

May 2006

Newsletter



## Spiritual Directions

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'Interspirituality recognizes  
that many paths lead to the  
summit, and each one of  
them is valid'

The Mystic Heart  
Wayne Teasdale

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## Director's Comments

As summer approaches and life slows you may have time to do the things you really want to do. We have listed below several exciting evening and weekend programs in June, July and August.

As we develop our fall program our mission is becoming clearer. I see Spiritual Directions as part of a positive spiritual movement that is reshaping our world through love, connection and the transformative/healing power of energy. We easily see the bad news that surrounds us because we are bombarded with fear evoking messages hundreds of times each day. These messages hook our fear response, and keep us in a place where we do not feel in control; a place where we can be easily manipulated. It is also true that we are surrounded by an abundance of resources and good news about how people are being empowered to make a difference. When we choose to look for this new way of being in the world we welcome it into our lives and take our places in the spiritual community that creates new possibilities. Here are some resources that will connect with you with this good news and the positive spiritual movement:

1. Ode Magazine, [www.odemagazine.com](http://www.odemagazine.com), reports good news. Their mandate is to publish stories about people and ideas that are making a positive difference, bringing hope, peace and sustainability to our world.
2. World Pulse, [www.worldpulsemagazine.com](http://www.worldpulsemagazine.com), is a web based magazine that reports on the contributions of women and children who are transforming the world.

An evolutionary movement toward a new consciousness is underway. There is an intentional and noticeable movement beginning in the United States to counter the influence of the religious right.

Some resources to check are:

1. The Network of Spiritual Progressives, led by Rabbi Michael Lerner, author of The Left Hand of God: Taking Back Our Country from the Religious Right. Although his book which sets out the guiding principles of the network is directed to the U.S. market, it expresses a perspective that has the potential to unite spiritual people around the world. Spiritual Directions resonates with their call to action. [www.spiritualprogressives.org](http://www.spiritualprogressives.org) or [www.tikkun.org](http://www.tikkun.org)
2. Diane Allan has led some Deep Ecology workshops and a retreat (with David Johnson) at Spiritual Directions. Deep Ecology is the spirituality of our connection to the earth which brings us hope for the future. A site that addresses sustainable ways of living by addressing global issues is [www.greatturningtimes.org](http://www.greatturningtimes.org).
3. Another website which addresses our own ability to make a difference is [www.zaadz.com](http://www.zaadz.com). (Zaadz is a Dutch word meaning seed).
4. And finally, [www.noetic.org](http://www.noetic.org), a pay for service website, brings together teachings from seminal and influential teachers such as Bruce Lipton, the Dalai Lama, Deepak Chopra, etc. There is a lot of free information here as well.

Set your intention for a summer that will nourish your soul and look forward to our fall course brochure in late August. Please forward this newsletter to people whom you think would enjoy our interspiritual perspective.

## Upcoming events...

1. **Divine Inspiration** - Margot McKinnon guides you in learning to listen to your spirit's voice, and be more conscious of the ways the universe speaks to you. Saturday, June 10, 10 am - Noon, \$25
2. **Sounds and Silence** with Marsha Read continues with sacred drums, Tibetan bowls, chanting, toning and more, Mondays, June 26, July 24 and August 21, 7 - 9 pm, \$15 per session
3. **Chanting Circle** with Susan Johnstone. Sing chants and circle songs from around the world. It's not how we sound; it's how we feel. June 12, 7 - 9 pm, \$15
4. **Quantum Touch** with Loretta Mohl is a hands-on energy therapy incorporating specialized breath work to enhance effectiveness. June 24 and 25, 10 am to 5 pm. \$295 plus GST (\$315.65) before June 9; \$374.50 after
5. **Nature Walks** with Jan Hornford include group coaching, journaling and walking the moderately easy 5 km Fullerton Loop Trail in the Elbow Valley near Bragg Creek. Saturdays, June 10, July 8 and August 26, 9:30 am - 2:00 pm. \$30 per person per day. Diane Allen also has a nature walk 35 minutes west of Calgary on Sunday, June 18, 10 - 2 pm \$25 per person per day.
6. **Meditation** continues every Tuesday evening in June, 7 - 9 pm, \$15 per session
7. **Leading From Within** with Nancy Doetzel. Develop a credo that reflects ways to cultivate spirituality in personal life and the work place. Tuesday, June 13, 7 - 9 pm. \$25
8. **Feng Shui Field Trip** in Chinatown includes practice in analyzing several buildings and a Chinese lunch. Saturday, August 19, 10 am - 4 pm, \$60
9. **Compassionate Communication** with Anne Walton. Based on the techniques of non-violent communication, this course provides a framework for expressing ourselves and hearing others in a way that strengthens our ability to respond compassionately and inspire compassion in others. Wednesday, June 14 or July 19, 6:30 to 9:00 pm. \$25
10. **Celebrating The Stages of Women's Lives** with June Churchill. A day of reflection, meditation, dance and ritual honoring the stages of women's lives. Women over 55 may participate in a wise woman ceremony honouring their transition into their wisdom phase. The shawl for this ritual costs \$20. Registration limited to 20. Saturday June 17, 9:30 am - 9:00 pm. \$95 (includes two meals).

## The Strawberry Tree Art Studio

1. **Celebrate the Artist Within:** Guided art experientials help you nurture your intuitive artist. No art experience necessary, June 5, July 17, August 28, 7 - 9 pm \$15 (includes all materials)
2. **World Soul:** Reconnect to the soul through ancient ways of knowing and art-making. All art invitations will be nature based and require no previous art experience. Saturday, July 28, 1- 4 pm. \$35. (includes all materials)
3. **Nourishing The Soul Through Art and Nature:** A five day non-residential retreat experience exploring your concept and connection to spirit and soul through art making (elemental mandalas, totemic marks, contemplative painting) Limited registration. Monday, July 21 - Friday, August 4, 10 am - 4 pm. \$295 before July 7, \$350 after.

## Have some fun...

**Nostalgia** A concert of Jewish Tango, Dance and Ladino Music, with Rebecca Levant, Voice; Penny Sanborn, Accordion; Ralph Maier, Classical Guitar; Ian Burleigh, Clarinet; Vince and Cindy Davis, Argentinean Tango dancers. Sunday, June 4, 7 pm. Tickets \$36 includes reception. Free parking. Phone 255-8688 for information

# Compassionate Communication

by  
Anne Walton

I want to thank Anne and Nancy for writing these articles for our email newsletter. If you would like to know more about either of these subjects please click on the links to their websites, or visit our website at

[www.spiritualdirections.com](http://www.spiritualdirections.com)

John Griffith,  
Director

Recently I returned from a nine day training in Nonviolent Communication (NVC), a technique developed by Marshall Rosenberg about 40 years ago. The Centre for Nonviolent Communication (CNVC [www.cnv.org](http://www.cnv.org)) is now a global organization "helping people connect compassionately with themselves and one another".

I first learned of Nonviolent Communication in 2001 and immediately my mind rejected the concept; anything that had the word "violent" in the name was definitely not for me! Over the next three years I kept hearing about NVC: how powerful it was and how heart centered and skillful Rosenberg was.

Finally, in the summer of 2004, after giving a talk entitled "Indulging God", I felt compelled to go into the CNVC website and my heart was touched so deeply I began to cry. The home page spoke about "imagining connecting with the spirit in each person, in every situation". The message was so similar to something I'd written five years before I was blown away. Right then I made a declaration that I was going to be a trainer in this technique.

Over the next eighteen months I began to notice how I judged and criticized myself and others -almost constant inner chatter made others or myself wrong. Rosenberg believes that every time we make someone wrong, judge or criticize, we contribute to violence on the planet. Conversely every time we are centred in our hearts in our interactions, we contribute to peace on earth.

NVC focuses on connecting to our feelings and needs, expressing what's alive in us and being present to ourselves and others. At the training we were also encouraged to "sit with the need", just allowing it to be there without having to immediately try to meet it. I notice how, in the past, I've wanted to "get off" the need, because it was too painful to just sit there!

Now I've begun a practice of being with the need and noticing what emerges -what I am called to do, what action I am led to. As I am with the need, the Universe naturally operates through/on that need thereby allowing the desired state to manifest. It's a practice of getting out of my own way and letting the Universe to show up in all its glory.

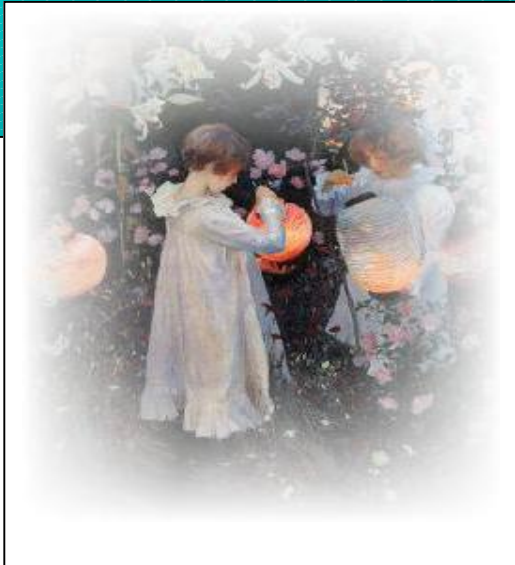
Of course, being present to my own needs in this way allows me to be present to another in such deep ways. My heart is opening...I am alive... I am a presence of love on the planet. And that is the power that transforms!

Compassionate Communication with Anne Walton, is based on the techniques of non-violent communication, this course provides a framework for expressing ourselves and hearing others in a way that strengthens our ability to respond compassionately and inspire compassion in others. Wednesday, June 14 or July 19, 6:30 to 9:00 pm.  
\$25

# The Soft Whisperings of Spiritual Intelligence

by

Margot McKinnon



I recently started to collect survival tales. Whenever I see an article in the newspaper or in a magazine that depicts an individual who has survived, while others who endured the same seemingly unconquerable circumstance perished, I sift through the who, what, when, where, why and how of the details and inevitably notice a single detail inserted but glossed over in the telling of the story. The person who survived, knowingly or unknowingly, tapped into spiritual intelligence – and lived.

The first article that made it into my file folder appeared in the Calgary Herald newspaper on Wednesday March 26, 2003: *Ex-premier's wife earns life-saving award*. Beckie Harcourt discovered that her husband, Mike, former premier of British Columbia, had fallen six-metres off their waterfront cottage deck and landed face down in the water. By the time she reached him, he was blue and lifeless. According to journalist, Greg Middleton, Beckie “checked his pulse and airway while screaming his name over and over until there was a pulse.” Was Beckie aware that a spirit, which has been suddenly jerked out of the body through an accident, can be called back into a lifeless body by calling the person's name loudly and urgently?

Ron DiFrancesco, from Toronto, Ontario, told his tale to reporter Andrew Duffy. His story appeared in the Sunday June 5, 2005 Calgary Herald. The opening lines of the article read “Face down beside a dozen others in a smoke-blackened stairwell, with panic storming in his chest, Ron DiFrancesco heard a voice. ‘Someone told me to get up,’ he says, recounting the moment that ultimately saved his life on Sept. 11, 2001.” DiFrancesco believes God told him to get off the floor of that South Tower stairwell. At times, DiFrancesco is tortured with the idea of why he survived New York's 9-11 tragedy, and others didn't.

Our spirit speaks to us in so many ways. How many of us actually listen? How many times have you heard a whispering in your ear, but ignored it only to be sorry later? Some people call it instinct. I call it Spiritual Intelligence. Very few of us have learned how to discern between our mind's talk and our spirit's whispering. About twenty years ago, I was lucky enough to spend time in the remote hill tribes of Thailand. Our guide said one thing that was so provocative it permeates all of my teaching. “There are two types of people in the world,” he said, “Those who still have their spiritual gifts, and those who have lost them.” He urged us Western tourists to examine our lifestyle to recognize how the telephone has significantly reduced our ability to tap into our spiritual intelligence for guidance.

In the isolated stillness of the hills, a tribal woman who wanted to speak to her mother three hills over had two choices. She could either take a dangerous trek through the jungle, or she could use her mental telepathy. Of course, she chose the latter. The tribal children are taught how to develop their mental telepathy, their ability to take their spirit outside their body in search of possible danger, and to connect with the God force.

Every human being was given the gift of spiritual intelligence to ensure survival. The inklings we get, the chills that rush up our arms and legs, the whisperings in our ears, the sudden brilliant ideas, and the dark foreboding feeling is our spirit's way of ensuring our safety. My mother taught me early. "If something feels creepy, it is creepy," she used to say. What I am wondering today is whether or not we are teaching our own children to develop their spiritual intelligence, to recognize that the human spirit is within us so that it can search out the safest and most productive path for us to fulfill our purpose in life, and to find joy in the human experience? Are we unknowingly suppressing our spirit's role in our lives? Is our reliance on the cell phone stunting our spiritual capacity even more? If we do not exercise our spirit, let it fulfill its function in our life, it will shrivel and waste away from lack of use, just like our mind and our body will if they are not exercised. Our spirit is more powerful than most of us realize. When I speak about spirit, I am talking about the intangible 'you', the 'you' that will go to a spiritual dimension when your time on earth is complete. If it leaves your body when you die, then are you aware of what it is doing while you are alive? Just as your body and mind have strengths, weaknesses, and abilities, so does your spirit.

My area of specialty is the study of the spirit aspect. I desire to understand my unique spirit's intelligence. Each one of us has a specialty, or a piece of the mysterious puzzle that is *spiritual intelligence*. Together we can explore the many possibilities of our own magnificent spiritual potential. We are in such an exciting time. More and more people are listening to their spirit's whisper, and turning to Spiritual Directions for guidance and support. We welcome you!

Divine Inspiration - Margot McKinnon guides you in learning to listen to your spirit's voice, and be more conscious of the ways the universe speaks to you.  
Saturday, June 10, 10am - Noon \$25  
To register phone 210-2802

The essence of all religions is love, compassion and tolerance. Kindness is my true religion. The dear proof of a person's love of God is if that person genuinely shows love to fellow human beings.

Dalai Lama

