

Self-Empowerment

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The newsletter dedicated to nurturing personal development

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Preparing for the Next Move – “On Top of the World”!

Just when I was enjoying the feeling of being settled and organized in our NJ apartment, my husband Rick and I bought a house... 968 miles away, in Ocala, Florida! It was *not* my plan to commit to a big move, yet it appears that Spirit has a different plan for me. I thought that our recent trip to Florida was for *research*, to begin the process of learning about properties we might consider moving to when Rick eventually retires.

Before leaving for our trip to Florida, I consciously set my intention to be open to guidance. It was funny how several synchronicities grabbed my attention throughout our time there, and when Rick & I walked into *our new home*, there was no hesitation. Clarity and peace made the decision very easy for us. Preparations are falling into place for our “next chapter”. We will be “visiting” our new home a number of times before our major fulltime move when Rick retires.

I am trusting the unfoldment of this new development, which does *not* match my former position. I was born and raised in Philadelphia, worked for City of Philadelphia government agencies for a total of 37 years, and have many friends and relatives in the Philly and South Jersey area. Whenever Rick talked about *someday* moving to Florida, I dug in my heels, grabbed hold of my roots, and offered, “Well...maybe we can *Snowbird* back and forth.” We had just moved last year to an apartment complex in South Jersey, practically a suburb of Philadelphia, where we would not have to shovel the snow in Winter or maintain the grounds year-round. Relieved of those duties, I was comfortable with our first “easy” Winter season. Of course, being retired, I no longer had to commute to work like Rick is still doing, doubling his commute time on those snow and ice covered roads.

The past two years, since my cancer diagnosis, have been quite challenging. After the surgery, chemo, and radiation, much of my time and energy has been spent building up my health, strength, immune system, and post-cancer education. As a result, Rick and I have changed our eating habits to no sugar and no wheat. We have been getting regular bodywork treatments with a local holistic health practitioner at Dorothy’s

Healing Center, in Hainesport, NJ. And we continue to do our emotional, mental, and spiritual healing work. We are both dedicated to our body- mind-spirit healing and well-being.

I could continue to do that in the Philadelphia area, right? Well, of course I could...but the “signs” have pointed to a new location for the next chapter of our lives. “On Top of the World” is the name of the 55+ community in Ocala where Rick & I will be making our new home. We have relatives there, as well as in other parts of Florida, so that makes the move even easier.

We will be able to stay in touch with our loved ones “up North” via telephone, email, Skype, Facetime, occasional travels, and good old Facebook.



But what about the Self-Empowerment newsletter?

I intend to continue writing the Self-Empowerment newsletter, but there is a major change in distribution that I feel moved to make at this time.

This issue will be THE LAST Self-Empowerment newsletter that will be mailed to the approximately 300 people who have been receiving it via U.S. Mail.

Over the past 22 years I have carried the cost of printing and postage for over 300 hardcopies being mailed out. I gratefully accepted contributions and stamps to help offset that cost, but the contributions have not substantially eased the financial burden. Some years ago I began emailing the “pdf” version to those who willingly allowed me to, thereby saving some printing and postage costs. I also began to post the newsletter on my website, www.AgapeInterfaith.org, for people to find the current issue and the most recent 10 years of back issues.

Those of you who would like to be on the email list for future issues, please send an email to Jilleroni@Juno.com with a subject line that says, “SE Newsletter” with your name, either in the subject line or in the body of the email. No other info is required. You will continue to receive it via email that way.

You are under no obligation to continue to receive this newsletter. I will not take it personally whether or not you choose to receive it via email. I know many of

us have very busy lives and often have an overflow of incoming email. You can always find the latest issues online, if you would like to do so.

Listful Thinking – So Many Lovely Lists.

I have been the Queen of List-making for a very long time. I used to hand-write them. Now I usually type them on my laptop. Rick announced at my 2012 retirement party that he was sure I would be making Word documents and Excel spreadsheets forever. He was right! I sure do spend a lot of time expressing myself and organizing my thoughts for greater ease and efficiency in my life via documents and spreadsheets on my laptop. You can be sure that the lists I created for my move from Philadelphia will be used once again for our next move. I have lists of who is to be notified of our change of address, what items we want to sell or donate, and what utilities need to be turned on or off – all ready to be updated when the time comes.

Some other lists I have enjoyed making

Bucket List – Various wishes, dreams, plans, hopes, and future accomplishments
Budget
Decision-making pros and cons
Donations to organizations (tax deductible)
Favorite authors, books, movies, shows
Gratitude List
Holistic treatments and resources for health and well-being
Meal Planning & Recipes
Medical appointments and referrals from the primary physician
Movies I want to see
Party games & party planning ideas
Passwords
Preparations for vacations/travel
Reminders of things to bring when I have a vendor table at a flea market

Taking a Risk / Dealing with Change

You might be wondering if I have had any doubts or anxiety about moving to Florida. Yes, of course I have! One thing about being human is the capacity to

question, doubt, wonder, and second-guess your decisions, no matter how big or small the risk or change. However, the beauty of doing one's inner work is twofold.

1) When a doubt or fear receives my attention, I open my mind to any inspiration or guidance that points toward more clarity or an answer to an issue that I had not previously considered. This can be helpful. As my friend Eva Lisle shared, "Fear is a stoplight." So I stop, look, and listen. What is the fear pointing to? Something specific to address, or just an old program that wants to avoid change of any kind?

2) I remember that I have the power to decide how I want to relate to any of my thoughts. My thoughts are like items floating down the stream of consciousness. I can choose to let them pass, or I can pick them up for more consideration now or later. Here's where my list prowess comes in – if now is not a good time to consider a doubt or fear thought, I can write it down for later consideration, maybe after I meditate, or discuss it with another person, or do some online research, or whatever I feel guided to do.

Bottom line – Self-Empowerment is a process of utilizing inner and outer resources for a greater experience of peace and clarity. It works if you work it!

Each of us has our own style for connecting with our inner guidance, Higher Self, Wise Mind. While some may get a clear voice that gives specific direction, others may receive various vague ideas, clues, or a gut feeling or intuition. I find that we need to keep checking in, as directions may change in the light of new circumstances. The list I made yesterday may not be the right list for today. I allow for updates or overhauls. Being alive can call for recalibrating my course, like a sailboat makes adjustments based on the wind currents and changes of weather.

Two months ago I planned to live in New Jersey for several more years. Then we found the house that felt like our next home. My ship has charted a new course.

**"A ship is safe in harbor, but that's not what ships are for."
~ William G.T. Shedd**

I look forward to continuing to share in this way with those of you who choose to keep on receiving this newsletter via email or through the www.AgapeInterfaith.org website. I bless and give thanks to all who have been along this journey with me. I have been extremely grateful for all of you!

May you all continue to thrive in body, mind, and Spirit! Much Love and Gratitude to each of you!

Your fellow traveler, *Rev. Jill*



Lessons Learned at the Amusement Park with my Daughter

by Scott Grace

Lesson 1. Waiting is worth it when anticipating pleasure. My daughter, normally with the attention span of a six year old (she is one), becomes as peaceful and patient as a seasoned meditator while waiting in long lines for rides she wants to go on. Maybe if I saw the whole experience of life as one giant amusement ride that I chose to go on, I would be more amused, patient, and peaceful while waiting.

Lesson 2. Wants are wants, needs are needs. This separation is impossible for a child.

Aysia: "Daddy, I need you to go on this ride with me."

Scott: "Sure thing, Aysia."

Of course, as she gets older I may want to point out that she doesn't *need* me to go on the ride; she *wants* me to. And if I don't want to, I can find her a companion close to her age to go on with her. We have done that on several rides that would have turned my belly inside out and upside down. (She makes friends, like, instantly!)

We adults are acting like children when we confuse wants with needs. Needs do not need to be met by a specific person or outcome. I can want companionship or to feel loved, but I don't need it from you. We become so much less controlling and enjoy the rides a lot more when we stop using Flight Attendant Lingo and its accompanying consciousness: *I need you to put that seatbelt on!*

Lesson 3. It's OK to say no and still have a good time. I say no a bunch of times at the amusement park. No to cotton candy. No to staying there eight hours. No to rides that make the contents of my stomach...Oh, I've covered that already! And her disappointment gets expressed. And I hear it. And then we move on to enjoying life again! Feelings do not last, and when they get validated, they pass as quickly as clouds across the blue sky on a windy day. It's the stories we tell ourselves as adults that keep negative feelings around. Validate the feeling, trash the story, get back to the joy...

Lesson 4. Fear is nothing to fear. (Sorry F.D.R. Let's agree to disagree!)) Scary rides can be fun! Why in the world would a kid want to be scared? Cause in small

enough doses, fear is a homeopathic remedy for fear. Dark rides give her a chance to practice touching her fears lightly and not getting stuck in them. These rides are a safe container that gives kids the experience of facing and overcoming fear. That's valuable stuff! She has a broad smile on her face, and so do I, after shooting down ghosts and goblins and surviving a tour of the haunted house. Victory!

So that's just a little of what I am learning from taking Aysia to the amusement park. I believe that life works best when you treat your time on earth as having signed up for an amusement park. One of my songs, Smile On Reality, has the following lyric: *"Life is like an amusement park, and sometimes the rides take you through the dark, but, if you can still be amused, you brighten up the night with your illumined attitude, and the darkness, makes you love the light even more, that's what it's for..."*

So, friends, may we all [Smile on Reality!](#) (That's my song you can find on Youtube) I wish you peace and joy and great gobs of goofyness at the amusement park, and for goodness sake, let's not take the rides too seriously: We bought a ticket! We wanted it all, the Fun House, The Haunted House, all of it!

Validate the feeling, trash the story, get back to the joy...

Scott Grace is a traveling troubadour, speaker, and an intuitive life coach who serves worldwide and does sessions via phone or Skype. Read more about his coaching practice at [Intuitive Life Coaching Jump Starts & Tune Ups](#) or schedule a free intro session through email at info@scottsongs.com

Just Stop It! by Karen Drucker

A Native American grandfather was talking to his grandson about how he felt about a tragedy. He said, 'I feel as if I have two wolves fighting in my heart. One wolf is the vengeful, angry, violent one. The other wolf is the loving, compassionate one.' The grandson asked him, 'Which wolf will win the fight in your heart?' The grandfather answered, 'The one I feed.'

Native American story

I am nervous. The date is one week from today (June 2, 2015) and I am wondering if it will all work out. All the usual gremlins are coming up: I won't have the time to prepare; I won't have enough money to cover the costs;



I will not be present to make the right decisions; and basically I have no talent so why bother.

I'm recording another CD and my inner critic is having her way with me.

You would think after producing 15 CDs, years of performing, singing, speaking, and recording that I would

have this down – no problem – just pure creativity pouring out.

Not so much.

The truth for me is that whenever I am doing something new, something that is a stretch, something that makes me feel vulnerable, my inner critic (whose name is Zelda) will rise up and go into full protection mode. She will do everything in her power to keep me safe, stuck, and away from any threat of danger. So it makes sense that whenever I am going to do something that will put my creativity out into the world, she will try to derail me so that I stop. And over the years her methods have gotten so creative:

- I will get overwhelmed and in “the fog” so that I can't figure out the next step.
- I will believe her that I don't have the talent, money or the time to do this.
- I will believe her when she says the ever-popular quotes like:
 - Who do you think you are?
 - Oh please, who really cares if you do another CD?
 - Other people sing better, write better, record better – why bother?

So what to do? Do I let her “win” and sit back and not do anything? No, I have learned through the years the concept of “feel the fear and do it anyway.” I have certain techniques to help me paddle through the rapids of my inner critic vortex. My methods might be a little wacky - but they work for me:

1. I clean. I purge, clutter clear, and vacuum. I take a few days to actually clean my space because it feels

like when my space is clear, my head is clear. My friend, author Joan Borysenko, says before she starts writing a book, she completely rearranges all the furniture in her house and it helps her to feel grounded, centered and clear enough to start the creative process. (After writing 12 best-selling books I think she has it down!)

2. When my critic comes up and I start believing all the dribble, I get the idea that my core-self has simply gone off line and I have to reboot. I started a book years ago of all the e-mails, letters and pictures that people would send me saying how my songs helped them get through cancer, or a dark night of the soul, or that my songs bring them joy. I read through this book and I can feel the light return. At this point I can tell Zelda: “Back off I have work to do here!”

3. I phone a friend. I have friends who see the highest and best for me and remember when I forget. I can be open enough with them to say what is happening and just feeling their support helps me go on and move through it all...

“If you hear a voice within you say 'you cannot paint' then by all means paint, and that voice will be silenced.
~ Vincent Van Gogh

So next week I start the process of recording 12 new songs that hopefully will be out by the end of summer. Will my Zelda voices stop? Probably not – but I am moving through it and setting the intention to enjoy the process and have fun.

To help you tell your critic to back off, there is a fun flash mob video of my song “Just Stop It!” made by Liz McDaniel about Dee Lloyd, a wonderful dance teacher in Arizona who teaches the healing power of dance and uses my songs in her classes.

See www.KarenDrucker.com for more info about her CD's, Events, and to sign up for her newsletter.



10 Reasons Why We Love Making Lists

www.npr.org February 24, 2009

Why is it that everywhere you turn there's a list for this or that? On Facebook, friends recently began posting 25 Random Things About Me — which bloggers have been doing for years. Now some people are lambasting the listiness while others are shortening it to a more manageable 3 Random Things (3 Places I Have Lived or 3 TV Shows I Watch).

Other Facebook and MySpace lists abound: 6 Great Books. 8 Favorite Songs. 7 Reasons to Hate ... Whatever. David Letterman's Top 10 List has become a bona fide art form. And there's a list of Top 5 Musicians on Twitter floating around. Everyday parlance is littered with lists: laundry, grocery, honey-do.

"Enough organization, enough lists and we think we can control the uncontrollable," observed a character on the TV show *House*. By now you would think there are enough lists. But still we keep jotting things down in an orderly fashion.

Why do we love lists? Let us count the ways:

1. Lists bring order to chaos. "People are attracted to lists because we live in an era of overstimulation, especially in terms of information," says David Wallechinsky, a co-author of the fabulous *Book of Lists*, first published in 1977 and followed by subsequent editions. "And lists help us in organizing what is otherwise overwhelming."

2. Lists help us remember things — at the hardware store, for the vacation trip, Christmas presents. The One Planet Education Network, or OPEN, is a global online education content provider that counts Harvard and Columbia universities as clients. OPEN also swears by lists. "Checklists help you remember what you have done and what you have to do," the curriculum reminds the students.

3. Most lists are finite. They don't usually go on and on. And if they do, you can skip to the bottom of the list. The Internet Movie Database, for instance, lists its "[bottom 100 movies as voted by users](#)." The winner — er, loser — is *Zaat*, a 1975 sci-fi fiasco.

4. Lists can be meaningful. The Steven Spielberg classic *Schindler's List* is based on the true story of a German businessman who used a list of names to save more than 1,000 Jews from the concentration camps. It

is ranked eighth on the American Film Institute's 2007 list of 100 top American films of the past 100 years.

5. Lists can be as long or as short as necessary. Jamie Frater, a New Zealand opera singer, maintains a list-keeping site called [The List Universe](#). Recent posts include "20 Great Quotes from Ronald Reagan" and "Top 10 Codes You Aren't Meant to Know." A list, Frater says, should be "as long as is necessary. Some lists need be only a few lines an item, others a few paragraphs. I seldom write more than one paragraph, but occasionally the need arises to do so." Frater adds, "This question is a bit like asking an artist: 'When is the painting finished?' It is when it is."

6. Making lists can help make you famous. Notable list makers include Thomas Jefferson, Peter Mark Roget, Martha Stewart and Benjamin Franklin. "A methodical and wry man," wrote Franklin biographer Walter Isaacson in *Time* magazine, "Franklin loved making lists. He made lists of rules for his tradesmen's club, of synonyms for being drunk, of maxims for matrimonial happiness and of reasons to choose an older woman as a mistress. Most famously, as a young man, he made a list of personal virtues that he determined should define his life."

7. The word "list" can be tracked back to William Shakespeare, according to the Oxford English Dictionary. In *Hamlet*, the Bard refers to "a list of landlesse resolute."

8. Lists relieve stress and focus the mind. "Lists," sociologist Scott Schaffer told *The Oregonian* newspaper, "really get to the heart of what it is we need to do to get through another day on this planet."

9. Lists can force people to say revealing things. In his 25 Random Things roster, former California Gov. [Jerry Brown](#) reveals that his favorite cereal is ... Flax Plus Multibran.

10. Lists can keep us from procrastinating. We put this one off until the end. Making a list enables us to get our heads around really big tasks — and helps us tackle the work, one aspect at a time. But a list is only useful if it reveals a truth, solves a problem or leads to action. Making a list, for instance, does not necessarily help procrastinators. As DePaul University psychologist Joseph Ferrari told *Psychology Today* in 2008, people don't put off work they must do because they lack list-making skills. And, in turn, making a list does not get the job done.



Daily Word

I trust my inner wisdom.

The global positioning system on my phone or in my car makes traveling so much easier. I know exactly where to turn. My spiritual practices also provide valuable guidance for navigating life. I start my day by checking in with God, my spiritual compass. With Spirit directing me, I travel in safety and peace.

I pack my bag with items to help me on my spiritual path: a journal, books, and inspiring music. I use my journal to reflect on detours in my life. I see how every experience leads me home. I am one with God – wise, understanding, and powerful.

Staying in touch with Spirit, I am confident I am heading in the right direction. God is my spiritual compass – guiding my way.

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