

Unfold
your
wings

and
watch life
take off

Sketches by the author
Wallace Huey



A Life Discovered Publishing
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This book is dedicated to all who are searching for that elusive connection that will make their life abundant and whole.

To you I offer the hand of friendship.

—Wallace Huey

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Acknowledgements

I always considered writing to be a solitary affair. However, once I began *Unfold Your Wings and Watch Life Take Off* I realised as it progressed that I needed to share my work with people close to me. As a result, *Unfold Your Wings and Watch Life Take Off* is very much a group effort. Without the help of many friends, relatives and some friends I have yet to meet, who offered support, this book would not have been possible.

As this book and its associated website have progressed, I have received unwavering support from my wife Carolyn. Her devotion has helped keep me motivated and focused, her patience has been unwavering and her amazing creativity has helped my project become practical.

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A Letter To The Reader

www.alifediscovered.org

Dear Reader,

As I sit looking out of my office at the sun setting outside and my book almost complete, I feel drawn to reflect on why I have written *Unfold Your Wings* and *Watch Life Take Off*. It has been written because I want to share myself with you. Writing it has, on occasion, moved me to tears and opened up new levels of joy, peace and understanding. As a result the book has unfolded and evolved in its own time.

Writing *Unfold Your Wings* and *Watch Life Take Off* has helped me become clear about my inner guidance. Searching through my memory for examples to illustrate the points in the book has helped me come to terms with my past. With my past resolved and my inner guidance clear, I now feel ready to start my new life as a guide and coach to others.

I invite you to discover your inner guidance. There is no greater discovery. This calling, which resides in your heart, will change your life. If followed it will open up your potential, heal your wounded heart and bring you abundant rewards. Eventually, if followed most sincerely, you will discover your life's mission and your connection to all that was, is now and forever will be.

Yours sincerely,
Wallace Huey



A Swan on Hillsborough Lake

Deep within your heart is a calling.

It is very gentle

It is very loving.

It is very persistent.

Would you like to discover

Its purpose?

Introduction

It was a dry sunny day and our family was heading to the beach to have some fun. As we drove toward the Mourne Mountains we passed by a lake and I cried out,

“Please Mum, stop!”

I was only 8 years old and I had recognised something. We all climbed out of the car and stood on the lakeshore to see why I had stopped the car so abruptly. There in the distance, a swan floated on the shimmering lake; it was my first glimpse of a swan. I was captivated and wanted to get closer, but couldn't. Eventually the rest of the family became restless. We climbed back into the car and headed for the beach.

At school I was inattentive, dreamy and hyperactive. I had little inclination to study or do well in exams. Then, as I was about to embark on studies that would prepare me for university, I felt this strong urge to make something of my life. I resolved to be somebody—to achieve something—and became determined to qualify as an architect. I did not know it then, but this was the first early stirring of my inner call. I was expressing it in crude and discordant ways, but it was there. This deeply felt inner guidance was to carry me through university, and out into the world. As I stood on the steps of our home ready to start life as an independent adult at university, I turned to my mother and said with conviction, “I mean to reach the top.”

I didn't.

Twenty-seven years later I found myself walking on the banks of Hillsborough Lake near my home. There on the lake was a solitary pure white swan. I was captivated. Recalling the event from my youth I felt drawn to remain with the swan all day. I was fascinated by her silence and beauty and the way she gracefully turned her head to watch everything that was happening. I could sense her power as I watched

her unfolding and flapping her wings, while floating on the still, clear water. I wondered what it would be like to fly like a swan. She evoked something...or someone. That day was spent in silent communion. It was a day of profound inner peace.

What had happened in the intervening twenty-seven years to change me from restless, arrogant young man to a serene and peaceful adult?

That is the secret told within these pages.

The Radiant Swan Within

Being still I wait
For the swan on a forest lake at sunrise,
Whenever I need to be supported, loved and cared for.
Whenever I need a passage
Through the mists of my confusion and loneliness,

The call is always there.

No-friend ever loved me thus.
The call helps me glide serenely through life.
Its feather soft touch and serene presence,
Helping spread my wings to fly home,
Home to wholeness, home to peace, home to love.

I can glide on the still waters of eternity.
I can fly up to Heaven's gates and behold the wonders of earth.

Part 1

Your Calling

Your Calling introduces a vast untapped power ready to support and guide you. This power is your inner guidance.

“If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts...”
—Psalm 95



Dawn

To the east a pink hue touches the horizon.

Mist hovers mysteriously over the still lake. Specks of grass float past with silken smoothness. A rich cacophony of birdsong fills the air.

A solitary, pure white swan glides gracefully over still water. She reaches upward to flap her majestic wings and settle once more into icy coldness. The swan turns and glides silently across the lake into mist, causing small ripples to fan outward on either side until they reach the bank.

Some ducks twist and turn playfully on the water's gently rippled surface. Other ducks glide in and out of a nearby reed bed.

Tiny white crystals of frost sit on long blades of grass that grow on the lakeshore.

An early morning group runs past. They are intent on arriving.

The sky is filled with powder blue light and half-light. In part of the sky the powder blue is masked by high cirrus cloud. Seagulls fly past, sometimes flapping, sometimes gliding, in the vast all encompassing space.

The swan is still now. She turns her small head in quick alert movements...watching.

Peace penetrates, like a silent blessing.

It is dawn.

Spring Reflections

Golden sun radiates soft light from a clear blue sky. The ground is clothed in a blanket of pure white snow that unites path and woodland. Behind bushes, a small delicate pagoda—its roof covered in a thick blanket of snow—protects wooden seats beneath. Then from inside the pagoda, a hypodermic needle is thrown over the bush, staining the pure, unsullied snow blood red.

Your Calling Is Inside

We live in a harsh, cruel world—a world of war, famine, poverty, environmental degradation, drug addiction and abuse of every kind. At a personal level our jobs are becoming ever more demanding, our marriages are under pressure, and we are fearful of the future society we are creating for our children.

In our unease we turn to advertised products, entertainment, self-help books, and gurus of every kind to fill the void and give direction and hope to our fractured lives—but it isn't working.

The call is inside.

The world is suffering because people are not listening to their calling. What is this calling? It is the call to love and to care and it comes from the heart. It is inside every one of us and it is inside you.

Envoi

Throughout the ages, down through the aeons of time,
Across the mists of space, the call has sounded.

The call speaks.

It speaks to the trees. It speaks to the stars.

It speaks to the clouds.

It speaks to the animals and it speaks to us.

For man is unique in nature's kingdom.

The call speaks to us personally

In the quiet whisperings of our heart.

The call is inside.

It is as precious as sunlight, as soft as a bird's feather,
And as loving as your mother's first kiss.
Please wake-up. Wake up to your true inheritance.
Wake up to your bountiful inner gift.



Green grass is emerging through pockmarks in the dank, sullied snow. City streets are awash with ice-cold water and slush. Drops of rain wriggle down the window pane as the wind howls and roars. Outside trees buckle and flex in the chaos of the equinoxial gale.

Your Calling Can Be Hard To Hear (amid all the hurly burley that goes on in your head)

Our calling can be hard to hear among the many thoughts and images whirling in our minds. Inner guidance is not intellectual. It is not a clever argument or astute questioning (although it may respond to astute questioning from time to time). The call is from our whole being. Inner guidance therefore is a feeling, an image or a thought, the slightest hint of a direction or a suggestion. The call needs to be sensed, rather like tuning our radio to a station that is difficult to receive. There can be lots of crackle and interference.

How do we know the impressions we are receiving are from our being and are guided from within? We know, because senses and directions given to us from this source are suffused with peace and help us to grow spiritually. With peace as our guide, we can be assured that these gentle promptings will be both in our own highest interests as well as in the highest interests of all those involved.

How can we best develop our ability to receive these gentle promptings? We need to cultivate silence, silence and still more silence. It is nearly impossible to tune in to our being amid all the frantic activity that passes for modern life—so to listen to inner guidance we need to cultivate periods of both outer and inner quiet. These periods will reveal the gentle inner promptings of our heart.

This does not mean we have to become monks or hermits, although sometimes we may wish to. What we need are some periods, however infrequent, to stop and listen. Inner guidance is always there. It is our best friend. I have made it my own life's purpose to fall in love with the call. In time you may wish to do the same.

I remember the first time I consciously listened to my inner guidance—I was a 23-year-old architecture student in the fourth year of my course at university. We had been given a very tough problem for archi-

tectural students to solve. Working in teams of four, we had been asked to design a complete extension to a city in England. This was a real project. We were being asked to use this project as a design exercise that would teach us town-planning skills.

In those days I was a rather supercilious young man and imagined I was a cut above the rest in terms of my design talents, since I thought I was a prize well worth having. I decided to hang back when the teams were being selected and wait for a team to pick me. I was asked to join a team of very good designers. I thought my number had come up! Now I was going to show them what I could do.

We had only ten weeks to complete the task including the design drawings, so there was no time for hanging around. I was sure I could lead the team well enough for us to get an A grade. I was proud of my abilities. At the first team meeting we set to work, but soon sensed that something was going seriously wrong. All four team members were headstrong—each one of us had great confidence in his own opinion and each was sure of he was right. As our opinions were often pulling in opposite directions, we fought and squabbled continually about whose ideas were best. I considered myself the best designer and of course preferred my ideas.

The result was a mixture of bitterness, recrimination and animosity. My dream of getting an A grade was turning into a shambles. At lunch-time one day I confided our group's problem to one of my close friends who was an architecture student in the same year doing the same project in another group. He admitted that his group had exactly the same problem. Interestingly I discovered that members of every design group were being antagonistic.

Time was running out. We began to get desperate. There were two weeks left to work on the project and we still had not produced a single design drawing. The closer we came to the deadline the harder we fought one another. I could feel the spectre of failure looming over the horizon. One morning I awoke and could not face going in to do battle yet another day.

I walked across my student bedroom. The late November frost was on the grass outside and cars were speeding by on the busy main road. Gazing absentmindedly at the early morning sun, as it hovered motionless above an indented red brick skyline, I admitted I was a beaten man

and did not know how to solve the design problem with my team. I admitted I needed help. Falling silent, I began to listen to my feelings inside and began to sense what I needed to do.

My inner guidance revealed that I was worn out and I felt drawn to take care of myself. I knew I needed a break. Thoughts that were not my calling—thoughts motivated by fear—told me that if I took a break at this late stage in the project, the other members of my team would be very angry. I decided not to listen to these thoughts but instead listened to my inner guidance, which I knew was suffused in peace and had my best interests at heart. I took the break I needed.

That afternoon I wandered through the university campus. I was lost, simply walking, did not know why I was wandering. My intuition was suggesting that I walk around the campus and I was following its gentle inner promptings. I ambled through the science area, along the majestic paved pedestrian plaza, past the science library, up the grassy hill with its leafless birch trees towards the student's union.

Following the path behind the student's union, I wandered into the main university library, not really knowing why I was there, and stopped—transfixed. A book title simply jumped out at me. It was Carl Rogers' book *On Becoming a Person*.

I took the book down from the shelf and studied it. It contained information on interpersonal communication that helped me understand how to bring unity to our divided group. I took the book back to my bedroom and read it cover to cover in three days and found it contained exactly what I needed to know to have our team work together in harmony. I realized we were all working for our own ends and that we were not pulling together as a team because no one was working for the group. We were all being extraordinarily self-concerned.

After reading the book I resolved to return to my group armed with a new understanding and a bit more humility about the best role I could play in the creative process. I resolved to be the one person in the group who would work for the group and became committed to creating ideas that would link together other ideas put forward by group members.

Having been away for two days, I walked into the group meeting, to receive a barrage of abuse. I was accused of being a lazy layabout and was threatened with expulsion. I said nothing. In time the abuse ceased and we began work. As conflicts arose I acted as the peacemaker by

creating linkages between different ideas. Immediately the atmosphere changed. The creativity began to flow. We had produced our first drawing by lunchtime. We all sensed something important was happening.

Over the course of the next two weeks an abundance of elegant drawings were mounted around the walls of our room. My friend walked in one day by mistake. He must have sensed the atmosphere of harmony and abundant creativity, because at lunchtime he asked me how our group was doing so well when all the others were in chaos. I tried to explain.

When the projects were handed in and assessed, our group came top of the class with the A grade I had always wanted, but achieved by a totally unforeseen approach. I was a changed person. Ever since then, I have always been able to bring harmony and unity to any group of people with whom I have been involved. All this happened because I listened to my inner guidance. This is the power of the inner call.



UNFOLDING YOUR WINGS

Next time you are discussing a difficult problem with a group of people, try being the facilitator. Give up your own particular viewpoint and focus instead on finding the viewpoint that unites all those present by becoming detached from the passions of the various arguments put forward. From this place of inner calm listen within for ideas you can contribute that knit together other people's disparate ideas. You may be surprised at the influence you wield when you start working for everyone else!

The above true story has all the ingredients for learning to hear inner guidance. There was an admission of my own inadequacy to deal with the situation. I became silent outwardly and inwardly. In that silence I listened for the gentle promptings from my being, like a beautiful radiant swan deep within. Finally I was able to discriminate between the gentle promptings suffused in peace given to me intuitively, and other unhealthy thoughts and feelings suffused in fear.

Envoi

I am so busy.
I am so concerned to achieve.
I am so pre-occupied.
I am so stressed.

No wonder I am deaf to the call.

You are always there, but I do not hear you.
But I can learn.

I can learn to be less busy.
I can learn to give up striving.
I can learn not to be so pre-occupied.
I can learn to relax.

I can learn to seek help from my calling.

When my mind is still I will hear.
When I take time to listen I will hear.
When I admit I need help I will hear.

There is no problem my calling cannot solve.
There is no confusion my calling cannot clarify.
There is no answer my calling cannot find.

I practice.
Being still, I learn to listen.



A mild gentle breeze moves through the park. People smoothly skirt the open tree-bound grass. An elderly couple ambles, allowing awareness. Points of tree-top melody sing out across open space. Light hangs on to the day. Gentleness, birdsong, lingering light, and a subtle pervasive awakening announce spring.

Your Calling Will Direct, Heal And Transform Your Life

Opening up to our calling is like the awakening of spring, it happens so gradually we are barely aware of it. All that is needed is for us to gently turn inward to hear our direction and guidance. People ask me, “How can I hear my calling?”

Our guidance comes from our heart and can be sensed when we are quiet and still. As we learn to tune in to our heart we become more aware of messages we receive from our whole being. Instead of striving to meet fixed deadlines, we learn just to be—and to trust. Guidance is formed from feelings, images and thoughts that arise within while in this state of being. Working together, these feelings, images and thoughts guide our actions and decisions. Giving rise to a range of inner faculties they direct, heal and transform our lives. These inner faculties include:

Intuition

An inner knowing and thought arises from this, sometimes expressed as “a gut feeling,” “a feeling in my bones,” “following my nose” or “a feeling in my waters.”

Insight

A breakthrough in understanding, received from perception of the wholeness of life.

Dream

An aspiration we hold for our lives.

Creativity

A breakthrough in expression achieved by leaps of the imagination.

Conscience

A discomfort caused by misguided action.

Night-time Dream

A symbolic image or story, received while sleeping, which can support, or warn against a course of action.

Supernatural Guidance

A direct communication received from beings in the spiritual realm.

Taken together, these faculties represent the Spirit within Man, and lead us to discover our true selves—the Christ Within. These inner faculties have both masculine and feminine characteristics. We may feel guidance towards being determined and single minded—a masculine characteristic, while at the same time displaying flexibility and sensitivity—a feminine characteristic. These inner faculties are illustrated in this book, through my own life story.

Envoi

The call is so gentle.
The call is so soft.
The call is so determined.

The call is a feeling, an image or a thought.

Deep inside, I sense my calling.
Listen, and I find her there.
All I need to hear is silence.

My calling hints.
He hints at finding new directions for my life.
She hints at building true friendships.
It hints at being of service to others.
I nurture these hints, these subtle promptings.

As I nurture them, they grow.

They grow into actions.

These are the actions that will make us whole.

These are the actions that will transform the world.



A patch of light from the setting sun brightens the circular flowerbed. Small colourful flowers of yellow, violet, white and lavender sparkle in the sun's low slanting gentle rays. In this patch of sunlight a few tiny flies dart and hover above the flowers. A magpie pecks persistently on the nearby grass as petals dance in the gentle breeze.

Your Calling Can Be Checked

Our guidance is usually very gentle. We sense its presence through our feelings, images and thoughts. People often ask me, "How do I know if the feelings, images and thoughts I am having are from the call?" There are five ways we can tell if they are coming from inner guidance. I would like to share with you a major decision I made a few years ago and then use this as an example to illustrate how we can know if we are being guided from within.

When my wife Carolyn and I were courting, I lived in Belfast and she lived in Dublin 100 miles away. Since we were seriously exploring making a life together, we had to agree where to live. Was it to be Dublin or Belfast or somewhere else? This was not an easy decision as we had lives rooted in our respective cities. In our discussions about bringing our lives together we were both prepared to make compromises. I reflected privately on this question about where we should live, and sensed that it was right for me to move to Dublin. By offering to move to Dublin I felt I was offering a gift that would bring us closer together.

One summer's day, as we lay in long grass looking out across open fields on the edge of a hilltop wood, I offered to move to Dublin. I made the offer with the reservations that I would try living in Dublin with Carolyn for periods to see if I liked it, and that we would discuss the possibility of living in the countryside some day. My partner was overcome with emotion and shed a few tears. We realised that my decision was taking us closer to marriage and a shared life.

In making this decision I was guided by my insight, which revealed that it was better for the relationship if I moved from Belfast to Dublin, by my dreams which imagined a new attractive life together in Dublin, by my conscience which sent feelings of discomfort about asking Carolyn to move to Belfast, and by my intuition because I felt in my bones that

I wanted to move to Dublin. But how could I be sure this decision was guided from within and was the right decision?



UNFOLDING YOUR WINGS

If you are in doubt about your inner guidance on a particular issue, try moving in the direction you are considering in small steps. You can imagine making the decision and see how you feel, or you can make the decision provisionally or else with reservations. As you progress toward your goal, use the guidelines below to notice whether your guidance is supporting this new direction, or seeking to move you back to your original path or onto a new path.

Firstly, I felt enthusiastic at the prospect of living with Carolyn on a try-it-and-see basis in Dublin. There was a natural inner energy supporting this move. I could release the energy of this enthusiasm to sort out the many tasks that would need to be addressed before I could make life in Dublin with Carolyn a reality.

Secondly, as I imagined a life in Dublin with Carolyn, I felt at peace. Of course there were complications and some anxieties in making this decision. I would have to sell my house, leave my parents and two sisters and the many friends I had made over the years in Belfast. Although I knew I could take my Internet project with me, I would have to find work in Dublin. Despite all these complexities, I felt a deep inner peace when I considered making this decision.

Thirdly, I just knew it felt right for me to explore living in Dublin. There was an inner “knowingness” that persisted. I had the feeling that, whether or not it would work out for us in Dublin, I was taking the right course of action.

Fourthly, by moving to Dublin and creating a life with Carolyn, I would have to make many new friends, find work and carve out a life for myself in a strange city. As I contemplated making this move, I felt I had the persistence to see the adventure through because I had the patience to focus on building a new life by overcoming every obstacle one step at

a time.

These are the four ways I used to know if my decisions and actions are guided from within. The decision or action is surrounded by feelings of enthusiasm, peace, knowingness, and patience.

Of course, before making a major decision I may wish to share the background to my decision with business colleagues or close friends and family. When I shared my wish to move to Dublin, and the background to this decision, with close friends and family members, they had some reservations as I had, but could see the value of making this move. Had they been dubious, I would have discussed matters extensively with them to discover the nature of their objections, before coming to my final decision.

Through sharing with people close to my heart who know me intimately I come to understand the nature of my decision, but I always rely on my inner guidance to make the decision, and do not follow others' opinions. Tuning into my inner guidance empowers me to act in a truly free and independent manner while taking into account the perspectives that other people offer.

Where we need the cooperation of others to fulfil a goal, for example within a marriage, or on a committee, we need to keep communication open and free-flowing by encouraging each person to freely share what is in their heart, until consensus about the way forward is reached, (see *Your Healing From A Broken Relationship* page 214).

Envoi

I listen.

I hear my calling.

But I doubt.

Is it really you?

Are these feelings, images and thoughts

Really from the Source of Life?

Can it be this simple to know my guide?

I listen to these gentle inner promptings.

Feelings of enthusiasm mean you are near.
Feelings of peace suggest you are with me.
Feelings of knowingness reveal your presence.
Feelings of patience have you by my side.

You are my loyal friend and ally.
To you I entrust my life.



The long straight path narrows and turns to skirt a mass of small elegant trees. These trees offer shade to the soil beneath. Shaded earth responds with small clumps of green-leafed plants bedecked with masses of tiny white flowers. Cascading leaves droop from the slender branches. On the outer edges of this copse, leaves dance to a passing breeze. Within all is still.

Your Calling Responds To Relaxation

Although the outer fringes of our lives may be a flurry of activity, by nurturing stillness within, we open to our inner guidance. At this still centre our loving nature is revealed. We are able to tune in to feelings and follow leads that come from our heart. The feelings we receive from the call come from The Source which is both personal and universal. This is marvellous news, as it means we can request guidance and develop our understanding.

So how can we use this guidance to bring love, creativity and healing into our lives? We can choose to nurture these inner promptings by drawing on the calming effect of relaxation, questions and contemplation.



TAKING FLIGHT A Simple Relaxation Exercise

Why not try this the next time you are really frazzled? Find a quiet space where you are undisturbed. Sit in a comfortable chair and gently hold an existing problem from your life. Hold it so gently that you forget it is there. Just sit for a while and absorb the sounds in and around the room. Relax a little.

To deepen your relaxation start from your toes and systematically tense and release each set of muscles in your body. Starting with your toes, pull them in and tense the muscles in your left foot. Hold the tension for five to ten seconds. Let them relax. Do the same with your right foot. Next, tense the muscles in your lower left leg for five to ten seconds and then let them relax. Follow this with the right leg. Continue tensing and releasing each set of muscles, working your way up through your body. End with the muscles in your face.

Once all your muscles are relaxed become aware of your breathing. Notice your stomach and chest rise and fall with each breath. Stay alert and gradually slow your breathing and breathe naturally and deeply. Practising the above will help you to become more relaxed about life. You can enjoy being, instead of doing. We are human beings after all, not human doings!

While you are sitting quietly, do not be surprised if you become aware of gentle, loving feelings and notice ideas that form around these feelings in response to the problem you are gently holding. This is your inner guidance speaking to you! I am sure the ideas you receive from this source will be more relevant to the problems in your daily life and of a much higher quality than your normal frantic ideas. Such ideas don't just help you to cope, they help you to grow.

When we take the time to relax, we are more intuitive. Although on rare occasions our calling can speak with loud obvious thoughts, for the most part it speaks to us with quiet gentle promptings. That explains why we do not often hear our inner guidance. Our minds are simply too busy to notice. A busy mind cuts us off from our loving feelings and from the information being sent to us intuitively.

In today's frantic world, when people have problems they rush around and become increasingly stressed as they try to deal with and solve their many concerns. If only they knew that there is an inexhaustible source of knowledge, wisdom and understanding inside. By taking the time to relax we learn to hear inner guidance.

Envoi

Can I really relax?
Sitting comfortably I relax my body,
And I slow my breathing.

Slowly, slowly my mind quietens,
Slowly, slowly I begin to relax,

Slowly, slowly I become aware of my feelings.
In quiet and stillness the call speaks to me.



Branches of Scots Pines are swaying softly in the wind. The sky is milky blue interspersed with menacing grey cloud. The smell of impending rain hangs on the wind. A grey squirrel hops across the path, hesitates and climbs a hawthorn tree with reckless ease.

Your Calling Needs To Be Trusted

As we learn to tune into and trust our calling, we are able to live with reckless ease. Learning to live with such grace needs finely tuned discrimination as to what is and is not inner guidance, gained from practice and experience. I have made many painful mistakes in learning to discern and then trust my calling. The temptation when I make a mistake is to close up and shrink from life. This is a perfectly natural reaction to failure, pain and stress. If we can learn to discriminate and trust inner guidance as a result of reflecting and learning from our mistakes, we will discover our potential, our lives will blossom and we will gain a quiet inner confidence.

When I was at architecture school I wanted to learn something significant from my time at university. My first two years at University were relatively uneventful. I had learned a little about design but had not learned much about life.

Then in my third year a new tutor joined the school. He was tall with a dignified look and fierce penetrating eyes that set him apart from the other tutors. I soon realised that he was a very able designer and an excellent tutor who had an awareness about life that others lacked. Through this awareness he seemed able to control what went on in the architecture school, even though he was neither a professor nor head of department. Over the next two years I came to admire him for his positive qualities, but chose to ignore the many small signals that suggested he had a darker side.

At the end of fourth year we were invited to choose a project for our design thesis. I had selected this teacher to be my personal tutor and had decided to design a crematorium. A short time into the yearlong project I called on my tutor for some help and guidance. When I told him about my wish to design a crematorium he said, "That's already been solved." He took down a book of designs and opened it at a crematorium explaining the significance of the symbolism as he did so. His explanation must

have made a big impression because I left the room stunned. For the first time in my life the significance of death really hit home.

I wandered in a daze back to my flat where I proceeded to cry. I could not stop. The tears continued for three days. My flat mate had no idea what was happening to me, but I knew. I had accepted the inevitability of my own death. After this period of intense grieving I felt a new level of inner peace and contentment. I was amazed at my tutor's awareness and began to feel he was someone I could really trust.

When I visited him again he suggested that I do a cathedral as my design thesis instead of a crematorium. I was surprised. Did he really think that I, a mere architecture student, could design a cathedral? Then I made a big mistake. I decided to design the cathedral because my tutor felt it was a good idea. I trusted his judgement instead of my own gut feeling, which was suggesting I design a crematorium. I did not know it then, but I had just put myself in the power of a manipulative man.

I returned to my tutor and told him I had decided to design a cathedral. He was delighted.

"I have been interested in the cathedral as a design problem for a long time," he said. We started to meet regularly to advance the project. At the second of these meetings he began to stare at me intensely. Then to my surprise an energy wave came out of his forehead and went right through me. I felt as if the cobwebs were being cleaned out of my mind. When I objected to this treatment he said,

"Perhaps I should take the candle to you instead of the searchlight."

When I left the room I was full of energy and for the next few days could not settle to do my work. I felt compelled to visit his strange new home outside the city.

I visited him on Saturday. We worked together on putting the finishing touches to his unusual modern house. That evening we went for a drink, returning late in the evening. Around midnight his wife went upstairs to bed and I was left sitting beside this strange man with paranormal powers. He turned to me and made it obvious that he wanted some kind of intimate sexual contact. I refused to cooperate. He was annoyed and rose to go to bed asking, "You'll survive on your own?"

I spent a restless night in bed downstairs, had breakfast with the family in the morning and then left as soon as there was a bus back to my flat.

The following week I endeavoured to return to my studies but could not concentrate. How could I work on a cathedral design project with a tutor who wanted a homosexual relationship with me? How could I do the project without his help? I had only chosen it because he thought it was right for me. I was well into the final year and it was too late to change my project or tutor. If I failed this project, four years of study would be wasted. I was becoming very stressed because I was unable to see a way forward.



UNFOLDING YOUR WINGS

Remember to always follow inner guidance. It is good to listen to the views and perspectives of others around you. Being open to a variety of perspectives can help us understand our situation by stimulating insight. But if other people's advice runs counter to inner guidance it is best to have confidence in and be guided by your own intuition.

One afternoon I rang my mother in an agitated state of mind. The next day both my parents appeared at my door unexpectedly. They had sensed something was terribly wrong and had come from Ireland. I did not tell them what had happened, but did say that I could not cope with my studies. We decided to visit the tutor that evening.

At the meeting he denied suggesting I design a cathedral and we agreed that I should take a year away from university to recover. When we returned to my flat I still felt distressed and agitated. That night I awoke and as I opened my eyes saw a long dark tunnel with a light at the end. I rose from my bed and went out to the landing. I sat on the stairs in a completely disoriented state, not knowing who or where I was. Returning to bed I waited for daybreak.

The next morning I was still disorientated. My parents suggested I immediately return home with them to Belfast. I lay in the back of my father's estate car for the whole journey. Looking out the windows from my prone position at passing trees and clouds, I was unable to think or

use my mind in any constructive way. On arrival in Belfast I had an emergency meeting with a psychiatrist, who immediately admitted me to a psychiatric hospital, where I was put on medication. I was not given the name of my condition because the doctors and my parents thought, in my fragile state, it would be too much of a shock. I had been diagnosed as having schizophrenia, a condition that was to haunt me for years.

Schizophrenia is a malfunction in brain chemistry triggered in some people by exposure to extreme levels of stress. The stress and pressure I experienced while in the company of this tutor had sparked the condition.

When I explained to the doctors my experience of the energy wave passing through me from the tutor's forehead, they considered it part of my breakdown and therefore a psychotic illusion. I am sure it was a real experience. It was different from any experience I have ever had. I have since read about the "third eye," an energy centre in the forehead that a few people have managed to activate, and now believe this was the source of the energy I experienced.

Once I recovered my mental faculties sufficiently to understand what had happened, I was very bitter and resentful. How dare that tutor prey on me! How dare he cause a devastating illness from which I would suffer for the rest of my life!

I felt my tutor had caused my breakdown and subsequent disability. As I reflected on the experience, I realised that I was the one who had chosen him as my tutor and I was the one who had chosen to become very stressed and feel trapped when he started to put pressure on me to do what he wanted. I had other options. I could have reported the tutor's inappropriate behaviour to my professor.

I eventually recovered well enough, with the help of the medication, to return to college. This time when it came to choosing my design thesis and tutor, I was more tuned in to my inner guidance and had learned through bitter experience to trust it more. I designed a crematorium and chose a gentle, caring, humble man as my tutor. These wise choices were instrumental in helping me pass my final year, even though I had a disability that made me vulnerable to stress. While there I avoided my old tutor.

My final year over, I left to enter the workplace, but I was not the person I had been. For the rest of my life I would have to learn, by trial and error, how to manage my medication and my stress levels so that I could lead a normal life. I could not escape the presence of my tutor. An invisible thread, woven from my bitterness and resentment, connected us. I was now a disabled person, and for a long time considered him to be the cause of this misfortune.

As time went by I managed to forgive my tutor. I saw him as he really was, a man with good qualities who was also selfish and misguided. I began to grow and mature as I understood the lessons in this misfortune. On reflection I realised that in choosing this tutor and deciding to design the cathedral, I was moving counter to my inner guidance. My maturity developed still further when I learned the spiritual lessons from living with disability.

Now, as I sit typing this, it is obvious that when misfortune befalls there are valuable spiritual lessons to be learned. Experiencing this setback and learning the lessons contained in it gave me much of the knowledge necessary to write this book. As I grew in wisdom I was able to find it in my heart to forgive my old tutor—the twisted cord of bitterness and resentment that had connected us all those years dissolved, and I was free.



UNFOLDING YOUR WINGS

When you experience suffering you will grow if you refuse to blame it on other people. Instead ask how you can improve your discernment. Improving your discernment will help you tune to inner guidance ever more precisely. As your ability to tune in improves you will discover that your guided life is providing protection from harm.

The great religions of the world, like Christianity, are in their essence about the spiritual journey and this inner call. This is the journey they teach, although it has somehow become lost in the mists of time. That is why Christianity places such a great emphasis on faith. What is meant

is not blind faith, like the faith I had in my tutor, but faith in ourselves, in our inner guidance, intuitions, insights, dreams, creative ideas, conscience, in Christ Within and faith in a transcendent reality to which we can aspire.

So let us have faith. We can trust our guidance, the radiant inner swan that grants discernment, from all the hurly burley in our mind. Then we can choose to trust that guidance. We can test our intuitions, insights, dreams, creative ideas and conscience in the real world and see if they work. Ask yourself, is following my calling helping? Am I able to avoid harm? Am I becoming wiser, more loving and more peaceful? I invite you to experiment and find out.

Envoi

Although I have experienced suffering,
And my ability to trust has been shaken,
I realise that it is my lack of discernment
That has made me vulnerable.

Learning my lessons I become perceptive.
Learning my lessons I become wise.
Learning my lessons I become knowledgeable.
I am learning to tune to the inner call.

As I learn I grow
I grow in peace.
I grow in love.
I grow in wholeness.

And I discover I can trust anew with confidence.



Beside the curving path, a small grassy alcove shelters a diamond shaped bed. In the bed tall flowers grow, yellow and maroon. In the still air, hornets dart with quick alert movements between slender, colourful stems. Suddenly a butterfly appears, white wings picked out by strong sunlight as it flits playfully over this dense soft pond of colour. White wings pause on yellow, and flutter, disappearing behind a sheltering fir. The maroon and yellow flowers sway gently in a puff of wind. Who knows where the butterfly has gone?

Your Calling Responds To Questions

We can also develop our relationship with the call and receive more help, by learning to ask it questions. I practice asking direct questions relevant to my daily life. Questions like “Do people live on Mars?” are not likely to receive a meaningful response! It is also helpful to phrase the question well. “How can I apologise?” is not as good as, “How can I apologise to my boss for messing up the photocopier?” Be specific.



TAKING FLIGHT

An Exercise On Living With Questions

You will solve your problems more easily by not seeing them as big immovable objects. Learn instead how to stimulate inner guidance by holding problems in your life as questions. Living with questions frees you up and invites your inner call to speak. Always be ready to receive an answer. It can come at any time!

Do not hold the question in your mind. Hold it deep in your heart. To learn this, frame the question in your mind and then imagine it being taken down to your heart. Taking your question down to your heart will help prompt your guidance. Then listen for and nurture any feelings that emerge. Nurtured feelings turn into inspired thoughts!

At the present time I am considering moving 100 metres from my home where I have lived for the past 16 years, to a new apartment. I am

gathering information and developing my feelings intuitively by living with the question, “How can I sell my own house, and is moving to the apartment right for me?”

As I wait for this question to be answered, I am also moving in the direction of selling my house and buying the apartment, without committing to either path until I know for sure that this is the right course of action.

Asking your inner guide questions can also be used along with relaxation, contemplation, talking and meditation. To do this, simply ask your question when your mind and heart are quiet while meditating, relaxing, contemplating or talking. Then leave it open to inner guidance to speak in its own time. Be ready to receive and then remember any new feelings, promptings or ideas. Remember, the call is always with us. Our guide is always there. This feeling gives profound security.

Envoi

I have a personal problem.
I ask a friend, but he knows not.
I ask my partner but she knows not.
I ask my parents but they know not.
I ask the call and it knows.

The answer comes, not with the
Booming voice of false authority,
But in a quiet inner knowing,
Formed in response to the question I hold deep in my heart.



Beneath giant trees grow shrubs. Beneath the shrubs grow leafy stalks. At the end of the stalks grow flowers. They hang like little lavender lanterns. Bees come here to play, each flower vibrating briefly when a bee lands. The tallest bells bob in the breeze as a puff of wind worms its way in from the west. The lanterns vary in shade from almost pure white to strong lavender. Sheltered from the wind, these delicate flowers sprinkle colour on dark green woodland. They quiver silently in the gentle breeze.

Your Calling Can Make You Quiver

Leading a guided life is challenging. At times we may quiver at the decisions we are being invited to make. We often wonder how to make difficult decisions, saying, "How do I know if the feelings, images and thoughts I am having are from my conscience?" We are confused between inner promptings coming from our conscience and feelings of guilt and fear based on our conditioning.

Some time ago I faced a difficult decision and was guided by my conscience. I had been receiving government disability benefit as I was living with schizophrenia, a handicap that prevented me working in a regular job. My disability was improving dramatically as I had been following my calling for years and was experiencing profound healing as a result. The government sent out a social worker to interview me and assess my current level of disability.

After interviewing me the social worker sent in her report. The authorities must have decided that I was now in much better health because they decided to take away two of the disability benefits that I was receiving. I now had only a very small amount on which to live, but was still unable to work in a regular job. I had only a small sum in the bank and became nervous about my financial situation. Then a family member put me in contact with a retired social worker who said she could help me have my benefits reinstated. I agreed to cooperate. We applied for and received the forms to re-apply for the two benefits. She helped me to fill in these forms in an exaggerated way.

When these forms were finished they were not an accurate representation of the truth. I was unhappy about the level of honesty in these forms and was reluctant to post them. I came under pressure from my family

to do so and I relented. After posting the forms I very quickly felt a deep unease about what I had done. I could not settle. My sense of inner peace was disturbed. I felt this strong calling to cancel my application. This was my conscience at work.

I knew this was my conscience and not unmerited feelings of guilt, because I was also being guided by my insight. Through my insight I saw that extra benefits were offered to citizens who found domestic responsibilities troublesome and to people who had difficulty moving around outside the home. Although I had needed these benefits at one time, I was now well able to take care of myself and could move around freely. I saw, that because my health was improving, I no longer needed or deserved these extra benefits, and although I had less to live on, I would somehow be able to manage. I knew I had to trust my calling and that my financial future would be taken care of. Two days after posting the forms I wrote to the government department concerned and cancelled. As soon as I had posted the cancellation letter peace returned. This was another sign that my inner guidance was working through my conscience.

A few months later my mother had an interview with her financial advisors and decided as a result of their advice to give a sum of money to my four siblings and myself. I had trusted my calling and my financial needs for the coming year were met in an unexpected way.

With the help of our insight we can learn to discriminate feelings, images and thoughts coming from our conscience. Our insight will reveal which action is in the best interests of all concerned. In this case it was misguided to try and claim benefits that I could not secure without exaggerating the level of my disability. I could see that by doing this I was seeking to claim money from government funds that were not intended for me, and in doing so unjustly adding to the taxpayers' bill. I also became aware that I was ready for the challenge of greater self-reliance. My insight was revealing the best course of action for all concerned.



UNFOLDING YOUR WINGS

Next time you feel your conscience and insight nudging you to take a certain action, why not experiment by taking the action inner guidance suggests? See if the result of your action works out for all concerned. Experiment on a small issue at first and as your confidence develops you can take actions your conscience prompts and your insight suggests on bigger issues as well. You will have more personal integrity because your intuitions, words and deeds will be one and the same. Consequently you will feel more at peace with yourself and the world.

If we have never sought to develop our insight then we may need to learn new skills of understanding to aid our discrimination. With a little practice, we can become certain when we are receiving feelings, images and thoughts from our conscience. When this happens our conscience becomes clear and can be trusted, even if we do quiver at some of the decisions we are being called to take!

Envoi

Some decisions are right,
 But right decisions can be difficult.
 How do I discriminate between right decisions
 And decisions that are misguided?
 My conscience and insight work together
 To guide my actions.
 These actions bring peace, harmony and justice
 To a chaotic world.



The broad path reveals views of river and lawn. Further along overarching trees enclose, their cool embrace enveloping and sheltering. All around branches sing in the fresh spring breeze. This sheltered space, a place protected from wind and sun, has womb-like security.

Your Calling Responds To Contemplation

We can nurture security in our lives by taking time for contemplation. If we have a problem with a person or situation, we can learn to sense the answer. It is helpful to have a relaxed, undisturbed place for your contemplations. My favourite is a long walk up the river.

When I go upriver I walk along the Lagan Towpath. Before I enter the towpath I pass a small attractive shop. I usually go in and buy a few nice things to eat and drink. With my picnic complete I head up river to Moorlands Meadow, where I sit under a tree with my treat. After my picnic I lie with my back against the tree and contemplate the situation with which I am seeking guidance, by lovingly holding it in my awareness and allowing ideas, feelings and thoughts to form. Quite often I return from the walk with complete clarity about the way forward and the actions I need to take.

Through contemplation we are able to discern higher quality solutions and resolve dilemmas and problems. I recently visited the local DIY store to buy some shelves for my consulting room. In the store I was drawn to two different types of shelves. The first set of shelves was contained within a frame. These drew my eye because this frame would be able to hold my many books, without them sliding off the end of each shelf. The second set of shelves was more attractive with soft curves, but had an open-ended design, not apparently suitable for holding books in place. After standing in the shop contemplating this situation for an hour with my wife I received a wonderful insight. If I chose the attractive shelves and placed one above the other at just the right height, then the wooden brackets that supported the shelves would act as bookends. Now that I knew how to store my books securely I was happy to buy the more attractive shelves with confidence.



TAKING FLIGHT

A Contemplation Exercise

To contemplate a particular problem, lovingly and gently hold the situation in your awareness. Holding it in this way connects you to loving feelings in your heart. This helps you tune into your guidance. As you hold the situation, thoughts may form around the loving feelings created. This is your inner guidance at work. Watch the thoughts as they form and dissolve in your mind. Don't interfere. Simply observe. This is good for creative problem solving.

Quiet contemplation is particularly good for solving design or business related problems. Business managers please note, the typical business environment is very far removed from that best suited to quiet contemplation. Could this be one of the reasons so many executives suffer from stress? (See *Your Calling Helps You Succeed At Work*, page 73). We may have to contemplate a situation for a long time before it is resolved. This is often true with bigger decisions. When contemplating a major decision we need to be able to live with feelings of uncertainty and confusion for protracted periods. This can feel uncomfortable, but it is important not to try and relieve the discomfort by jumping at a decision before everything becomes clear.

I was considering how to design the website that accompanies this book. I designed three different design concepts, each one a development of the previous version. In my design work I would go through a period of intense creativity prior to forming each design idea, then see the flaws in my approach as I contemplated the solution. Seeing the flaws in my approach brought up feelings of uncertainty and confusion. I needed to be still and present for weeks, letting the confusion settle, before I felt drawn to embark on another period of creative exploration.

I was on holiday in Ballycastle when I suddenly received the idea of doing the home page as an illustration, using visual images from the Myth of the Sacred Swan, the mystical story at the end of this book. Soon after receiving inspiration, the fourth design concept fell into place.

I was completely happy with my fourth design and made the decision to place it on the internet.

Contemplation is also excellent for helping us resolve relationship problems. The key to successful relationships is to always act in loving ways. If we are holding negative feelings about our partner, this will separate us from our inner guidance and we may pursue misguided actions that we later regret. By lovingly holding the difficult situation I share with my partner quietly in my awareness, I am able to sense the best course of action, (see *Your Healing From A Broken Relationship*, page 214).

My wife and I were employing some men to cast a concrete step at our front door. Carolyn wanted a curving semi-circular step. I wanted a rectangular step with chamfered corners—this was because I wanted to tile the step myself at a later date and tiling a curving step was going to be very difficult. Carolyn and I discussed the problem and after taking time to contemplate our dilemma we received a wonderful insight. We decided to do a curving step. But instead of tiling the whole step at a later date, we bought a small number of small tiles that matched in with our front door, and asked the workmen to set them into the step in an attractive design when the concrete was still soft. The finished step looked wonderful. Through contemplation and discussion we had come to a decision where both our needs were met and we had created a better quality solution.

Envoi

When in disagreement with my partner,
I need the call to love and to care.

I hold my partner and her choices lovingly in my awareness.
I hold my partner and her choices privately in my awareness.
I hold my partner and her choices quietly in my awareness.

Slowly the call comes to me.
Slowly my thoughts change.

I see and understand her point of view.

She sees mine.

Then we receive a sudden insight and a breakthrough.

Where we felt confused, we now know clarity.

Where we felt separated, we now know marriage.



The water glistens in strong spring sunlight. A meadow of soft thick green, laced with spots of white, rests beside the stream. A hint of path slopes to visit flowing water between piles of neatly stacked brown logs. Large bubbles smoothly skirt small boulders, bump over rippling rapids and dissolve. A solitary bird calls out passionately from a nearby tree. From the dark depth of a deep pool small pieces of weed surface, and are carried effortlessly downstream.

Your Calling Transforms Fear Into Love

Thought emanating from fear is not inner guidance. Simply allow it to surface. Express it and it will leave us. We need to feel free to express our fears in any way our calling suggests. We can write down our fears and then burn them. Symbolizing our fears being consumed by fire in this way can rid us of them. We can confess our fears to a close friend who would understand. Fears can also be symbolized in drawings.

With high levels of fear we may wish to go into a forest and scream. I have done this myself and found it very therapeutic. Once I did a workshop in Scotland because, as a young man of 29, I was finding it difficult to make peace with my sexual desires. I received information about the workshop in Scotland and read it with interest and more than a little trepidation. In my quiet moments I felt called to attend this workshop. This desire came from my own need for healing, was suffused in peace and was intuitive. Thoughts emanating from fear that were not intuitive were telling me to run a million miles from such a workshop. I went to the workshop.

My insight was guiding me to be totally honest about my thoughts, feelings and inclinations around my sexual desires. I understood this was the only way I was going to receive healing. Being so honest about my sexual desires was going to be very difficult.

I flew from Belfast to Glasgow and then took the train all the way to a small village in northern Scotland where the workshop was to be held. I could feel the trepidation build with every mile the train travelled along its tracks. It was September, and the highlands of Scotland were extraordinarily beautiful.

I tried to distract my mind, which was doing somersaults, by gazing

out the train window as we passed through the mountains and valleys. The mountains were covered in brown and purple heather. Occasionally dark clefts of bare rock broke through the heather carpet. Although I was suffering from nervousness, underneath I felt a strange almost transcendental calm. I knew I was taking the right course of action.

I arrived in the village in the afternoon. The warm welcome I received helped calm my frazzled nerves. I could sense I was in a healing place. I felt safe. The next day groups were formed to do the workshops. I happened to find myself in a group of five women! How could I confess my thoughts and feelings around my sexuality to five women? The fear and trepidation began to rise like never before. But beneath my fear the strange calm persisted. I realized there was no going back. It was all or nothing.

Over the next few days of the workshop I confessed some of my difficulties concerning my sexuality and my sexual desires. It was a difficult experience. One of the women, who was quite young, said some unpleasant things to me. The other women were so understanding and loving. At the end of the workshop I felt really healed.

On the last night each group was invited to do a short dramatic performance to convey the feelings the workshop had released. During the dramatic performance I rose from the floor and as I did gave a deep growling scream. The fear was starting to leave.

When I went home I could not settle. I felt this energy rising inside me. My intuition was prompting me to go into the woods and let it out. That is exactly what I did. I still remember standing in the woods at night howling for all I was worth. My sexual desires never troubled me to the same extent ever again. I had been released.

I have found that expressing fear helps it leave. This is necessary because our calling will lead us to activities and decisions that will bring our fears to the surface. In this way the call changes our fear into love. Ever since I have expressed and let go of these fears, I have had more loving and gentle feelings regarding my sexuality. As a result, since this workshop, I have been able to improve my relationships with women.



UNFOLDING YOUR WINGS

If you feel fear surfacing as a result of actions you want to take but are frightened of pursuing, try experimenting with letting the fear out. Find a private place where you can do this harmlessly. By expressing your fear in this way, you will find it easier to love yourself and to move your life forward.

We will learn the best and most appropriate ways to express our fears by listening to the feelings given by inner guidance. You might like to experiment by expressing your fear in different ways. (See *Your Calling Is Elevated Through The Release Of Pain*, page 66).

Envoi

Fear, you are an illusion.
 Love, you are the only reality.
 How can I know love when I am filled with fear?
 When I am filled with fear, my reality is an illusion.
 The call knows the cure.

With its gentle promptings my calling
 Leads me right into the heart of fear.
 If I never feel terror, I can never feel love.
 Love rests on the other side of terror.
 My journey to love is through terror.
 The call...you are the signpost to my healing.
 But am I a willing traveller?



The circular gazebo is surrounded with earthen beds of freshly pruned roses. Three gardeners stoop, bobbing up and down, moving from rose bush to rose bush, pruning. Only the gentle snip, snip of pruning scissors and bird-song break the quiet. An icy wind rustles tiny green leaves on the gazebo's climbing plants. The fresh, neatly prepared roses are waiting.

Your Calling Is Elevated Through Talking

We do not need to wait helplessly for our calling to reveal itself. We can prepare to receive inner guidance by elevating our heart through talking, meditation and the release of pain. As our heart is elevated and refined we become a clear conduit for guidance. Then The Great Universal Power is able and willing to express itself through us.

To converse is to communicate directly with the source of our calling—the Creator who is present everywhere. For talking to work, for it to be powerful, it must be simple and sincere. We can use conversation to help us become an open conduit for the call, and to ask for guidance on particular issues.

For talking to help us become an open conduit to our inner guide we need to ask the highest part of ourselves for changes and improvements in our character. We must ask for a pure heart. Conversation is very flexible. We can converse spontaneously in a corridor before an important meeting, while we are out walking our dog in the park, as a regular part of our life before going to bed or when we awaken. We need to make our conversation suit us. It is very important that when we talk we are sincere. Sincere conversation will reach the Source; insincere dialogue will fall well short.



TAKING FLIGHT A Talking Exercise

As you go about your daily life, try stopping occasionally to remember and talk to the most elevated part of yourself. Try trusting your calling. This will nurture a deep and profound security within.

If you are asking for a change in your character, you need to request help with all your needed changes and then do your best to implement these changes in your character as you go about your daily life. If you converse with sincerity you will notice that it will become much easier to bring about the changes you desire.

As your character improves and you attain higher levels of personal integrity you become increasingly sensitive to your calling. Improving your character refines your heart. A pure heart opens up a conduit to the inner call. With this clear channel you receive the grace and wisdom to lead an inspired life of worthwhile service.

When I ask for guidance (from what I have referred to as my inner swan) on a particular issue, I always request answers to problems that are either current or coming over the horizon. These are issues that are important to me in my life, are close to my heart and with which I want help from the call.

Before I wrote this book, I had withdrawn from the world. I was spending a lot of time peacefully in my own at home in Belfast. I was experiencing a level of contentment I had never known. After some time being peaceful at home, I felt I needed a project for my life in retreat. The peace surrounding this feeling suggested my inner guidance was at work. This was an issue that was coming over the horizon.

That night, before going to bed, I talked to the most elevated part of myself. I requested from my heart that I would receive a project that would help me reach people and touch their lives. The next day I was sitting quietly after a long period of meditation, when I sensed that I wanted to write. I fetched some paper and began to express the words and ideas that were arriving in my mind. This was the start of the book you are reading now. I know in writing this book, whenever I need help or inspiration, I can turn to my inner mentor. This gives me a great feeling of security. I also give thanks for the help and support I am receiving. That is the power of conversation when linked to inner guidance, the beautiful radiant swan within.

Envoi

I am alone.

I am lost.

I am confused.

Talking to the most elevated part of myself,

I tell of my confusion.

I cry out from my heart.

I feel loving feelings of connection.

I ask for help.

“Please bring me clarity that I may see the way forward.

Please give me the answers I need.”

The morning stillness fills the room.

I sit quietly, listening to the ever-changing

Sounds of the city at daybreak.

When least expected, the answer comes.

I am not alone.

I am never alone.



A small flock of doves precision peck persistently. Their quick furtive movements are in sharp contrast to the stillness of the surrounding park. Jerkily they go about their gathering. One dove is still. He keeps lookout for his pecking companions. Someone passes. All doves stop and stand still. They are alert and ready. Strong sunlight bursts through cloud. One dove cautiously starts to peck. Gradually others join in. The single lookout continues cautiously.

Your Calling Speaks In Different Ways

Our calling is the optimum response. Guided actions seek out what we need to grow and are an inner response to changes within and to a changing environment. Therefore we need to be constantly on the lookout, ready to hear at any moment. Communications received may range from the soft and subtle, to the direct and overwhelming.

We need to be alert and ready to hear inner prompting because inner guidance usually communicates in soft and delicate ways. I was recently contemplating selling my house and moving to an apartment close by. This apartment was slightly farther upriver from my house and had almost exactly the same attractive river views. When I visited the apartment I felt that this could be my home. I was attracted by its tidy, clean appearance.

There would be many advantages in moving to the apartment. It would need less maintenance than my old terrace house and would be more secure, an advantage when I am away on long trips to Dublin. My mind was convinced of the benefits of the move, so I waited to see if my heart would engage and I would receive the call to move. I sensed that it was right for me to smarten up my existing home with a view to selling it. So I started to paint the outside of my house. This was an activity I was definitely being called to pursue.

I worked for eight weeks painting my house and throwing out a lot of rubbish that had collected over the years. As I did this I was still unsure what my calling was saying. After two months' work I had a clean, fresh home, but I still hesitated to place it on the open market and was not being drawn to place a bid for the apartment. Then I heard that the apartment had been let and I had missed my opportunity. I was not dis-

appointed, as you might expect; I was delighted. I felt that I was making a new start in my fresh, tidy house.

A few weeks later I discovered that the prices for apartments were at an all time high and that a number of large new developments of apartments were coming on the market. As a consequence the prices people were asking for apartments were now somewhat inflated. I discovered it was wise to wait because prices would almost certainly fall. This was unknown to me when I was considering buying the apartment.

Using my insight I came to the conclusion that I was really being called to tidy up my life and make a clean, fresh start. This did not necessarily mean I had to move house. I continued to tidy up my life now that it was clear what I was being called to do.

Although our calling usually speaks in subtle ways, it can on occasion speak with loud unmistakable authority. This has happened to me a few times in my life. I have found definite, strong communication to be significant and life-changing. I have received this type of communication after periods of quiet withdrawal. That is how I received the inspiration to write this book and create A Life Discovered (www.alifediscovered.org), the book's supporting website.



UNFOLDING YOUR WINGS

If you would like to gain inspiration for the way forward in your life, consider a period of quiet withdrawal, meditation and contemplation. You could rent a cottage in the country for a week or two and take time to be alone. Do not be tempted to fill this retreat space with busy-ness. Instead, open up to your solitude. If you wish, engage in simple tasks, like gardening, for part of the day. Do not work at finding answers. Instead live with the questions that interest you and simply trust that insight, understanding and inspiration will emerge in their own time.

I was on retreat some months ago. Before I felt called to withdraw, I was struggling with how to write the last chapter of this book. I did not know how to communicate the rewards of living by your calling. I had

already written the last chapter twice and scrapped it. Towards the end of my retreat I received powerful inspiration to write the last chapter as a myth set in ancient Celtic Ireland. Once I could see how to approach the final chapter, writing it was easy. When I asked a few friends to read the last chapter, they loved it.

I have had other powerful visions to do with my life while on retreat which are deeply meaningful, but at this point in time it feels right to keep them private. You do not need to be on retreat to experience a powerful calling. Mother Teresa received her calling to live and work among the world's poor while sitting on a train. If you nurture communication with the most elevated part of yourself and endeavour to refine your heart you can receive such life-changing inspiration at any time.

Envoi

I long to know my life's purpose.
By being still,
By listening within,
By learning to communicate with
The most elevated part of myself,
By developing my character,
By aligning my thoughts, words and deeds,
I am Being Prepared.

Then from nowhere I receive powerful inspiration.
I have discovered my life's purpose,
It is more than I could ever have hoped
And I am deeply grateful.

With you as my guide I can journey in harmony and in love.

You cost nothing and yet you bring great wealth.
You demand nothing and yet you attract my cooperation.
You need nothing and yet you give so much.



A thick tall hedge of tiny needle-like leaves, shelters the herbaceous border. Swirling puffs of wind enter between nearby trees and flow along the high hedge. Tall slender stems sense the wind's invisible dance, each red flower head rocking rhythmically to even the gentlest puff. Bees busily buzz between nearby stems of tiny lavender flowers. Each slender stem bends slightly and vibrates in response to the bees' gentle touch.

Your Calling Is Elevated Through Meditation

Meditation touches us in a deeply profound way. It is very effective in helping us purify our heart and sense our calling. Silence outwardly and inwardly helps open a conduit to inner guidance. This silence is the place from where all creativity, right action, clarity and inspired thought emanate. By meditating on our hearts, we become more sensitive to Being. Inner and outer quiet helps us know.

To be in silence is totally fulfilling.

Through meditation we develop a quiet mind. As our mind quietyens we become much more aware of the world around us. We see buds form in spring, feel dusty earth beneath our feet in summer, smell fallen leaves in autumn and hear wind blowing through trees in winter, a state of being similar to that of children. We also become more aware of our inner world—our thoughts, feelings, moods, and emotions. Messages from our body are noticed more easily. Through meditation we come to realise that we are not our thoughts, feelings, emotions, moods or body. We discover that we are the one who watches our inner and outer world. The mind is transcended. We become aware. When we are aware we always know exactly what to do and how to behave. We lead a life guided from our silent inner essence.

To discover a degree of inner silence I invite you to try the simple heart meditation below. As you practice this technique begin initially by consciously focusing on the method. If your attention wavers or you become distracted, simply return to the technique. Meditation begins with attention to the method. After a period of practice you may no longer need to focus on the method. You may feel able to drop the method and be left with pure attention. At this point your meditation experience will feel effortless. This happens when our focus is unwavering.



TAKING FLIGHT

A Simple Heart Meditation

To meditate on your heart, find a quiet place where you will be undisturbed and sit in a comfortable chair, fairly upright so you won't be tempted to fall asleep! Make sure your muscles are relaxed. Let your awareness centre on your heart. (This is located at the top of your rib cage, where the two wings of your rib cage meet, in the hollow at the centre of the chest.) Let your eyes rest gently. It is best if your eyes are held half open.

Breathe naturally and slowly through your nose, with your awareness centred on your heart. Withdraw awareness from your five senses. As you breathe in, feel that you are drawing in pure energy and as you breathe out, feel as if you are letting go of all restlessness. Now you are meditating. You should be experiencing a state of relaxed awareness. Stay in the meditation for five minutes then gradually and slowly return your awareness to the room.

You can practice this daily. In the morning before breakfast is a good time. Between 6am and 7am is the best time to have a deep meditation, because nature is still asleep and everything is quiet. You can gradually build up your commitment by adding a second meditation period in the day. Evening before tea, or just before going to bed are suitable times. You can gradually lengthen your meditation to 10, 20 and then 30 minutes.

Techniques you can add to improve your meditation:

Light A Candle

Before you start meditation light a candle and place it straight ahead of your sitting position. This creates atmosphere. I associate the candle flame with the light, wisdom and security brought to me through the inner call. Remembering the symbolism of the candle flame helps prepare me for meditation.

Wrap Yourself In A Shawl Or Blanket

This will help you feel comfortable and protected as you enter meditation. If you live in a cold climate it will also help keep you warm.

Feel Grateful And Joyful

Before you start meditating and while in your meditation try and feel an inner gratitude and inner joy. This is your true nature, even if you do not feel it much at present. Consciously feeling inner gratitude and joy while meditating will help you absorb the beneficial effects of your meditation.

Consciously Relax All Your Muscles

Start at the toes and one by one tighten and then relax each of your muscles finishing with your facial muscles. Do this before you start your meditation. This is very appropriate for people who come to their meditation in a tense agitated state. Practicing this will help you enter into meditation.

Let Your Eyelids Half-Close

While entering the meditation let your eyelids close slightly and hold them half-closed throughout the meditation. This helps you enter and stay in the meditative state. This state is different from your waking consciousness that you feel when your eyes are open and your sleeping consciousness that you feel when your eyes are closed.

Count To Twenty

Just after starting meditation, count to twenty or another suitable number, with awareness. As you do so feel your meditation deepening. This will help reduce thinking and allow you to embrace meditation.

Breathe Slowly

While in your meditation, practice breathing as slowly as possible through your nose without straining. Slow, rhythmical breathing is a powerful aid to deep meditation. Be sure to fill your lower lungs first. It helps to pause between breathing in and breathing out. In your meditation it helps to purify your heart by feeling that you are breathing in

pure energy and breathing out all restlessness. This needs to be done consciously to be effective.

Imagine A Flower Opening

When you have centred your awareness on your heart, imagine a flower opening. Allow it to open once, one petal at a time, in rhythm with your breathing. When it is fully open imagine you are that beautiful rose or sunflower. Imagine you have blossomed and you can even smell the scent. This will help open your heart. Then proceed with the next part of your meditation.

Imagine An Enlightened Person

While in your meditation hold the image of an enlightened spiritual person of great significance to you, like your favourite saint, Jesus, or Moses in your heart. This will help your aspiration and draw their meditative qualities to you.

Repeat A Sacred Or Inspirational Word

Inwardly and silently repeat a word that is personally significant and represents a quality you want in your life. Such a word might be Love or Peace. Repeat it in rhythm with your breathing. To deepen your meditation, remain focused on this word as you repeat it more softly until the word is barely present. Allow a place of infinite love and peace to fill your heart.

Alternate Imagining An Enlightened Person And Repeating An Inspirational Word

If you are a beginner and if you are having problems keeping your attention focused within while meditating, try imagining an enlightened person and then when your attention begins to wander switch to repeating an inspirational word. If your attention wanders again while repeating an inspirational word, switch back to imagining an enlightened person. This is a technique beginners can use to help keep their attention focused within during their meditation.

Imagine A Flame In Your Heart

While in your meditation imagine a flame, like a golden candle flame, in your heart. Imagining a flame is very effective in helping open your heart.

Imagine Journeying To The Depths Of The Ocean

While meditating imagine you are going deeper and deeper into your heart. Try and sense a place of great depth and stillness, like the bottom of the ocean. Alternatively try and sense an inner vibration where you are totally at One. This will take you into the depth of Being, the source of your inner call.

Imagine Yourself Connecting To Friends And Enemies

While meditating imagine that you are radiating white light that connects you with family members, friends and even enemies. Then imagine this light spreading out even further until it reaches the farthest horizon. Seek a place of inner vastness and perhaps even sense infinity.

Drop The Method!

Once if you reach a place of total inner peace (this will take practice), drop the method and simply remain in that place of total rest until your meditation is complete. This place of total inner silence is completely fulfilling. Let yourself discover infinity!

Come Out Slowly

End your meditation very slowly. To do this, open your eyes slowly and then practise gradually turning your head to look around the room while keeping your awareness centred in your heart. Take five to ten minutes to come out of the meditation. Slowly emerging from meditation is a pleasant feeling. Practicing this helps take the calmness of the meditative state into your everyday consciousness.

Engage In Quiet Simple Activity After Meditation

If you rush back into your day after completing your session you may not absorb the benefits of your meditation. Leave 10 minutes after your meditation where you engage in simple quiet activity, like sitting

still, reading an inspirational book, listening to uplifting music or quietly tidying the house.

Have Regular Daily Practice Times

Practicing at the same times every day will deepen your meditation. To be effective meditation needs to be practised daily.

Create A Meditation Space

If you create a private place to practice meditation this will help deepen your meditation, since that space will absorb the peace of your previous meditations and come to feel sacred. To decorate your private meditation space you can have a small table. If you belong to a particular religion you can place symbols from that religion that are meaningful to you on your table. Alternatively you can place symbols and images of people and places that inspire you.

Take Regular Exercise

Cycling, swimming, walking or jogging regularly will all help deepen your meditation.

Get Your Hands Dirty!

Doing things with the earth like gardening or woodland work will help deepen your meditation.

Things To Avoid While Meditating

Thinking

While you are meditating, your awareness should rest on your heart where inner peace is found, not on your mind, which is full of agitated thoughts. If you are having problems thinking too much while meditating, imagine taking the thoughts down to your heart. This will reduce their power to disturb you or will help them to disappear. It takes a lot of practice to cease having thoughts altogether while meditating. Your first aim should be to observe your thoughts as they pass through. By practicing detached observation, you are able to stay focused in meditation.

Distractions

Maybe you have an itchy nose or there may be a noisy car outside. Scratch your nose if you need to, but it is best to be aware of the distraction without reacting to it. Practicing this will assist your detachment.

Eating Before Or Immediately After Meditating

If you eat shortly before meditating you will find it more difficult to meditate. This is because your body is busy digesting your meal and it is not as easy for you to relax. If you are hungry before meditating, drink a glass of fruit juice. This will not affect your meditation. Try and leave 15 minutes free from eating after meditating. Eating straight after meditation makes it more difficult for you to absorb the beneficial effects of your meditation session.

Meditating For Too Long A Period

This is especially true if you are new to meditation. Do not be tempted to think that plunging in and practicing for long periods will be to your benefit. You will only make yourself unbalanced. It is good to extend the time you spend meditating but you need to do so gradually.

Placing Your Awareness In The Wrong Place

If you are doing heart meditations the correct position for your awareness is the heart. If you meditate with your awareness in other places without proper training you might feel unwell and unbalanced.

Leading A Frantic Lifestyle

Very high levels of daily stimulation will detract from your meditation. The daily practise of meditation will help you get on top of a stressful job or family commitments. A frantic lifestyle is to be avoided.

Drinking Too Much Tea, Coffee Or Alcohol Or Smoking Cigarettes

Any drinks with caffeine, or alcohol, or produces like cigarettes that contain nicotine, detract from your meditation. It is best not to drink or smoke these in the period before or after your meditation. You may wish to avoid these products altogether. Meditation takes us into our still, silent essence, where abiding inner peace is found. Products that

dilute mental purity will make it harder for you to enter a state of deep meditation.

You can gradually enrich your meditation experience using the above methods. I have suggested a more advanced meditation below, made up from some of the above techniques. Feel free to develop and make up your own meditation experience from the above techniques. Follow what feels right for you.



TAKING FLIGHT Using The Above Techniques To Form A More Advanced Meditation

Light a scented candle. Call in feelings of gratitude and joy. Half close your eyes, letting them rest on the candle flame ahead. Let your awareness descend to your heart. Breathe ever more slowly, counting from one to twenty with each breath. With each in breath imagine pure energy flowing into your heart. With each out breath imagine all restlessness leaving your heart. Stay with this experience for a while. Imagine a beautiful rose opening in your heart one petal at a time in rhythm with your breathing. Feel the fullness of the opened flower. Smell the scent. Stay with this experience for a while. Repeat silently and inwardly the word P...E...A...C...E. Allow this word to resonate within your heart ever more softly. Sense a deep inner peace as you do this. Stay with this experience. Slowly emerge from the meditation after 20 minutes and gradually look around the room. Take 5 minutes to sit in silence and 10 minutes to listen to some uplifting music.

Meditation Is Like Learning To Ride A Bicycle

Do you remember when you learned to ride a bicycle? At the start you had to consciously work at finding your balance and operating the controls. Then one day to your surprise everything clicked and riding your bicycle became easy and natural. Learning meditation is a bit like this. At the start you will have to consciously work at developing the meditation skill by learning to focus on your chosen method again and

again. Then one day you may find that it suddenly becomes effortless. If this does not happen do not be concerned. You will still benefit, even though you are working at meditation.

How You Can Tell If You Have Had A Good Meditation

If you have meditated correctly you will feel calm afterwards. You will feel energised and renewed. You will feel balanced and loving. If you are experienced and you have had a very good meditation, you may feel that your body has become light. You will almost feel that you can fly. Afterwards you will feel delight and joy as if someone has given you a beautiful gift. You may also feel positive and dynamic, as if you have some important work to do.

If you are feeling unbalanced it probably means you are moving ahead too quickly with your meditation. To cure this, take a break from meditation for a week or so and then return to your daily practice, but meditate for a shorter period of time than before.

Meditation May Bring up Your Pain

You may notice after meditating that you have unexplained fear or anger that surfaces from deep inside you. This happens because meditation brings up your buried emotional pain to be healed. Simply express the pain and it will leave you. Although this is a difficult aspect of meditation, you can be assured that it is by expressing your buried emotional pain that you will reach new and deeper levels of peace and become more sensitive to inner guidance, (See *Your Calling Is Elevated Through The Release of Pain*, page 66).

Enjoy experimenting with the above techniques for improving your meditation. Different techniques may suit you at different stages of growth through meditation. Feel free to adapt these techniques to suit your personal needs. It is easily possible to teach yourself meditation. Simply sense what does and does not work for you. Bear in mind that some of the above techniques need practice to become familiar. To learn you will need to persist until you get the knack of meditation and gain the peace it offers.

It is important to have a daily discipline of meditation so that you receive benefits. The best policy is to do it every day at the same time, whether you are in the mood or not, just like cleaning your teeth, unless your intuition guides you otherwise. With time the discipline of meditation becomes easy and enjoyable.

Meditation works slowly but surely. In the short term it may give you a period once or twice a day when you feel really relaxed. As months go by you may notice a calmness descending and you may also find it easier to discern feelings and impressions you are receiving from inner guidance throughout the day. If you wish to explore tuning into inner guidance, sit quietly after your meditation and become aware of feelings, images and thoughts. If you want to focus your feelings, images and thoughts on a particular subject, ask a question inwardly.

By watching our mind, not only during our sitting meditation, but also during the day, we become more aware of our anxieties and fears and discover how these cause us to react in habitual, unconscious ways to the world around us. As we continue to watch our mind working, the one who watches grows in strength, and the power fear and anxiety have over us weakens. We become adept at distinguishing between inner guidance, which comes from a place of peace, and fearful, anxious, negative and unbalanced thoughts. Eventually a day may come when the separation between the watcher and the thing watched disappears. When this happens we discover enlightenment, a state of unity and absolute peace beyond the confines of the mind.

Envoi

As I meditate I drop down into a deep inner world,
Where all is still and all is peaceful.
Akin to floating motionless at the bottom of the ocean
Where thoughts are like fish,
They pass silently by, leaving no trace.

I am Being, the source of my inner calling.



Trees, bushes and shrubs enclose the small grass-covered square. This place is a haven from the surrounding traffic and bustle. Others sense this. People gather to sit. Doves flock to graze. The spacious grass lawn has green and brown shades and is peppered with white daisies. Starlings energetically turn, climb and swoop in the sky above. All around are the growling mechanical sounds of a city at work.

Your Calling Can Increase Creativity Many Thousand Fold

In today's bustling, fast changing world, it is more important than ever to draw on our innate creativity to help us find new job opportunities, create new businesses, master new techniques and methods, and nurture new relationships. Whether you are an artist, businessperson, scientist, government employee, charity worker or politician, inner guidance can really help you with your work. That is because the call comes from an amazing source—the same source as created the stars, the clouds, the trees and the animals—the source that created you!

So whatever your problem you can listen within for an answer. You may feel your problems are huge. Maybe you have a very responsible job and you feel beset by difficulties. Your creative sense can easily solve these problems.

I remember in 1993, when I was working as a volunteer at Oxfam, (a leading charity in the UK for assisting developing countries), I felt strongly drawn to create a project for a developing country. I did not have a country in mind but I knew that if I could raise a large sum of money the project would soon appear. So I had to find a way of raising a significant amount of money without drawing on Oxfam's staff time or resources. Here was a task I really cared about, but what could I do?

I turned to the call.

That evening I went home early. As I cycled through the wet city streets, I reflected on the task ahead. How could I go about raising a large amount of money for Oxfam? I simply did not know. It was raining. The streets were busy with commuters returning from work. As I cycled up Botanic Avenue I could see people scurrying in and out of the many coffee bars, restaurants and hotels. I cycled on up the hill

and into Botanic Gardens. It was autumn. The park was resplendent in gold, brown and the kind of rustic red only found at this time of year. I felt a curious potential, as if something significant just might be possible, although I had no idea what.

After tea that evening, I retired to my office upstairs. The room was filled with the clutter associated with my everyday paperwork. I sat in my favourite chair. The clock on the wall was ticking in a regular soothing rhythm as the seconds passed by. I fell silent. I held my intension to raise money for Oxfam lovingly in my heart. I began to listen to my calling.

Initially nothing happened. Then as I continued to listen, I received the feeling that we needed help. I received the feeling that we needed a lot of help. I stayed with this feeling, not trying to change it, or alter it in any way. I simply allowed the feeling to grow and develop.

Then ideas began to form around the feeling. In my mind's eye a galaxy of ideas were swirling half formed, like a giant kaleidoscope. I simply watched as they formed, grew and died. I seemed to be drawing on my whole life experience for inspiration.

Then out of the mists of memory something began to consolidate and take shape—the milkmen of Northern Ireland! In Northern Ireland, as in the rest of the UK, milkmen deliver milk fresh every morning to family doorsteps. They visited hundreds of thousands of homes in Northern Ireland every morning. I remembered that they had run a Christmas appeal by collecting tins of food and shipping them to Eastern Europe. Could this be the help we needed? I resolved to act on my idea.



UNFOLDING YOUR WINGS

When presented with a difficult problem that is hard to solve, try retreating to a quiet place where you can relax free from interruption. Hold the problem as a question deep in your heart. Then listen within and notice any feelings, images or thoughts that form in your being. Imagine you are like a giant radio telescope dish, ready to receive even the faintest impression or piece of infor-

mation. Do not judge or assess the incoming information, simply let the feelings, images and thoughts speak to you in their own way.

A few days later I was sitting in a neat house in East Belfast with the Chairman of the Milkmen's Association. He had a very pleasant manner and received me graciously. He was sympathetic to our need and wanted to help, but he was adamant that the milkmen would not handle money. It was simply too big a security risk. I was left to go away and think of how the appeal might work without handling any money. This had to be an appeal without money! I was stumped.

In the meantime I talked to Oxfam's director in Northern Ireland about finding a suitable project for the appeal. She contacted Oxfam's head office in Oxford where they told us about a refugee crisis on the border of Zaire. A number of families had crossed the border in fear of their lives and were marooned at a railway station. They were starving and in distress.

The media were not picking up the event or the number of people involved; it seemed that many thousands of victims were not enough for a news story. These people were bereft of help. Oxfam wanted to help them but did not have the money. The head office in Oxford was delighted to learn that we were developing a fundraising venture. I really cared and felt strongly drawn to help these refugees. I felt called to take on the responsibility for raising the money.

I was told we needed to raise £50,000 for the refugee crisis. There were no staff available to help and no funds to pay for advertising the appeal. So at Oxfam's Northern Ireland Office we had to raise, in a hurry, more money than from our biggest annual appeal, with no staff time available and no available funds for the project. Such financial and time pressures are typical of many of the charities serving the developing world.

I went home to listen to my inner guidance but without success. What could I do now? I knew from previous experience of solving problems that sometimes two or more people can successfully solve difficult problems by each helping the other tune into their inner guidance.

That evening I rang an old friend who is brilliant at listening to his creative inner guidance and loves an opportunity to explore solutions to

seemingly intractable problems. We agreed to meet and discuss the problem.

A few nights later we met and had a few fruit juices together. My friend and I both really cared about raising the money for the refugees. This level of care helped us listen to our inner guidance together. We talked for most of the evening, helping and supporting each other develop our thoughts and feelings. At the end of the evening we had an idea. Why not print a glossy card with the appeal on one side and a space where new unused postage stamps could be stuck down on the other side! The glossy card would be resistant to rain and could be left with the milk bottles at the doorstep. The stamps would be unattractive to thieves, because although unused, they would have been stuck to card.

To respond to the appeal customers would simply stick unused stamps on the other side of the card and leave it out with the milk bottles the next day. We thought we could then reclaim the value of the unused stamps from the Royal Mail. We also felt the timing of this idea was perfect. Christmas was approaching, a time when people are naturally more charitable and have lots of stamps in the house for Christmas cards.



UNFOLDING YOUR WINGS

If you wish you can invite other people to help solve your problems. Working closely with others can be helpful when trying to solve difficult or complex problems. Choose friends or work colleagues to help and support you, but choose carefully. I suggest you invite intuitive people.

The only remaining piece of the jigsaw that remained was that we did not know if the Royal Mail would give us money back if we presented them with thousands of unused stamps! When I rang the Royal Mail they generously agreed to refund the value of the stamps minus a small handling charge. Hey presto, the appeal was a runner!

We had no money, but it didn't matter because the Milk Marketing Board paid for the printing of the leaflets. The appeal was run at the end of November. We were staggered by the response. Box loads of leaf-

lets covered with stamps were arriving in Oxfam's office. The last remaining problem was to recruit enough volunteers to count the value of the stamps as they came in. This proved to be no problem. Success attracts volunteers.

Within three weeks we had raised £108,000! This was £58,000 more than was needed! This meant that we could not only help the refugees, but that we had plenty left over for other urgent tasks. Quietly I gave thanks.

Today the milkmen still run this appeal at Christmas. They devote the appeal to a different emergency each year. It has raised around a million pounds for essential humanitarian aid. All this happened because we listened to the call, the radiant swan within.

Envoi

I have a problem.
It seems huge.
It seems bigger than I am.
It seems intractable.

When my problem seems intractable, it is easy to fear.
When my problem seems intractable, it is easy to doubt.
When my problem seems intractable, it is easy to tense up.

I know of something bigger than my problem.
I know of the call.
Trusting, I relax into its limitless intelligence.
Trusting, I seek inner and outer quiet.
Trusting, I learn to see with eyes of peace.

I gaze inward in wonder at a multitude of solutions
Spinning in the inner caverns of my mind.
I simply watch and wait.
More quiet.
More quiet.

The answer comes.
It has formed out of the mists of my mind,
Ideas inspired by the love in my heart.
I feel empowered and ready for action.



The large elegant conservatory is reflecting early evening's waning sunlight. A half visible world of green and terracotta is revealed inside. An indoor tree fills the central dome. On either side are brightly coloured flowers and dark green shrubs. People enter through a finely decorated arched doorway between two marble urns. Each urn, topped by small cream leafed shrubs, is set on a cubic marble podium. The glass is reflecting the setting sun like a giant multifaceted crystal.

Your Calling Is Elevated Through The Release Of Pain

If we are to become pure, strong and true, and able to live out our inner calling then our character needs to be cut and polished until it resembles a sparkling attractive crystal. To attain that inner diamond we need to release buried emotional pain. The vast majority of people and certainly those who have not explored personal development for years are full of unresolved pain. Inner pain takes the form of buried emotions such as fear, anger, bitterness, sadness, grief and sorrow. This pain festers away inside us like a sickness, sucking the joy, fun and sensitivity from our lives.

Buried pain blocks us from sensitivity to our calling and explains why so many people find it difficult to get started on a spiritual path of growth and healing. If the call is to be our guide in life and we are blocked from feeling and following its gentle inner prompting, no wonder we feel lost.



TAKING FLIGHT

A Gentle Exercise In Releasing Pain

Find somewhere quiet where you can be alone. Have a pad of paper and some coloured crayons or pens handy. Do a relaxation exercise (See Your Calling Responds To Relaxation, page 20). Recall a relationship that is causing you some emotional pain. Close your eyes and sense the buried emotional pain. Feel where it is held in your body. Try and picture it as an image in your mind. What shape does it have? What colour is it? Can

this pain be symbolised by an animal, plant or other object? Stay with these feelings and images. Slowly open your eyes and draw what you visualise. When you have finished drawing become aware of any feelings that are surfacing. Sit and feel these buried feelings surface. You may be feeling a bit raw and vulnerable. The origin of these feelings will lie much deeper than the present difficulty you have with your current troublesome relationship. If you can, recall an incident from further back in your past that may be giving rise to these feelings. You may find it difficult to sense your inner pain. If so, wait until you have an experience that brings your pain closer to the surface (like a row or vigorous disagreement with someone). Then do this exercise when your pain is closer to the surface.

Our pain is held in every cell of our body. This pain is stored from past traumas and hurts dating from adulthood, childhood and even back to our birth experience. To find freedom to be our true, authentic selves, we must release all this buried emotional pain by learning to open our heart. Our calling will help us to do this. We are taken into our pain, through our pain and out the other side into a new joy-filled life by following our calling.

Deep within, we know we have business to attend to that we are avoiding. Maybe we know we should be changing our career, forgiving a friend or confessing to a lie we told our partner. Whatever it is we are called to do, we know it is right and we know it is difficult. It is made difficult by our buried pain. We fear changing our career, we are angry and do not want to forgive our friend and we are terrified of telling our partner the truth. All of this is buried pain at work. No wonder we find it difficult to be truly authentic by having our intuitions, words and actions correspond.

By following our calling's inner prompting and attending to our unfinished business and unheeded challenges, we are taken into our pain. The art of being healed is to attend to unfinished business and to fully experience buried pain and the associated memories as they surface. So how can we release our pain, and become more authentic?

You could try the more vigorous exercise described below for the release of pain.



TAKING FLIGHT

A More Advanced Exercise In Releasing Pain

Find a private quiet space. Become aware of your feelings. Let your awareness of what you are feeling replace what you are thinking. To be successful you must replace thinking with feeling. Sense what your body wants to do and start to do it, gently at first. Maybe you are aware that you are feeling angry. Perhaps you sense that you want to beat a cushion. Get a cushion and start to slap it.

Do you sense that you would like to make a noise? Then make it—again gently at first. As you slap the cushion and growl gently you may sense there is more anger surfacing. So now start to thump the cushion and growl a bit louder. Release yourself from thinking about what you are doing and start to follow your emotions and inner inclinations. Let your movements and sounds take on a life of their own. You are becoming spontaneous. You may find yourself flying into a rage and beating the cushion to bits, followed by a fit of tears, sorrow and grief! This is all very healthy.

By expressing your buried emotions like this they are surfacing to be healed. During or after such an emotional catharsis memories and feelings from your past, including childhood memories, may surface. I always take time afterwards to lie comfortably with a blanket over me and be aware of these memories and feelings that have been locked away. By recalling old memories, and feelings associated with them, I become reconciled with my painful past and the associated pain. After merging with my past memories I then take time to feel loved and cared for.

There are a number of other techniques you can use to develop your ability to release pain.

Catch The Moment

In trying catch the moment you respond to those points in your life when you sense your buried emotions surfacing. Maybe your partner has

said something that has really hurt you and brought up anger, or maybe you have just taken on a new job and you are terrified of facing your first day at work. These moments are a precious time when it is easier for you to release pain, so make it a priority to do this, if your schedule allows. This technique is particularly good for people who are new to releasing pain and find it difficult. Catching the moment helps you, because you are releasing pain when it is near the surface and wanting to come out anyway.

Move And Breathe

This technique allows you to release pain even if you do not feel it is near the surface. Find a quiet private space. Start to breathe ever more deeply and strongly. As you breathe start to move by springing up and down on your toes and swinging your arms around. Build up into a strident rhythm of moving and breathing. After about five to ten minutes return your breathing to normal and just stand with eyes closed listening inside for any emotions that may be surfacing. This technique works because it shakes up your buried emotions and helps them to surface. Once you begin to sense your buried emotions surfacing, follow and express them as before. This technique is good for making emotional release part of your daily routine, or to help shift hard to get at emotions.

Write Spontaneously

Pick up a pen and paper, or keyboard if you prefer, and sit down and write about your painful past. Simply let the words and sentences flow. Put energy, feeling and passion into your writing. If you wish you can make your writing a purely private affair. You do not need to write to be published, or even write for others to read, so you can be as open and personal as you wish. Such writing may bring up your buried pain, which you can then release, as above.

Watch Emotionally Charged Videos

If there are films that make you feel sad, or angry, you can watch these and use them to get in touch with your buried emotions. When you feel them you can release them as before.

Listen To Emotive Music

If you have music in your collection that makes you feel sad or angry you can use this music to bring buried emotions to the surface where you can release them.

Let Go of Items Associated With Your Painful Past

Seek out items associated with your painful past and burn or dump them. You may find this brings up buried emotions, which you can then release.

Make Works Of Art That Represent Your Deep Buried Emotions

These do not have to be masterpieces; they are simply tools you can use to help buried pain to surface. Use a method you feel comfortable with. Coloured crayons, paint and clay are good. Be spontaneous. I remember when I was on an art therapy weekend once I made a clay image with sexual connotations. I was embarrassed at the time but it brought up a lot of buried emotion around my sexuality, which I could then release.

Create A Vision

Paint, sketch, write or imagine yourself as a fully functioning, powerful, peaceful, sensitive person, then allow yourself to feel a longing to be that person. This will help your buried pain surface where it can be released.

We know if we are releasing our pain effectively because we will become lost in the emotional experience and will have stopped thinking about what we are experiencing. Do not under-estimate the amount of buried pain that you have. It takes years of work to clear it. You may find, as your exploration of buried pain progresses, that more pain exists below the pain you have already cleared, like peeling off the layers of an onion. Also as time progresses, the nature of your pain may change from harsh surface pain to more profound deeper pain.

In my own life I have spent years experimenting with releasing emotional pain. A great deal of pain surfaced when I had my second mental breakdown and thought I would never be strong enough to ever work again. So much pain surfaced that I was completely disabled by it for

two years, (see *Your Healing From Adversity*, page 179 and *Your Healing From Loneliness*, page 199). This turned out to be a blessing in disguise, because when I eventually began to listen to my calling and, with its help, commit to shedding my pain, so much of it was near the surface that I was able to make good progress.



UNFOLDING YOUR WINGS

If some event in your life has brought about powerful painful emotions, this is a good opportunity to shed your pain using the above methods. It will take some time, and you may feel overwhelmed by the pain, but you will eventually emerge, renewed and full of life!

Do not underestimate the value and healing power of the above techniques. You may wish to find friends, a local support group (like an art therapy workshop), or a skilled professional facilitator who can support you with your journey into buried pain or, like me, you may feel called to journey into your pain alone.

As our pain is released, we become increasingly sensitive to inner guidance. Our life opens up, we become much more spontaneous and rely increasingly on our feelings to guide our actions. We change to feeling life as well as thinking about it.

The methods in this book and others on www.alifediscovered.org, the web site that supports this book, are all effective in helping you lead a guided life. In particular talking, meditation and the release of pain work well together as a daily discipline for increasing sensitivity within. You can mix and match these methods, as you feel inclined. You may wish to try some of the simpler methods first, like relaxation and questions.

Envoi

I am an emotional being.

I commit to feeling my buried emotions.

As I feel my emotions surface
I find ways of releasing them—harmlessly.

By releasing my pain I become more spontaneous.
By releasing my pain I become more sensitive.
By releasing my pain I am tuning in to the call.
By tuning in to my calling
I am finding the way to a new joy filled life.



The seagull flies low over the busy river bridge. A tall burly man ambles lazily along the pavement. His coat, trousers, shoes, gloves and cap are all black. He has radio ear pieces fitted to his head. A short smart man passes him unnoticed, walking in the opposite direction. His tie is red with a small blue pinprick design and his moustache is neatly clipped. He carries bags with the logo of a nearby designer store. Both men are oblivious of each other and to the seagull's call overhead.

Your Calling Helps You Succeed At Work

The frantic helter-skelter pace of the typical modern office can alienate us from one another, from our environment and from ourselves. Consequently offices are not always the most promising places for solving problems and creating supportive, productive human relationships. To be guided from within we need to be in harmony. Our ability to work together harmoniously as a team increases, and our communication improves, if we care about one another and are being supportive. Our productivity rises when we create the time and space to be guided from within. We are creating harmony by being supportive and solving problems in new and innovative ways as a result. Companies like Microsoft realise this. In Dublin they have time-out spaces in their office where their employees can go to be alone or to discuss problems informally.

You may say, "We don't have time to access inner guidance at work." When I worked as a management consultant I would bring the people who directed companies to my office once a month for three hours. At those meetings I would teach them how to solve their problems by communicating sensitively and by thinking creatively. I was teaching them how to be guided from within. Meeting once a month for three hours was sufficient to have a major impact on the strategy and success of these companies.

I had a client company which sold their product at the low-cost, low-profit end of the market. After learning the skills of inner guidance, they invented an entirely new way to market and present their product. Their improved marketing gave them confidence. They decided to price the same product they were selling at a low cost in Northern Ireland and as the second most expensive in the Republic Of Ireland.

If you have problems finding time to tune in to the call at work, I suggest you start with yourself first. You could choose to do something as simple as come into work an hour earlier on Monday mornings. An hour spent in guided contemplation before work starts is not taking up any of your existing working week. Early on Monday morning will also be a quiet time of day. I suggest you learn to listen within in any way you choose. Perhaps you could use one of five approaches outlined earlier; relaxation, questions, contemplation, talking or meditation. After a period of inner listening you may find it helpful to express what you have heard by either writing down thoughts, drawing images or talking to a colleague.

If you find your early Monday morning quiet time productive and helpful, then you could create other times during the week to listen within by consciously creating space for inner and outer quiet. If you have a private office you could inform the secretary that you do not wish to be disturbed for an hour and hang a "Please Do Not Disturb" notice on the outside of your door. It would also be helpful to find a way to prevent incoming phone calls. You will be more likely to gain the cooperation of other people if you explain why you are taking these measures. This is especially true if you have a boss or line manager.

Once you have seen the effectiveness of harnessing inner guidance to help you with your work, you may wish to extend the benefits to others in your organization. If you are the manager of a department or business you might consider making inner guidance part of your organization's business culture. Four things are needed to make inner guidance part of your business culture. Firstly, your staff needs to be trained in how to listen within. You could do this yourself using this book and the personal development opportunities on the "A Life Discovered" website as a guide. Secondly, your staff needs an environment suitable for listening within. To provide this I recommend the creation of a quiet room to be used only for inner guidance and quiet discussions to assist inner guidance. Thirdly, this room and its environment need to be properly managed. Finally, your staff needs to be encouraged to use the quiet room for the correct purpose. Please see the creation of your quiet room as a labour of love, to be enjoyed.

Once your staff has been trained and the room created, it is then essential that the use of the room be properly managed. I suggest a sec-

retary be asked to manage the occupancy of the quiet room. It should be a rule that the quiet room is only used by members of staff who wish to nurture inner guidance. I recommend that people who are not staff, and are not members of your business or department, no matter how important, do not have access to this room. This is because people who do not understand inner guidance can ruin the carefully constructed atmosphere of quiet and love.

Finally, you may have some work to do educating your newly trained staff to use the quiet room for contemplating problems and other matters. We have such an out of balance work culture that many people have it deeply engrained that to sit and not be rushing around is wasting time. They may even fear being criticized for doing nothing. You will understand what I mean if you see these tendencies in yourself, once you start taking your own quiet times.



UNFOLDING YOUR WINGS

In a rapidly changing business environment we need ways of stimulating creativity and solving problems at speed. Paradoxically we need to learn to slow down so that we can become more efficient. The techniques in this book on using the inner call to solve problems and increase creativity are very powerful. I invite you to experiment by using them to solve problems. You will soon discover their effectiveness.

When I worked as a management consultant, I used to tell my clients that 50% of my effectiveness was due to my input, but that the other 50% was because I provided a peaceful quiet room in which to meet, free from interruptions and the telephone. I'm not sure they believed me but I knew it to be true!

Envoi

I am the first.

All is quiet.

I enter the inner sanctum.

Gentle sunshine falls on the newly opened pink curtains.
The green of nature fills each corner.
The atmosphere vibrates with the old and loved.
I rest in comfort, remembering the day's tasks.
Closing my eyes I ask for help.

How can I perform these tasks?
How can I plan the day?
In the inner sanctum of the room
Resides the inner sanctum of my mind.
Images, feelings and thoughts form and dissolve.
I remain still...listening.
Slowly...slowly...the day is planned.

I emerge ready for action.



Yellow, red, pink, white, peach; the rose garden is full of colour. Air is fragrance-filled. A couple meet to enjoy the garden. They smoothly saunter between beds, engaging in quiet conversation. Occasionally the woman stops to admire a particular colour and scent. Beds resonate with buzzing, as bees and flies flit between abundant petals. A solitary white butterfly flits playfully as petals, disturbed by a passing bee, fall gently to earth.

Your Calling Helps You Understand Relationships

If marriages are to remain light and playful, then it is necessary that both partners are totally committed to loving one another. I believe that if men and women could learn to really love one another all the world's problems would be solved. I realise this is a sweeping statement, but it underlines the importance of relationships, not only for our own purposes, but also for the world at large.

The family and the home are the foundation of life and human civilization. If we are able to learn about love in the home and family, then we will have love in abundance to give to our businesses, charities and friends and to the whole of life. Unfortunately relationships are often a source of discord and friction, rather than love and understanding.

Inner guidance prompts us to love unconditionally and with dogged determination. Unconditional love loves before waiting to be loved. When we love unconditionally we pour out our love in all directions, to the hurt, the needy, the difficult and the lonely. Our partner helps us to love unconditionally. This is because our partner is at times hurt, needy, difficult and lonely. Do we stop loving them when they are like this? Not a bit. That is when we dig deep and are determined to love. We need to be able to express our love with understanding and sensitivity; otherwise our love may not have the healing effect we desire. Fortunately inner guidance is there to help.

A healthy relationship has two states—harmony and conflict. Healthy relationships are always growing. They grow when the couple share their love and they grow through conflict, because with sensitive communication and a willingness to learn, matters are eventually resolved. Unfortunately most relationships do not have this pattern. Most relationships alternate between conflict and truce. When there is conflict, matters are

not resolved and a truce develops. The outstanding issues have not gone away, because they were never resolved, and they continue to influence the relationship. If the outstanding issues continue unresolved and lack of resolution gives rise to resentment and bitterness, then it is increasingly difficult to maintain the truce. Stresses and strains appear and in extreme cases the truce breaks down and divorce results.

This need not happen.

For a relationship to succeed two things are necessary. Firstly, both partners need to be able to grow and learn from the good times together and from the inevitable conflicts. Learning from conflict restores harmony and strengthens the relationship. Secondly, both partners need to honour their inner guidance.

“How can my inner guide help me in my relationship?” I hear you ask.

In a relationship there will inevitably be conflict. Conflict results when two partners are struggling to understand a problem that faces them. Conflict situations need love, patience, sensitivity and determination; otherwise frustration can develop and communication degenerates. Before communication becomes harsh or insensitive we can gain help by saying, “I need time to think this over.”

This is the time for us to withdraw from the conflict situation to a quiet place on our own, where we can sense our inner guidance, learn from our insight and conscience and be inspired to find creative solutions.

Of course, in a busy household the children may need to be fed and the laundry done. In this case we could say, “I need time to think this over. I would like to think about what we have said this evening when I have some peace and quiet. Can I talk to you about these matters again tomorrow?”

Then in the evening we could find a quiet place to be on our own, perhaps run a hot bath, and take time to listen to our inner guidance. We can use one of the six approaches outlined earlier, (relaxation, questions, contemplation, talking, meditation and the release of pain). If there are unresolved negative emotions like anger, and resentment, these need to be expressed harmlessly outside the relationship.

We can also talk to friends, consult a book on relationships or seek help from a counsellor, but our final guide should always be our own

inner counsellor. Our external counsellor could be wrong. The book could be badly written. Our friend could be giving poor advice. Only our inner guide knows the perfect answer to our situation. Our job is to create the time, space and loving attitude so that we are able to listen to its gentle inner promptings.

Once our guidance has become clear, we are then free to return to our partner and communicate what we have learned with love, sensitivity and persistence. We may need to do this many times before we recreate harmony in a newly strengthened relationship. Our relationship has begun to grow, and so have we. (See *Your Healing From A Broken Relationship*, page 214).



UNFOLDING YOUR WINGS

Try regarding your relationship as a school and your partner as your teacher. This teacher can help you grow in love and understanding and give you opportunities to practice tuning in to and following inner guidance. Experiment by creating a space in your relationship to talk about difficult and contentious issues. Being part of an ever-deepening relationship is a very powerful opportunity to tune in and follow inner guidance. As both of you tune in you will find an exquisite sensitivity growing between you. The sensitivity you gain by being in a loving and mutually supportive relationship can then be offered to family, friends, work colleagues and the world at large.

When I was 29 I met an attractive young woman at a night-class. I got to know her and eventually plucked up my courage and asked her out. There was an indefinable something that drew me to her.

We started dating. Although I found her an attractive person, there was a side to her nature that was remote and difficult. She seemed to be alienated from life. She had ongoing conflicts at work and with her parents. She was not a happy person. I never felt really close to her. She was angry and defensive and kept me at a distance. I didn't know the real person.

I sensed that my partner had never been really loved. I felt called

to give to her unconditionally. Consequently I was the person who gave way most often when there were differences. I was the person who was the most flexible and the most giving, although on some key issues that were important to me I stubbornly held my ground even though I felt controlled and manipulated. When she hurt me with her harsh words, I let her see that I had been wounded by expressing my feelings. After going out for two months, I planned a week's holiday break in a caravan in Donegal in the northwest of Ireland.

On that holiday we spent some intimate times together. Towards the end of the holiday she began to open up to me. I began to see the real person. She told me of her hopes and fears and her despair at the emptiness of her life. We discussed her situation together. I sensed she was taking a real risk telling me these things. I suspected she had never talked to anyone else this way. I saw her vulnerability. Her beauty was revealed. I felt a great love for her; but I sensed that this was only a short relationship. I knew it was not to be a prolonged love affair. I understood from my insight that to have a prolonged love affair I needed a partnership where the giving was much more balanced.

After five days she wanted to return early from the holiday. We left the caravan and drove home to Belfast. Two weeks later she told me she had been given a job abroad. Shortly afterwards she was gone. I never heard from her again.

When I love I give and I receive. Anger and frustration have no place in my love. When I am angry and frustrated it is because I am rigid and dogmatic about getting what I want and need. When I wish to gain something for myself through my relationship I am flexible about what I can achieve and how and when I can achieve it, while at the same time being dogged and determined. This flexibility enables me to be patient and kind. My dogged determination enables me to get my needs met.

We live in a harsh and cruel world. Anger and frustration are everywhere. Maybe our boss is angry or maybe our partner is angry and frustrated. Yet as long as this person chooses to be with us it is important that we love them. This is unconditional love. They may try to control us or manipulate us. Our task is to offer up our kind but determined love again and again even if it is rejected or abused.

Unconditional love is about offering ourselves as kind and determined people in a harsh and cruel world. Such persistent, gentle love

is needed because it is so healing of both others and us. Because I have experienced healing I find I can offer up this precious healing love to everyone everywhere.

Giving simply pours out of me in a cornucopia of offerings, presents, gifts, surprises and general helpfulness. This outpouring of love enables me to attract a loving relationship and many caring friendships. I find as I do this others may respond to my love and generosity in unloving, uncaring ways.

I can find myself the target of their anger, bitterness, frustration, resentment, anxiety, and jealousy but I remain kind and determined. It is my possession of this kindness and determination in the face of rampant negative emotion, and my ability to stick to my own calling despite all manipulations, that enables love to work healing miracles. Because I am sticking to my calling it draws the other closer to their calling despite all protests.

This kind of sensitivity will help us understand our relationship. We will feel guided in what to say and when to say it. We will know when to stand up for our viewpoint, when to yield, how to find creative compromises and solutions and when it is appropriate for a relationship to end.

Through my calling to date this woman, I was learning from my insight about the type of relationship that did not work for me and consequently was becoming clearer about what a loving relationship was really like. I went on to have more successful and balanced relationships after this experience. That is the power of the call in helping us understand ourselves and love our partner.

Envoi

At times my partner is awkward.
At times my partner is difficult.
At times my partner is mean.
This is when I need inner quiet.
This is when I need to turn to the call.

You reveal to me the beauty of the flowers,

The beauty of the sky and the beauty of the angry person.

Through you I see the truth.
Through you I feel the truth.
Through you I know the truth.

For it is in

Expressing softness, that I overcome hardness,
Offering flexibility, that I overcome rigidity,
Showing determination, that I have my needs met.

I offer myself as a kind and determined person to the world.



The bed is full of spring's pink profusion, light pink, dark pink, soft pink, strong pink. Some damp flower heads droop and touch the earth where small green leaves populate places between the flowers. Each leaf is bedecked with tiny glistening drops. Bees bounce around dank flowers next to fallen pink petals scattered on brown earth.

Your Calling Can Get You Into Trouble

If we are not skilled communicators we may find our well-intentioned actions lying like fallen and scattered pink petals. When we are able to live a guided life we find, as if by magic, that we are able to meet and make intimate friendships with many people. These intimate friends, we discover, are also living guided lives. They are happy to support us. We will inevitably find that some people will resist our well-intentioned actions.

Why do some people resist the well-intentioned actions of those who are living guided lives? Everyone needs to feel secure. Feeling secure is an important human need. Some people do not know about living a guided life and the security it brings. If people do not know the security of a guided life, they find it difficult to give others the freedom to be themselves. Rather than listening to their needs and responding to those needs in a relationship of equals, they will have a tendency to cajole others into conforming to their wishes.

They feel that by exerting control over others in this way, they will be creating a secure environment for themselves. Subconsciously they are telling themselves, "If only I can manipulate the world to suit my wishes, then there will be no danger and I will feel safe."

It is hard work trying to mould the world to suit your requirements. Relating to the world in a manipulative way is very stressful. Consequently, when a person living a guided life is relating to someone who is not, then awkwardness can result. Fortunately our inner guidance will help through the difficulties ahead.

The answer to being in awkward relationships is to communicate sensitively and lovingly. We may be called to stand up for our point of view and persist in expressing it. Inner guidance comes from our whole being; therefore such persistence will always be tempered with love and under-

standing. Despite our best intentions to communicate lovingly, sometimes it doesn't work. It is at these times that our calling can get us into trouble and our well-intentioned actions are like scattered petals in the wind.

When I was 29 years old I was working as an architect in an office in Belfast. I was put in charge of the design of a family day care centre to be built in the northern part of the city quite near our office. I had an assistant, an architect my own age. He was a great help to me and I involved him in the major decisions and design developments. I appreciated his help.

During the period I was working on this project I took a break to visit Scotland. One night, while I was away, I was lying awake in my hotel room with the window open on a perfectly still, balmy, summer night, when the curtains blew open. This mysterious wind swept over my bed and I felt my spirit lifted up on a beam of white light into another realm. There I was surrounded by the loving presence of Beings of Light. While in their presence I was told to go back to Belfast and awaken people spiritually. After receiving this guidance I travelled from this realm, back down the beam of white light into my body lying at rest in the bed. At the time I did not know what to make of this experience, and it felt too personal and intimate to share with others. I returned to Belfast from my break in Scotland to continue my work.

When I returned to the project I no longer seemed satisfied with my work as an architect. I began to dream of offering work that was more personal, that could change lives. I began to dream of offering a management training course that combined creativity training with training in one to one and group communication. I even gave this imaginary course a name, Creative Action Management.

Eventually our project was successfully designed and the office was commissioned to carry out a new project, the design of accommodation for the elderly near the Mourne Mountains. This time my colleague was to lead the project and I was to be his assistant. There was a reversal of roles from the roles we had on the previous job. I was looking forward to us working together again. I felt sure we could do a wonderful design suited to the special needs of elderly people.

When the project started my colleague went to work on the design by himself. I was left sitting at my desk twiddling my thumbs. I approached

him and offered to help but he did not want it. I tried a number of times to become involved. Nothing I tried worked. I talked to our boss but he did not want to address the issue. I continued to sit at my desk and twiddle my thumbs. This went on for days. I began to feel that I was drawing a salary for doing nothing. I felt I was not doing my job and was bored.

I knew I needed to do my job. I knew I needed to earn my salary. I cared about the project I had been asked to assist with. I felt intuitively that I did not deserve to be left out. So I began to work on the project on my own to see if I could improve our design work.

Eventually, after a month working on the project, a design meeting was called with our boss. My colleague's design was discussed. Then the proposed improvements I had worked on were discussed. The fact that I had worked on improvements and presented them was an embarrassment to my boss. My colleague was irritated that I had been working on the project and had presented my improvements.

None of my improvements were accepted. I had presented them in a calm manner, although I was feeling rejected. I was seen as a trouble-maker, someone who was rocking the boat. A week later I was told there wasn't enough work for me and I was dismissed from my job.



UNFOLDING YOUR WINGS

If you get into trouble as a result of following your calling and as a result lose your job or your relationship, try and see this as a positive step that is taking you to new improved employment opportunities or a more loving relationship. In this future environment you will have greater freedom to unfold your wings and fly.

I felt a hurt at having lost my job. I had really cared and thought this had never been properly acknowledged. I decided not to apply for another architect's job. Although I felt real fear at the prospect of leaving the architecture profession, I persisted with the move because I felt called to leave. Once again I was experiencing a transcendental calm when I thought of leaving, a calm that was much deeper and more profound than my superficial fears.

Through my insight I realised there were too few opportunities in the profession to care deeply about the work I was asked to do. I felt boxed in. My sacking led me to rely more on my inner guidance and I accepted the challenge to make my dream of offering my management-training course a reality even though I had a disability. Eventually, by following my calling, I went on to be self-employed as a management consultant. My working life improved dramatically. Although this move brought a lot of fear to the surface, where it could be healed, my sense of freedom increased. I was learning to trust my inner guidance.

Envoi

I am standing up for myself.

I am attracting trouble.

I am at a dead end.

Even at a dead end the call is with me.

With the call as my companion there is no dead end.

There is only a new beginning.



This part of the woodland is less dense. Occupying the space is a giant beech trunk. It expands left then right, each branch adding to the overarching canopy. In the canopy branches divide again and again until they form a dome of small twigs growing skyward. These slender, sky hungry twigs are lined with tiny green leaves. A solitary seagull gracefully glides in the vast empty space above, magically merging movement with stillness.

Your Calling Will Help You Know

There is transcendent reality to which we all belong. This reality is hidden, but it can be known. We are shielded from this reality by a veil of worries, fears, anxieties and preoccupations. This reality is not something that can be understood by the machinations of the mind. It is something we know when we are gliding through life, magically merging movement with stillness.

I find this inner stillness by expressing love. I need to love more and more people and love them more and more intensely. This is what I am guided to do. Loving others intensely, anticipating their needs and offering myself in their service, shrinks my troublesome ego with all its worries and anxieties, opening up the vast, still space within. Once we can carry that still inner space into every situation, no matter how fraught or troubled, then we find that inner space is the doorway to knowing transcendent reality, where everything is meaningful, everything is purposeful and where we realise life is just as it needs to be.

Nature, with its perfect expression of need and response, reflects that reality. Unfortunately we are blind to the beauty around us because our minds are so confused, stressed and filled with fear.

I remember leaving a large Do It Yourself Store in South Belfast late one autumn. As I came out of the main doors and looked across the car park, my heart responded to a magnificent sight. The whole sky was lit up with the most spectacular pinks, reds and purples. A beautiful orange sun was setting on the horizon. I was awestruck. My heart filled with glorious presence.

I looked around at the other people leaving the store, to share this vision of wonder. I stood at that doorway in amazement for five minutes. Of all the people who passed by, it seemed to me that no one noticed that

magnificent sight. As they walked urgently with head bowed out of the store, I could see their faces etched with an ever-present anxiety. When I was cycling home that evening I was full of mixed emotions—great love for the beauty I had just seen, and great sadness for the state of humanity.

By loving more we are gradually healed of our fears. Our mind becomes simpler and simpler. We lose the need to rationalize and put words to everything. Then we see the world differently. We enter the present and see the world as it really is. The truth is that we are already living in paradise. It is then that we realize that the exquisite beauty of nature reflects transcendent reality, not as an idea in our head, but directly with tears running down our cheeks.

Envoi

How can I know?

By listening to the call.

By listening to the call I learn to love more and more.

By loving more I lose my fear.

By losing my fear I begin to relax.

By relaxing completely I live in the present.

By living in the present I know.



Below the trees and flowers a turquoise sea surrounds the small brown and green island. People cross by a delicate taut rope-bridge and explore the tiny, white fisherman's cottage that nestles in the only sunny alcove. The fisherman's olive green boat floats undisturbed at the foot of the cottage cleft. Shadows from surrounding cliffs cast dark patches on turquoise water. Beyond the shadows vast ocean reaches to the horizon.

Your Calling Opens Your Potential

To have a life with real potential is to have a life with limitless horizons. Many of us seem resigned to the confined, the mediocre and the mundane. Our life resembles a small garden, with a few attractive seats and some pretty flowers. Outside this garden little is known. There may be the odd visit to another garden, with its attractive seats and flowers, forming a highlight in this drudgery of an existence we call life, but the great wide vistas and the distant horizons where discoveries take place are never explored. We are too frightened of leaving the tried and tested, so we opt to live out our life in this confined little space. But does life have to be like that? Is it possible to share more openly? Is it possible to reach new and unexplored horizons? Is it possible to discover the meaning of life? Is it possible to realise our potential?

To many, such questions are irritating. But such questions persist and if I try and push them away they only persist more strongly. These questions exist not just to irritate me, but also to encourage me to meet the challenge of life, to grow and to become more than I already am. These questions are the very life-blood of the inner call. When I am called forward, it is because I am called to find the answers to these questions, not in dry intellectual argument, but by the recasting and reforming of my character, through offering my life in service, by loving more and more people and loving them more and more intensely.



UNFOLDING YOUR WINGS

If your responsibilities are keeping you from exploring your calling, try having the courage to hold on to your dreams. By

attending to your duties with love and devotion you are developing a deep and powerful patience. If you wish, while attending to your duties you could ask inner guidance to suggest a few small steps in the direction you eventually wish to travel. You may be able to take one or two of these small steps in the direction of your goal. As your responsibilities diminish you can add more steps. Then when you have more freedom to act, the patience you have gained will be very helpful in fulfilling your dreams.

A life with potential is a passionate life full of purpose and meaning, a life where we really care. If ever there was a time when the world needed people to live such a life it is now. So why not seize the moment. Listen. The inner call is calling us forward to love and to care. What is your calling? Why not follow it? It is by following our guidance, the radiant swan within, that we are empowered to realise our potential.

Envoi

I want to share more openly.
I want to know the unexplored horizon.
I want to realise the meaning of life.
There are answers.

I listen within.
I discover the first step I need to take on my journey.
I take that step and begin to explore my potential.



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Your Pass Code is **star**

Visit the home page at *www.alifediscovered.org*. Then, enter through the archway in the home page.

Full details about the website on page 292.

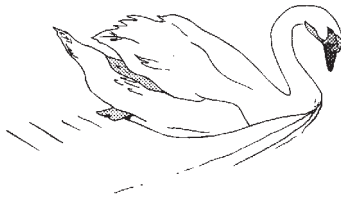
Part Two

Your Potential

“Your Potential” reveals how a life guided from within opens into an exciting destined journey. While reading this chapter you begin to sense that your personal difficulties can actually be the opening to a new joy filled life.

“We must believe we are gifted for something. And that this thing, at whatever cost, must be achieved.”

—Marie Curie



Noon

The yellow sun sends its warm rays across the lake. The water sparkles and jumps with reflected sunshine.

The swan glides to the shore to greet an elderly man passing by. He picks at bread and throws the crumbs with pinpoint accuracy in front of the swan. He is intent on throwing each crumb to exactly the right spot. Eventually he becomes bored, tucks his stick under his arm and turns to walk into the woods.

A young couple pass, half walking half trotting, engaged intently in conversation. Clouds of misty water vapour surround their faces.

The water continues to sparkle, like a tray of moving diamonds.

A seagull glides past.

There is a loud slapping of water. Silence stops. The swan is charging flat out along the lake. With wings flapping, feet running along the water and head and neck pointed towards a gap in the trees. She is intent on flight. Eventually she manages to lift her great bulk airborne. The flapping sound ceases. She lifts silently into the air and follows the watercourse through the trees.

The lake returns to its quiet murmurings, silence interspersed with birdsong. In the distance ducks playfully splash each other with water. The trees on the lakeshore are mirrored in the still surface. Specks of grass float silently by.

Great quiet has returned.

Summer Reflections

The large cormorant sits on an ocean rock, wings outstretched, drying in the strong sunshine. She gently contracts both wings to preen with her long yellow beak. Preening completed, one wing is hung out to dry, closely followed by the other. Three seagulls sit motionless, watching from where seaweed grows. The cormorant folds her wings again and turns to face the gentle breeze. Her head darts full circle, to left and right, watching. She beats her wings, tilts her head back and opens her beak to the sky.

Your Potential Embraces The Whole Of Life

When we listen to the call and act on the promptings we are given, then we are opening up an exciting new life for ourselves—a life that becomes deeply meaningful. Like the blossoming of summer we have begun to show our potential. Realising our potential is the only path that leads to liberation.

Our potential embraces the whole of life. It is not a specific teaching that we can apply in this or that part of our life, it is not a method to be practised once or twice a day—our potential embraces the whole of life. Every area of our life offers opportunities to share ourselves more deeply by a committed and joyous giving of ourselves. We create opportunities to share with others by expressing our many different talents and gifts in our marriages, families, working lives, hobbies, spiritual interests and friendships. We are healed of our fears through this profound sharing of ourselves.

Unfortunately many people do not know about their calling and their potential. Many people are stuck in a rut of their own devising. Others are following a path they believe to be their potential, like ambition for career goals or rigid adherence to a religious dogma, which are only causing them lots of stress and strain and not delivering the healing they so badly need. Their potential embraces the whole of life.

As we embrace our potential we change. How we change is very individual; we might change our career, hobbies, daily routine, marriage partner or friends. Throughout, our calling guides us in the changes we need to make and because we sense these changes intuitively, altering our

life is easy and natural. For example, my TV had been sitting practically unused in my lounge for some time. My sister needed a TV and I felt prompted to give the TV to my sister and use the money I spent on the license fee on cut flowers for the house instead. I did this and felt much better as a result.

As we seek to change, we apply will power to developing our character and pursuing our ideals. We do this because we think it will do us good. Changes of this kind always require persistent effort. After a while we often revert to the good old ways anyway. When our potential changes, it is because there has been a change of heart. When we have a change of heart, it is because we are in communion with the purity of the radiant inner swan. Our love has grown and we need never go back.

Envoi

I listen to the call.
As I listen I open up to
And follow its gentle inner promptings.
My life changes and I face new interesting challenges.
My life is going in new directions.
I have opened up to my potential.



The ocean is completely calm. Stillness is suddenly disturbed by the distant sound of wings against water. The solitary cormorant is intent on flight. Eventually she climbs and turns shoreward skimming the calm water. The sea rises rhythmically, fills a tiny rock hollow and falls spilling and tinkling to the ocean. Water sighs deeply, fills the gully and slithers seaweed. Little bubbles form. Each tiny bubble offers itself to the vast flat ocean.

Your Potential Is As Unique As You Are

If we are to offer ourselves to the limitless ocean of life then we need to acknowledge that our destiny is an individual one. There is no prescription. What is right for one person at any one time is not necessarily right for another. This is because our guided life mirrors our relationship to the call and the call speaks to each of us with a unique message.

One of the most wonderful characteristics of living a guided life is its surprise element. From the age of 12 all I wanted to be was an architect. I realized my dream and might have spent my whole working life in the profession had I not decided to follow my star. When I was 30 I changed to become a self-employed management consultant. When I was young I had never dreamed I would be a management consultant. I was genuinely surprised to find that I made a much better management consultant than architect! I went on to lecture in personal development at Queen's University. I am 44 now and I am working as an author writing this book. When I was younger I never dreamed I would ever be an author. Each time I have made a change like this, I have been delighted to find I could do the work and that I enjoy the work much more than my previous occupation. This has happened of course because I am leading a life devoted to my inner call.

For those in a relationship, each partner will have their own call and their own destiny. It is in the nature of a relationship that destinies are shared. For a successful relationship it is preferable that those parts that are shared are discussed and agreed together before being implemented. (See *Your Calling Helps You Understand Relationships* page 77).



UNFOLDING YOUR WINGS

It is an advantage to have a major project at the heart of your relationship that you both care about and to which both can contribute. For a time raising your children might be your joint project; however, this will only be a temporary phase of your marriage. There will come a time when it is healthy and natural for you both to move on. A suitable project might be the husband's, or wife's work, in which the partner could be involved in a supporting role, or a joint project like a shared business venture. If you are established in separate careers you might have a shared voluntary or charity project that means a lot to both of you. This project will create a shared destiny and will help hold things together when other more peripheral issues are in conflict.

If you want to support others in realising their potential be aware that it is misguided to try and coax others to take up this path or that cause. By cajoling people in this way you are only taking them away from their own calling. To many people coaxing others is a sign of concern and friendship. Such behaviour only reflects our own insecurities about the path we have taken in life and our lack of understanding about the call. It is preferable to draw out their interests, inclinations and skills rather than attempt to foist our ideas on them. This is especially important when we are raising our children.

Envoi

My friend seeks my advice.
 She is lost.
 "Show me my potential," she pleads.
 She seems so helpless.

It is tempting to tell her.
 She wants me to tell her,

But I know she must find the way for herself.
Despite her pleading I keep silent.

Acknowledging my silence she turns inward.
She turns inward to her calling.



A steady gentle breeze sweeps over the rocks. Three ducks float past in the slightly choppy water. The jewelled surface glints in midday sunshine. A solitary seagull soars out from the shore. He keeps low over the water, then climbs, turns and drops to land on the blue ocean. On the distant horizon the deep blue ocean meets the powder blue sky, forming a perfect straight line.

Your Potential Is Not A Method (but may employ methods from time to time)

Many people explore life in a straight line, looking to methods, systems and exercises to grow spiritually and enhance their lives. There is no harm in this provided we realize that our potential is not the method. Our potential embraces the whole of life.

Some people pray twice a day, others use rosary beads, some people eat a special diet, do yoga, or fast at certain times of the year, take vitamin pills, or go to church every Sunday. Some of these people think that because they use rosary beads or attend church on Sundays, this will change their life and lead them to salvation. This is a much too narrow view of spiritual development.

Near where I live there is a centre that teaches meditation. Many fine people attend this centre to learn meditation. I have met a number of them. Some of these people really believe that by meditating twice a day for 20 minutes their lives will be significantly transformed. They are unconcerned that their work is meaningless and their marriage is a mess—their life is going to be revolutionised by meditation alone!

I know because I was like that myself once. Years ago I suffered from extreme depression and stress. My life was so unbearable that I had to find something to relieve the pain and give me hope of a cure. In desperation I hit upon meditation as the solution. This was going to save me and bring me back to normality. I enquired in this local meditation centre in Belfast, only to be told the teacher would be away for a number of months. They didn't seem sure when he would return.

I was distraught. The method I had pinned my hopes on was unavailable. In my despair I contacted the headquarters of this meditation organisation in the UK and arranged to travel across the Irish Sea to England. Although I was very short of money at the time, I spent all my

savings staying in a bed and breakfast accommodation for a month until I was trained in their meditation method.

After the month was over I returned to Belfast and began practicing the method. After a few months practicing I could see no significant improvement. I quickly realized that to restore my health was going to be a long involved process that needed work on all fronts, not just sitting meditating twice a day. I stopped feeling desperate to find a cure and began listening to my calling, which guided me to make changes that affected many aspects of my life. Shortly after starting this life-embracing process, I gave up their meditation method in favour of a broad sweep of other approaches. (See *Your Healing From Adversity*, page 179.) I did return to and explore meditation at a later period in my life, when I had shed some of my inner pain and was feeling less distressed. Their meditation training was useful, but was not appropriate for me at the time.

There is a deep-seated desire in each of us for the quick fix, the easy option, and the simple answer. Life is complex. We need help to work it out. In order to make a significant difference we need to apply the lessons learned from our inner guidance to the whole of our lives. We need a life born of devotion to the inner call.



UNFOLDING YOUR WINGS

Methods, systems and exercises are useful provided they are part of a guided life and you are using them for as long as your intuition suggests they are useful and helpful to your personal growth. When you sense that they have had their day, it is better to drop them permanently or temporarily and move on.

Please feel free to explore methods as we follow our destiny, but be aware of their limitations. Our potential embraces the whole of life.

Envoi

As I explore my potential
I discover new exciting methods.
I search the most promising.
I find the method helpful.
I find the method interesting.
I find the method healing.
But I always remember my potential
Embraces the whole of life.



The honey hue rock shelf rests close to calm ocean water. The tide is out. Tiny encrustations cover the rock. Moisture collects in small hollows. Here limpets stubbornly cling in clusters. Small ridges radiate on each stony shell. Bright green seaweed ties itself to the tip. Around this rock shelf the calm ocean breathes gently.

Your Potential Needs To Be Understood

Many people find it difficult to stay calm and breathe gently because they are afraid of making mistakes. We are bound to make mistakes while exploring our potential. Making mistakes is natural and normal. We learn by making mistakes. If we do not learn from our mistakes then we will simply repeat the mistakes until we do learn from them.

We follow our star to learn about love. We learn about love through lessons from mistakes we make along the way. These lessons teach us to understand love, which underpins the whole of life. Understanding lessons presented while exploring our potential will also greatly help us to discern our calling. This is because the call is suffused with love. It is vital that we learn from mistakes we make while following our star. If we fail to learn then we fail to grow and we will be fruitlessly repeating outmoded patterns of behaviour.

Our potential needs to be understood.

Sometimes it has taken time for me to learn lessons I received from following my star. All my life I have felt drawn to undertaking freelance projects. Doing freelance projects has been an important part of realising my potential.

I remember when I undertook to design a glider. I always loved flying and thought I could create a better motor glider than was available on the market. The project failed.

A few years later I met an aeronautical engineer at Queens University. He had a project to design and manufacture a light aircraft. I decided to help him by producing a marketing plan to launch the project. The marketing plan got nowhere.

The following year I decided to design a new type of vehicle for developing countries. I spent 3 months on the design but the project failed to progress beyond the report stage. (See *Your Healing From Arrogance* page 165).

Why did all these projects fail? The first project failed because I didn't:

- Involve others in the project
- Gather together the necessary resources
- Acquire knowledge needed to carry out the project
- Cultivate contacts to make it a success
- Respond to a proven need
- Have a humble approach to carrying out the project

Interestingly, the second and third projects failed for exactly the same reasons. I didn't learn the lessons that were repeated from the first project. That is why these projects also failed.

I hadn't understood my life-path because I hadn't used my insight.

After the third failure I decided to take a serious look at why I was failing in my freelance projects. I reflected on my past projects and I wrote down what I had learned from the lessons they presented.

A few years later I decided to research running a business exhibition in Northern Ireland as my next freelance project. This time I decided to learn from my insight. I wrote down lessons from my three previous failed projects and made sure I had learned from those lessons.

- Involve others in the project:

I involved the Federation of Small Businesses.

- Gather together the necessary resources:

I organized major sponsorship from an international telecommunications company.

- Acquire the knowledge I needed to carry out the project:

I talked to others who had organized exhibitions.

- Cultivate contacts needed to make it a success:

I worked alongside an exhibition company with a proven track record.

- Respond to a proven need:

I carried out a questionnaire to establish that the small business community would support such an initiative (the questionnaire showed they would).

- Have a humble approach to carrying out the project:

I did not think I had all the answers. I involved others and acted as a facilitator for other people's efforts.

When the time came to decide to go ahead with the project my inner guide was absolutely clear. It said, "Do this project." We received many appreciative letters from exhibitors. It was a great success. I had learned my lessons. I could now apply what I had learned to any future freelance projects.



UNFOLDING YOUR WINGS

Experiment in fulfilling your potential by pursuing activities that you feel guided to undertake. This is the best way I know to grow as a person. If you are afraid of failure try and reduce the power of that word by seeing failure as an opportunity to learn something new. If you feel attracted to a particular activity but are afraid of the risk involved, ask your guidance to show you a simple first step where the risk is minimal.

Our potential needs to be understood. When we follow our star we will fail and we will attract lessons. These lessons will apply to every aspect of our lives including hobbies, friends, family, work and relationships. If we reflect on our failures and difficulties and learn our lessons, our understanding will grow. As a consequence we will learn about love and we will become more sensitive to the inner call.

Envoi

I am opening to my potential.
I have made a mistake.
What am I to do?

The mistake has been made. What is past is past.
How can I make the mistake into success?

I can learn from the mistake.
I can learn the lesson given from following my potential.
I can learn about love.

I learn my lesson.
My mistake is transformed into success.
Next time I know how to behave,
And I am grateful.



A great curving crescent of golden sand runs from the town to the pan rocks. The air resounds with children's laughter and lapping waves. Families are gathered in small groups to build sandcastles and sunbathe. A few have taken to the water. Dark patches of seaweed are visible through the azure blue sea. Out on the ocean a single white yacht leaves harbour. Two men shout and laugh as cold water stimulates their warm bodies.

Your Potential Needs Persistence

If we are to enjoy a swim in Ireland we have to persist, undressing on a windy beach and pressing on despite the shock to our bodies, wading deeper and deeper into cold water. Persistence is a vital quality to cultivate when following our potential. The way is difficult, especially in the early days. As we open up to our guided life we are confronted with our deepest fears. Our existing assumptions about life and how it can best be lived are fundamentally challenged.

If we don't persist, what hope have we of travelling such a journey?



UNFOLDING YOUR WINGS

Try not to engage in blind persistence. When living a guided life endeavour to understand what is happening and to divine the meaning of the lessons with which you are being presented. When you combine persistence with understanding in this way then your journey will be really fruitful.

In the example under the previous heading I had failed at three projects in a row. At this point I could have given up carrying out freelance projects. However, I knew that I was strongly drawn to freelance projects. Pursuing them was crucial to the development of my potential. It was when I combined persistence with understanding, by undertaking the fourth project differently, that I was rewarded with success.

If we fail, and respond by blaming others, cultivating a cynical attitude to life, then all progress will be halted. We will remain stuck and miserable. We need to remember that no matter how other people

behave towards us, we can control only our own behaviour. Therefore we need to persist while at the same time always remaining open to learning and to changing our responses as situations grow and develop.

This approach will benefit us in our relationships and in our projects. No energy will be wasted. All efforts at change will be directed inwards to changing ourselves. Even if others remain cynical and negative we will prosper and win through in the end. Positive energy applied with understanding and persistence is an unstoppable force. We are adopting an approach which is in harmony with the principles of evolution. Consequently we will be supported by life.



UNFOLDING YOUR WINGS

Once you begin to explore your potential and learn the lessons they offer, you will notice that a mysterious force is helping and supporting you. Things will begin to fall into place. You will experience coincidences that help your life develop. You may even start to feel a loving presence travelling with you. As you feel and experience this help, your faith will strengthen and you will feel able to take bigger risks.

Persistence is a rare quality. We will gain immeasurably by cultivating it. When I worked as a management consultant I used to be surprised at how easily professional business people would give up on a project. Sometimes they would even do all the hard bits, and yet fail to follow through to completion. I can think of marriages I know where one of the partners has been astonished to find that their spouse wants a divorce after only one year. In some cases the person didn't have it in them to persist. Consequently they failed to develop their character and to reap the rewards.

Whether we are engaged in our work, are building a better marriage or working to improve our health, persistence and understanding applied together yield amazing results.

Envoi

Exploring my potential can be tough.
Developing my potential can be hard.
Realising my potential can be long.

That is why I need to persist.

When times are rocky I dig deep.
When I dig deep I develop my character.
When I develop my character I mature as a person.

When I mature as a person
I do not complain about my destiny.
I know I am receiving help and support
From a mysterious source and I am in love with the journey.



Rocks lie like flat plates, linking pebbles to still ocean water. Their honey-coloured smooth surface is patterned with glistening green seaweed. Brown sea moss contributes colours. Beyond the rocks, shelve shallows with free-floating weed and sandy floor. The patterns in the sand echo the patterns in the weed, etched by wandering waves.

Your Potential Absorbs Unusual Happenings

As we wander the way, we are hoping to improve the quality of our lives. We quite naturally seek out relationships, work and friends who we think will make our lives happier and more fulfilling. , although we try to avoid it, eventually we are bound to encounter unusual happenings.

Unusual happenings are events that happen to us along the way, that are not of our conscious choosing and involve loss, grief and heartache. Examples include diseases, accidents, divorce, becoming bankrupt, being a victim of crime, experiencing the death of a loved one, etc.

How can we make such difficult experiences part of a fortunate life?

When we meet with unusual happenings we are inclined to experience feelings of bitterness, cynicism, self-pity, anger, resentment, and a host of other negative emotions. These are all part of a natural grief reaction.



UNFOLDING YOUR WINGS

Healing takes place when you allow these feelings to surface and be expressed. You can go into the woods and scream, do artistic drawings, write, talk to a friend or simply sit alone and cry. If you express these feelings fully they will eventually leave. (See *Your Calling Is Elevated Through The Release Of Pain*, page 66.)

This is the vale of tears. It is the way we cope with loss. It is important to remember that the vale of tears is not all pain. We open our hearts through this grieving process and we become aware of a deeper reality.

When a loved one dies, or we have a disabling accident, our favour-

able outer circumstances are shattered and we are grief-stricken. For a while we may think happiness is no longer possible. We grieve because we believe our happiness is dependent on our lives having these favourable circumstances. By fully experiencing this grief, happiness eventually returns. We then discover that our new-found happiness is more durable, because it is closer to real happiness—a happiness that is independent of our circumstances. This is one of the purposes of following our calling—to come upon happiness that is independent of our circumstances. This happiness endures, no matter what life throws at us.



UNFOLDING YOUR WINGS

You open your heart through this grief process and give birth to deeper compassion and empathy. This means you are more able to empathise with others who suffer. You will find you are more inclined to reach out and help. You are becoming more loving.

Aspects of our lives that were important may not now hold the same prominence in our mind and in our values. We are more in touch with the durable, timeless and dependable. We are more in touch with reality. We are also more sensitive to our calling.

In my own life I have been touched by two unusual happenings, schizophrenia and depression. As a result of these two diseases I lost my career, my income, my friends and my happiness. Because I eventually embraced these illnesses and worked through the grief associated with them, I became a much stronger person. I now have a new set of values, a new understanding, a new compassion and a new more durable happiness given by the beauty of the radiant swan within.

Although I did not consciously choose them, these were the most significant events to happen to me as I explored my potential. Looking back on that difficult period of my life, I can honestly say that it was a blessing in disguise. (See *Your Healing From Adversity*, page 179.)

If we embrace the feelings of loss and work through the associated

grief, unusual happenings that we encounter along the way lead us to a happiness that is independent of our circumstances.

Envoi

I am exploring my potential,
And I have had an unfortunate accident.

I am suffering loss
I am grief stricken.
I am in mourning

The grief can be held in no longer.

I express my pain.
I exorcise my loss.
I embrace my grief.

Through my grief I am healed
And find a new kind of happiness.
In my newfound happiness
I am aware of the timeless, indestructible reality,
An inner diamond,
Unaffected by the rigors of loss and decay.



Brown rock forms a sloping shore. Close to the ocean, where tidal waters touch, a million tiny, conical crustaceans cling. Seaweed clings in clumps to crevasses. Blue ocean water gently laps, flowing into small rock gullies. The water gently tinkles and gurgles. Seaweed surfaces sensuously before dropping down deep.

Your Potential Is Illogical (when judged by outer criteria)

The journey is directed from deep within. Guidance comes from the call. Inner guidance often leads us to make decisions that are not to our material advantage and are materially unproductive, but will yield spiritual fruits. When following our destiny we are often asked to give up situations that benefit us materially, so that we might gain other inner benefits like the presence of more peace and love in our lives.

Just recently, in my own life, I felt drawn to close down my business and go into retreat by withdrawing from the world and spending more time sitting quietly in my own home. I followed this guidance and as a result found great depths of inner peace and contentment. This book was also written as a result of that period of withdrawal. I have a friend who recently sold his “proper house” in a local town and moved to a mobile home so that he could fulfil his calling to live in the village community where he works. He has felt much greater levels of contentment since he has made this move. I frequent a local vegetarian café. The owner gave up a lucrative job in a major corporation to pursue his love of cooking. The café only yields a minimal income.



UNFOLDING YOUR WINGS

If you feel drawn to a project that is important to you but may yield a smaller income, trust that you will find a way to have your needs met while pursuing your project.

A materially unproductive activity I felt drawn to was to take off most days for a walkabout. When on walkabout I would wander for hours aimlessly. There was no material benefit to this walking. I was not trying to get anywhere. I was not doing it to become fit. I wasn't doing it to enjoy the scenery. I wasn't following a pre-planned route. I was just doing it. I did not know why I was doing it. In time I came to realize that going on walkabout was helping to break up my rigid ways of relating and thinking and increasing my sensitivity. We don't always have to know why we are doing something for the activity to yield benefits. What is important is that we feel guided do it.

Sitting in silence "doing nothing" is a materially unproductive activity. People in our western materialistic society find this particularly difficult to cope with. I often hear parents say to their children, "Don't just sit there—do something".

From an early age we are indoctrinated to be active "doing something." "Doing nothing" is regarded as unproductive, irrelevant and for wasters. As we progress through school, college and work, our lives are increasingly filled with things for us to do.

When I worked as a management consultant and was involved with the business community in Northern Ireland, the first thing business people would ask me was "Are you busy?" I felt an obligation to say yes, even if I wasn't. Then one day I was asked the usual question, when I was out at a convention. I wasn't particularly busy and I decided to experiment and said "No, I'm not busy at present." Well you could have heard a pin drop. The group of business people I was with did not know how to cope with my answer. They parted and drifted away. To them not being busy was a sign of failure.

Many of us reach such a state of inner compulsion, that we cannot exist for a minute without some sort of noise or other activity to distract us from our inner silence. When we are busy, engaged in activity, with no counter balancing periods of inner quiet and reflection, we are running away from our own healing. It is during periods of inner quiet that our pain and angst will surface to be healed. By sitting silently, we find that presence that makes our lives truly meaningful.

Be still and know.

Pursuing our potential is illogical, but only if judged by outer criteria. Following our potential cultivates our highest qualities. If we value our

inner world, the world where we can nurture peace, harmony, freedom and love, then pursuing our potential makes perfect sense.

Envoi

I give a loan to a friend who cannot repay it.
My other friends do not understand, but I understand.
I change to part-time work and pursue my love of sculpture.
My friends do not understand, but I understand.
I spend the day mowing my elderly neighbour's lawn.
My friends do not understand, but I understand.

The inner call guides me to live from the heart.
I am happy to oblige.



There are no waves. Sunlight picks patterns on the calm ocean. Two seagulls sit motionless on honey coloured rock. There is only gentle gurgling as still ocean laps water-bound boulders. Brown seaweed slides slowly near a single submerged rock. The rock touches the surface, radiating ripples.

Your Potential Can Be Crazy To Family And Friends (but sane to genuine friends)

As we follow our dreams the effects of our journey will ripple out and touch family and friends. It is important to have friends with whom we can share our journey. If we are new to the journey, we can be disappointed to discover that our existing friends will often not support us in the decisions we make about our life. We may even find that family and friends disagree vehemently with decisions we are making.

Most people judge the value of the decisions they make by their benefits in the outer world. Just recently, when I closed down my business to enter a quiet space and retreat from the world, some of my friends did not understand the move and a few advised against it. Such a move appeared irrational to them. That is because they did not understand my calling. My genuine friends, with whom I shared my inner life, and who are living intuitively, did understand and were supportive.



UNFOLDING YOUR WINGS

If you find your support withering in this way, endeavour to persist with your decision, provided it is guided from within, and find genuine friends who will understand and support you in the difficult decisions ahead.

As we travel the journey we will make more and more genuine friends. Close friends are people with whom we share intimacies, like our deepest fears, highest dreams, personal philosophies on life, doubts, failures and successes. Genuine friends try to help us understand our

lives, so that we are able to make the best decisions. When we do make those decisions they happily support us. Close friends are much more valuable than financial riches.

Before I started on the spiritual journey in earnest, my hobby was hang-gliding. I had a lot of hang-gliding friends. When we met we would discuss hang-gliding and nothing else. We did not share our inner life. Eventually I gave up hang-gliding and took up charity work as my hobby. When engaged in charity work I made new friends. These friends were willing to talk and share their inner world. They were also more supportive and did not try to put me down as my hang-gliding friends did. Eventually I met other friends who were also living their dream. These became my genuine friends. With these close friends I was able to share more and more of my inner world, including my doubts and insecurities. I really value friends with whom I can be intimate.

Do not be surprised if you decide to cultivate new friends as you lead a life devoted to listening to and following inner guidance. Be open to encounters and associations that arise from your new interests. By inviting genuine friends into your life, you will be able to share more of yourself and feel really supported. You will be a truly rich person, no matter what your financial circumstances.

Envoi

Dear friends—Where would we be without you?
In a harsh and cruel world
Your friendship brings softness and love.
With our close friendship we have
Understanding when we are confused,
Compassion when we are hurting,
Sympathy when we are sad
And joy when we are glad.

Dear friend, I turn to you, heart open, vulnerable,
Needing to share and you welcome me in.
I have a secret never told; you hear it.
I am in pain; you feel it.
I bring glad tidings; you are full of my joy.

Although my life may appear strange to another,
You do not reject me.
Although it may be difficult to understand,
You do not judge me.
Although I may have failed and be thought stupid by others,
You do not criticize me.
Although I may be in pain and unattractive to others,
You do not shun me.

We know that we are travelling inward to the great beyond.
We share our pain, that we may be healed.
We share our secrets that we may be forgiven.
We share our glad tidings that we may be full of joy.
We give to each other freely and without reservation.

I know that in giving to you, I am giving to myself,
For we are as one.



A beautiful pond lies ringed with rock and surrounded by ocean. The bottom is visible in strong summer sunshine. Long stringy seaweed floats close to the pond's edge. A small brown fish glides from under the seaweed. She moves with a sudden deft flick of her tail near a stony shelled crab creeping sideways. Blue sky and white cloud are reflected in the pond's gently rippled surface.

Your Potential Can Make You Feel As If You Are Lost

When we start to walk the way, we become less certain and our outer life begins to reflect that uncertainty. Old goals and ambitions may not have the same appeal. We may not feel the same connection with the career path we have chosen in life. Whether or not we live in an up-market part of town may not be so important. Getting a new car may no longer be so attractive. This is happening because we are changing our goals from outer goals concerned with amassing material wealth, to inner goals concerned with increasing our ability to experience peace, love and happiness.

As I made this move from outer to inner goals, I decided to change the plans I had for my life. I have changed my plans twice, from being an architect to a management consultant and from being a management consultant to a writer. Making these changes was rather unsettling. I needed to acknowledge that my present career path no longer satisfied me spiritually. I had to admit this before an alternative path opened. As a result I felt lost as I made the transition from one career path to another. Feeling lost for a period was an inevitable part of my transition experience.

When I took time out for healing, I felt lost for extended periods. Creating an open space for my own healing brought forward my ability to nurture and be creative. I moved from having my day structured by my job or my commitments, to having a day I could structure any way I pleased, or even had an absence of structure, by letting the day unfold without a predetermined plan.

Being in a healing space like this was highly experimental. How was I to spend my day? What activities were best? How did I know if the way I was spending my day was healing for me? I felt as if I was drifting in the

ocean without a paddle or rudder to help give me direction. Listening to my inner mentor helped me answer these questions and structure my day. I needed to remember that during these healing times my direction and purpose was inner healing. As long as I felt I was making progress with my inner healing, it did not matter that my outer life lacked direction and purpose.

During the years I spent on experimental healing I went on walk-about, allowed fears and tears to surface, nurtured myself with quiet times and read spiritually enlightening books. For most of this period I felt lost, yet deep inside I knew that what I was doing was meaningful, so I kept going. Throughout this difficult period my close friends were supporting me. I did not concern myself with the opinions of others. At that time I was a single man. If you have a partner it would be wise to gain their support if you feel drawn to enter a healing period. This could be difficult if they do not value inner healing and the spiritual life.

During my period of inner healing I often wondered if I would ever emerge from these lost feelings. The openness of healing periods and periods of transition helped me gain the trust and sensitivity I needed to become ever more dependent on inner guidance. Eventually I emerged with a new expanded sense of purpose and direction and with new, more rewarding outer world goals given by my new, more purified calling.



UNFOLDING YOUR WINGS

If you are entering a healing period or a period of transition try and embrace the unfamiliar open-ended feeling that will be arising. Ask your calling to show you new possibilities that may be found in your transition period. Do not be in a rush for answers. Periods of transition usually herald profound changes in your life. Lots of open space and inner quiet may be needed for these new possibilities to become clear.

Periods of transition and inner healing are not easy. But they are necessary if we are to go through a personal metamorphosis. During these

times we are a bit like the caterpillar retreating from the world to build a cocoon and settle inside. To the onlooker nothing seems to be happening. Then one day, to everyone's surprise, a beautiful butterfly emerges.

Envoi

I feel lost, floating in mid-ocean, rudderless.
My friends do not understand.
My family does not understand.
Sometimes I do not understand.
But I know it is right to be here.
I am casting my gaze inward towards peace, love and truth.
It is painful.

My close friends understand that pain and are there for me.
My days go by.
Their only purpose is the one I give them.
I reach inside to the gentle murmurings
From my ever-present heart.
Its voice is so soft, so delicate and so quiet.
Can I really rely on this still small voice
To carry me through to a new life?

I doubt.

But deep inside there is a knowing.
My friends doubt me but I know.
My family doubts me but I know.
I even doubt myself, yet still this inner knowing persists.
Truth lies at the heart of trust.
Emptiness harbours healing.
That is how butterflies are born.



Golden sand is pockmarked from gentle rain. Among the pockmarks, half-buried in the sand, are white, buff, orange, grey and black pebbles. They are as numerous as the stars. Their colours blend perfectly with the sand. A wavy line leads away from the small pebble area. This wandering line marks the meeting of pockmarked rain danced sand, with smooth wave washed sand. It runs for a mile.

Your Potential Can Make You Feel As If You Are Losing Control

When wandering our lifeline, we are challenged to change from outer goals, like amassing material wealth or cultivating status, to inner goals like the reformation of our character. As we make this transition we feel as if we are losing control. The truth is that we are losing control—we are letting go of our old materialistic values and increasingly listening to and following our calling. When we do this our lives become motivated by love.

Previously we may have been motivated by status, money, power, or by cultivating the good opinion of others. The plans we had for our life were a reflection of these values. When I trained and worked as an architect, I harboured a secret desire to be rich and famous. I saw architecture as a way of making my mark, gaining attention and earning lots of money. At the time I was not aware I was motivated in my career choice by these values. When I lost these values, I became more sensitive to my calling and being an architect no longer had the same appeal.

When I began to realize that architecture was no longer satisfying, I was uneasy. I felt pulled forward by a hidden inner force into an uncertain future. Rationally it made perfect sense to continue developing my architectural career. I had studied seven years to become qualified. It was secure and the prospects were good. But my heart was no longer in it. The call was guiding me towards being a freelance management consultant because I could bring forth more love in that role. As I let go of my commitment to architecture I felt a very real fear in letting go of the secure profession that I knew well but which no longer fitted my life. In letting go of my architecture career I felt as if I was losing control. Then enthusiasm grew as opportunities to get started in manage-

ment consultancy appeared. Following my inner guidance was taking me towards a new working life.

As we let go of old outmoded values and are motivated increasingly by love, we become progressively more dependent on our inner guidance for the decisions we make and the direction for our lives. Life becomes simpler. When faced with difficult decisions there is an inner knowing that we can depend on. It may take us to some strange places, but we can rely on its wisdom. I have come to trust the inner call implicitly.

Envoi

I listen, heart open.

I hear the call.

My calling is soft and persistent.

Slowly it wears down my stubborn attachment

To all that is not love.

Like water flowing around a boulder in mid-stream.

I am that boulder.

For years I have sat immovable.

I feel the soft water.

Slowly it is washing away my grip.

I feel as if I am losing control.

Then the flood comes and I am washed away.

Now I am flowing with the water.

Now I am living out of love.

Now love has control...and I am free.



Wisps of high cirrus cloud are painted against the milk blue sky. Between the shore and Rathlin Island a line of small grey and white clouds hangs motionless, close to calm ocean water. On the horizon across the Irish Sea, fluffy white clouds are towering. The cloud base lies low, just above the land. The towering tops reach into the blue in great boiling columns of cotton white.

Your Potential Can Be Frightening

Like watching thunderclouds form, feeling lost and out of control can be frightening. The old certainties are gone. They will never come back. We can no longer rely on our old goals. We need to learn to have faith and to trust. This is especially true when nothing seems fixed or certain.

Being lost and out of control are means adopted by the call to bring our fears to the surface. When our fears surface they leave us and we receive healing. We may have quite understandable worries. We may be worried that our partner disagrees with what we are doing, or that our family members do not understand, or we may be worried that we will run out of money. Following our potential will challenge us to trust in a fundamental way. Trust stops being a concept in our heads and becomes a central feature of the way we run our lives.

As I followed my potential I had money worries. I went for long periods without working and had to rely on small amounts of money I received from the government. I worried because I did not seem to be achieving anything (I was achieving inwardly, of course, but this was not always obvious). I was worried that I no longer had any status in society (this was good for me and taught me not to be dependent on status for my self-esteem). I also worried if I would ever come out of my healing period (this taught me to have patience).

In the end I did not so much move away from feeling lost and out of control, as enter fully into it as a permanent state. I adapted to it. I felt comfortable. In that settled state I discovered freedom, true love and security. I had found a life centred in love and in the call. I had gone beyond my fears and was at peace.

Envoi

I have fears...inside.
They are buried deep.
How can I be free of my fear?
How can I live a life free of anxiety?

I follow my potential in trust.
As I travel the inner journey my fears surface.
I never knew I had such fear.
No wonder I was stubborn.
No wonder I was arrogant.
No wonder I could not love.

Like a volcano my fears surface and I am terrified.
Anger, jealousy, bitterness, resentment, and great sadness
All pour out.
It comes from fear.
I am emptying all negativity.
What do I have left?

Love. Only love,

...and great peace.



The rain stops. Land and ocean reawaken. Over the ocean sky opens to the blue beyond. Sunlight picks out the white, green and brown cliffs of Rathlin Island. A cloud's dark grey shadow moves imperceptibly across these colourful cliffs. The air sings with cascading sounds of breakers on the beach, as the blue ocean sparkles and shimmers in the distance.

Your Potential Is Full Of Joy

I am just back from my morning walk along the beach. My face is glowing with the warm fresh air. The ocean was overflowing with beauty in the July sunshine.

I was amazed at a bird which simply dropped out of the upper branch of a beach side tree and fell in a controlled swoop, opening its wings fully before landing. She was an interesting colour, blue grey and black. She was with her mate. The mate found a piece of shiny silver wrapping paper, picked it up and hopped over a tuft of grass to examine his new discovery.

How many of us love life enough to find joy in simple things, the flight of a bird, the smile on a friend's face, the silvery whiteness of frost on the grass? Most of us are far too preoccupied.

Many people look forward to find joy. They look for joy in holidays, dates, parties, a new car or Christmas day. Of course we can and do find joy in these, but joy can be much more than an occasional experience, interspersed with drabness. Joy is all around.

Exploring our potential helps us to go beyond our pre-occupations. Following our star helps to heal our worries, anxieties, fears, ambitions, strivings, comparisons, addictions and our continual need to turn everything over in our minds. When we go beyond all this we see things as they truly are, in all their glorious simplicity.



UNFOLDING YOUR WINGS

Joy is your natural state.
Try to believe this and to aspire to this.

Joy is the natural state for human beings. Joy is an inevitable outcome of healing. We know we are making progress when we find a spontaneous joy arising in our hearts for no apparent reason. This is the joy that has no cause.

This is the joy that is present when we have love in our hearts.

Envoi

Today I feel an expansive overpowering joy
That resides in my heart.

I was not given a present.
I did not go on holiday.
I did not meet my lover.

This joy is a mystery,
For it knows no cause
Other than the love I carry within.
A love that blossoms
As I endeavour to explore my potential.



Along the coast Fair Head stands majestic in the afternoon sunshine. Even at this distance great boulders are visible on the headland's steep sea slope. Above the slope a serrated sea cliff pierces the sky. In places the headland is covered with gleaming green and outcrops of rusted rock. Far off, beyond the sea cliffs, a distant dog barks suddenly.

Your Potential Is Full Of Surprises

When following our potential we notice that our daily life is filled with an increasing number of surprises. Before, much of the day may have seemed rather drab. Now we can't wait to get out of bed to see what the day will bring.

As we listen to and follow the inner call, our lives are filling up with surprises, because we are becoming more open, flexible, discerning and creative. We start to attract new happenings. We discover we have new talents. We receive new gifts. Friends make surprise visits more often. We make new discoveries. We are introduced to new interesting people. We express ourselves creatively in new ways. We reach new levels of understanding. These new happenings add a great richness and diversity to our lives. These surprise happenings also hold great personal meaning.

In addition to attracting new happenings we also notice many more existing happenings, like the flight of a gull, or the bark of a dog. These happenings are very interesting and surprising. We would have completely missed them in earlier times.

When I began to live intuitively I discovered an abundance of new talents. Some formed gradually and some arose almost instantly from nowhere, almost fully formed. I discovered to my surprise, that I had a talent for helping business people. This was all the more surprising because I had no background in business. I discovered I was good at working with groups of people who were gathered together in teams or in committees. I discovered I was a good counsellor to my friends. I was surprised to discover that I could write. It was especially surprising to discover that I could write poetic prose. I had never tried it before. I discovered that I really enjoyed woodland work and working with trees.

I also began to receive increasing numbers of surprise gifts, not just

