondly, that which has become the orthodox teaching of the church, and finally, the spiritual teachings which embrace humanity as a whole – what could be called God consciousness, ‘How to find truth and love in today’s world.’

He does his best to explain some of the confusion and contradictions, remembering the simple people who were listening to Jesus two thousand years ago. As we know, his words were recorded many years after his life. The essence of Christ’s teaching is alive today if it is recognised and resounds in our Quaker hearts – “blessed are the peacemakers.” To quote from the book, “...His purpose is to fulfil God’s will by bringing love to everyone, and the birth of a new humanity will ultimately make Christ fulfilled.”

Anne Smith

The Distant Healing Handbook by *Jack Angelo* Piatkus Books Ltd 2007
200 pp. ISBN 9780 7499 28155 £16.99

My first thought on looking at this book was why do we need 200 pages containing fifty eight exercises to send distant healing? And of course, the answer is, we don't. However one has to be cognisant of the author's reputation and experience and not dismiss the book as unnecessary.

Part One, the first sixty or so pages, gives us all the information that we need to send healing. The next sixty pages are devoted to sensing the various energies of the body and healing on an astral level. There are then useful sections on working with the environment and plants and animals and global issues. As with all subjects the more one knows the more one knows how much more there is to know. This book deals exhaustively with the subject and will be of interest to those who like to pursue detail. For me distant healing is to have a loving intention to heal and to be in a safe environment and that is enough.

Geoffrey Martin

George Fox and the Healing Ministry by *David Hodges*. FFH Publications 1995 and reprinted 2008 48pp. £4.00 ISBN 1-873048-98-X

Some of us find it very hard to understand how some Friends can deny that spiritual healing is – or at least, should be – an integral part of the Quaker message. Reading this book only makes it harder.

Here are assembled most of the quotations from the writings of early Friends which refer to the healing ministry. Many of them are from George Fox's various journals, but there are enough from other sources to convince all but the most stubborn doubter that healing was as much a part of the ministry of early Friends, as it was of the ministry of Jesus. Indeed, it was the firm conviction of Friends that Christ had once again manifest “. . . to teach his people himself” that was the root and source of this aspect of Quaker ministry.

So what happened? Why was this vital aspect of Quaker insight in danger of being lost to future generations? We know that George Fox considered it important enough to devote a whole manuscript to the records of healing. Indeed, he actually left money for its continued publication. However, there is evidence that the next generation of Quakers did not share his enthusiasm, or his healing ability (though he never claimed ability for himself; it was all the workings of “the Power of the Lord”). Later Friends may well have been slightly relieved, in that they did not have to defend themselves against the charges of witchcraft which were likely to be levelled at anyone claiming to be able to heal spiritually.

David Hodges' book sheds new light on the whole affair. It is a vital step in rediscovering Fox's testimony and practice of healing. Though the main focus is on George Fox, other aspects of the healing ministry among Quakers, right

up to the present day, are also covered. Along with the *Book of Miracles*, this is a work that should be read by all Friends. It will confirm the leadings of those who hold a Testimony already, and provide a basis for those who may have any doubts on the matter to think again.

Jim Pym

The Secret by *Rhonda Byrne*. Atria Books 2006 199 pp. Approx. £12.00
ISBN 9-78184-737-0297

This book attracts one immediately because of its presentation. It looks like the sort of book one might want to give as a present: the cover has a look of treasure and mystery, and the paper is of a fine quality. To give a good indication of what ‘the secret’ is about I quote – ‘The placebo effect is an example of the law of attraction in action. When a patient truly believes the tablet is a cure, he receives what he believes and is cured.’

This concept can be applied to all aspects of our life so that it follows, apparently, that what we truly believe, and accept to be so, we *will* receive.

Jesus said: “Ask and you shall receive”, or, in some versions it is quoted as: “Ask, and truly believe you have it and you will receive it”. In other words, it is all down to our own positive thoughts about it. We have the ability to attract good towards us.

There is a film too – and, according to the book, there have been ‘miracle’ stories of all types of diseases dissolving from people’s bodies after they have watched *The Secret*. All things are possible when you believe.’

So that’s the secret – believe. The book urges us not to be negative, half-hearted, or ‘wishy-washy’ in our intentions. Believe, believe – believe you are already the weight you want to be; believe and focus on the money you would like to attract (not the lack of it you might be experiencing); believe the job/relationship/property etc. etc. is already yours, and see it as such. ‘Thoughts become things’.

See yourself with the good that you desire; and to bring this into perspective, ‘Praise and bless everything in the world, and you will dissolve negativity and discord and align yourself with the highest frequency – love.’ The secret, of life, of joy, of happiness is within ourselves, within our very thoughts.

As you can tell, it’s a very positive book, and some people may well feel that it’s easy to follow the advice when things are going well in their lives, but when adverse circumstances pertain, then what? Can we still hold onto the thought that everything is going to work out how we want it to, that all will be well? It would seem that Dame Julian of Norwich taught along these lines!

It is worth reading the book, perhaps with the intention of trying to train oneself to look more positively at our own personal circumstances. After all, what have we got to lose? We certainly won’t lose our soul; but, according to the book, we might just ‘gain the whole world!’

Rosalind Smith

FFH PUBLICATIONS

Available from Alan Pearce, 15 East Street, Bluntisham, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE28 3LS. Tel: 01487 741400. Please add postage. Cheques to be made out to the 'Friends Fellowship of Healing'.

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Also available:	<i>George Fox's 'Book of Miracles'</i> Henry J Cadbury (ed.)	£1.00

The Postal and Phone Link Groups give prayer support to people seeking reassurance and healing. Some members have joined these groups because they are physically isolated by handicap, age or geography. Others may already belong to a local healing group and are able to give additional commitment by also belonging to one of the postal or phone link groups, or are simply committed to the power of prayer.

All are welcome to join. If you would like to help in this way, please write to one of the Postal Co-ordinators (*Elliot Mitchell* and *Muriel Robertson* – addresses on next page) with a few details about yourself. Your letter will be passed on to one of the group secretaries who will then contact you direct and give you the names of two or three people to uphold in prayer regularly.