

September 2005

Volume 5, No. 3

BOOK REVIEWS

Joseph M. Felser, *The Way Back to Paradise: Restoring the Balance between Magic and Reason*, Charlottesville, VA: Hampton Roads Publishing Company 2005 225 pp \$14.95 16pp Refs.

Joseph Felser is a wise teacher of philosophy who does not buy into the rigid modern pursuit of reasoned examinations of our place in the universe, particularly when it comes to questions of religion. He connects with nature to know his place in the universe, observing that we all know how to do this – though many in our culture have neglected this connection for so long that we have forgotten we are ourselves a part of nature. He calls this a state of ‘metaphysical malnutrition’ (p. 50) and observed that earlier in his life, when he could not even identify the source of his inner hunger, he tended to satisfy himself with more familiar junk foods.

Reason is no more a mere adding machine or a logical scalpel than a gardener is her shovel or rake. These are only (some) tools used by reason, and not reason as such. To think otherwise, I suggest is a fatal mistake. [...] "Reason," said Joseph Campbell, "has to do with finding the ground of being and the fundamental structuring order of the universe." In other words, as I assume in this book, reason is the faculty of asking ultimate questions, of seeing things as a whole, of making real--not, as Hume thought, spurious--connections. (xxv)

It is through being in the flow of beingness that we connect with our spirituality.

Paradise is not the garden of bliss, but rather, the bliss of gardening.... Paradise, I contend, is the harmonizing of magic and reason. (xxii)

... traditional religions and even many esoteric spiritual systems seek to cloud our perception of the invisible dimension with distorting fears, illusions, and superstitions. They do this in order to stage-manage and control not only the magic itself, but also the questing intelligence to which our innate psychic sensitivity gives birth. They condemn the psychic as demonic or, at best, as a distraction from "true" spirituality...

As for science, it, along with its offspring technology, continues to pretend that our reason is utterly self-generating and self-supporting, like a tree growing out of thin air rather than from a seed buried in the rich earth. This idea would truly be magical if the image weren't so laughably absurd. We can repress our sympathy with nature, but we cannot destroy it. Repressed, it exacts its revenge, threatening us with our own doom. (xxviii)

Suggesting that he is a canary stuck in a mine – along with you and me – he announces that he is singing out a warning about our insensitivity to the degradation of the world around us “If I can do it, so can you. Paradise is only a pain away.” (xxxii)

Felser advocates for spiritual awareness that is alive and questioning, for it is through the questing and inquiry that one comes into real, personal awareness of the transcendent.

Felser has a wonderful gift for presenting complex concepts through simple imagery and metaphors, helping the reader experience some of the delight in nature and in the transpersonal that he himself obviously has developed.

But what if, as the Sioux philosopher Vine Deloria Jr. says (from the perspective of that older, outlawed animist point of view), "the world is constantly creating itself because everything is alive and making choices that determine the future" ? Then creation (or evolution) is not something essentially over and done with; it's happening right now, all the time, in ways we can neither predict nor control, nor perhaps even comprehend. Everything, in other words, is conscious, alive, and free. Creation itself is "heretical"! " (p. 74-75)

This book is a thoughtful and enjoyable read, with stimulating quotes that open doors into further reading.

Bruce H. Lipton. *The Biology of Belief: Unleashing the Power of Consciousness, Matter and Miracles*, Santa Rosa, CA: Mountain of Love/ Elite Books 2005 224 pp 5 pp Refs. HB \$25.00

Bruce Lipton was a tenured Associate Professor of Anatomy at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine – but was deeply unhappy with his job and his life. He had begun his career as a cell biologist with great enthusiasm, excited to be working at the leading edge of science. However, he was totally stressed by having had to care for his father while he died of cancer, at the same time struggling to maintain his teaching schedule while writing grants to continue his research program, and dealing with an economically devastating divorce. He abruptly left to take a sabbatical to work in a medical school in the Caribbean.

He became fascinated by the cooperation between the various plant and animal inhabitants of his island. Gradually he came to see that cooperation appeared to be the guiding pattern of nature, rather than competition, as Darwin had proposed and as had been taught within western science for decades. This was unacceptable to his colleagues when he returned to his professorial duties, so he resigned to pursue a life-long dream of playing in a rock and roll band.

When he discovered he was actually better at teaching and research than at musical performances, he returned to his former occupation. He published several papers confirming his alternative views of biology, showing that DNA was not the sole control mechanism for life processes, but then abandoned for good his position as a cellular biologist.

In a book that is peppered with wry humor, Lipton engagingly shares his understanding of the interconnectedness of the universe, building on theories derived from:

Cellular biology –

You may consider yourself an individual, but as a cell biologist I can tell you that you are in truth a cooperative community of approximately 50 trillion single-celled citizens. Almost all of the cells that make up your body are amoeba-like, individual organisms that have evolved a cooperative strategy for their mutual survival. Reduced to basic terms, human beings are simply the consequence of 'collective amoebic consciousness.' As a nation reflects the traits of its citizens, our human-ness must reflect the basic nature of our cellular communities. (p. 27)

Lipton points out that if we examine various organisms – as diverse as worms, fish and humans - the similarities between them are far greater than the differences. The diversity in form and function in organisms cannot be accounted for simply through genetic differences.

Some of the most important contributions of this book are Lipton's suggestions of alternative ways of explaining genetics. Drawing on Lamarckian theory, supported in research that Lipton summarizes, we begin to see how evolution may be a co-creative endeavor that includes individual organisms, collective needs of the environment – which can include all of creation – and not excluding Darwinian selection,

Quantum physics –

... the laws of quantum physics, not Newtonian laws, control a molecule's life-generating movements... (p. 110)

Bioenergy medicine –

... Energetic signaling mechanisms such as electromagnetic frequencies are a hundred times more efficient in relaying environmental information than physical signals such as hormones, neurotransmitters, growth factors, etc. (p. 111-112)

Common sense –

You are personally responsible for everything in your life, *once you become aware* that you are personally responsible for everything in your life. One cannot be "guilty" of being a poor parent unless one is already aware of... [health-related] information and disregards it. Once you become aware of this information, you can begin to apply it to reprogram your behavior. (p. 178)

C. Stephen Byrum, Ph.D. & Leland Kaiser, Ph.D., *Spirit for Greatness: Spiritual Dimensions of Organizations and Their Leadership*. Littleton, MA: Tapestry Press 2004. 651 pp \$25.

How can strong people become stronger? How can good organizations achieve excellence? C. Stephen Byrum, Ph.D., organizational and leadership consultant, and Leland Kaiser, Ph.D., healthcare futurist, share their guidelines in *Spirit for Greatness*. The book is organized around Memorial Hermann's core values of Vision, Ethics, Trust, and Spirituality, which are universally applicable to other organizations. These principles are gleaned from the Memorial Hermann Healthcare System's 'Spiritual Leadership Institute,' initiated in 1997.

The authors begin with the premise that ethical conduct, defined as right action even when no one is watching, is essential for transformational leadership. Adhering to this principle, it is imperative for organizations to encourage the spiritual growth and moral tone of all staff members, while preserving their religious autonomy, in order to implement the vision of such powerful leadership.

Byrum illustrates this point with the story of a married supervisor who, despite professing 'Bible belt' religious traditions, openly carried on an extramarital affair with a female co-worker. His actions not only led to gossip but undermined the productivity and quality of the whole work environment. Other workers believed if the boss could ignore the rules they could also. Their loss of respect for him translated into reduced work performance and overall poor morale.

Conversely, organizations built on mutual confidence, respect, and trust are strong. These foster authentic listening which leads to genuine consensus, but only when rooted in true integrity and accountability. A strong organization fosters what the authors call a good place, which compensates, potentiates, facilitates, provides opportunities, and rewards those who work there.

If an organization is to manifest power and beauty, it must nurture these qualities of a good place. The authors ask us to take an honest look at how good we want to be and how willing we are to stretch beyond adequacy to rich goodness, which they equate with greatness.

Kaiser considers this challenging question in his profound, yet elegantly clear, description of each individual's spiritual journey. This continuously unfolding path leads us through our life's circumstances and events, constantly mirroring to us our inner strengths and weaknesses. He asks us to look at where we are on this path, to understand the role of unresolved issues which are contributing to our present circumstances, and to look ahead to where we and our organizations want to be.

He asserts that truly transformational leaders face and use their inner conflicts to achieve greater creativity in their organizations. Such leaders thrive on chaos, using intuition and possibility thinking to vision the best future. According to Kaiser, "What looks like chaos is actually a large pattern beyond your perception." He challenges us to overcome our fear of transformation which may prevent us from reaching our true spiritual and leadership potential.

In order to do this we must honestly face our shadow – that part of ourselves which we would rather not examine, where we have buried our angers, hurts, and fears. Worry, anger, envy, jealousy, depression, drugs, excessive sexuality, or any other negative addictions will drain power and greatness from us. Those negative ego traits in our shadow tend to crystallize in the organizations around us, limiting their energy and resources.

It is in our best interest to consider the spiritual principles which these authors are mentoring in their book. They define spirituality as 'caring' in its most universal sense, emphasizing the avoidance of confusion between spirituality and organized religion. They caution against infusing the workplace with any one particular religious perspective or practice.

The greatest value of this book, together with the self-study program of which it is a part, is to provide a template for individual and organizational caring. If the principles of Spiritual Leadership put forth in this authoritative work could be implemented by even a small percentage of contemporary organizations, our whole culture would be elevated to a higher standard of greatness.

Reviewed by Rev. Cay Randall-May, Ph.D.
Author of "The Intuitive Career" (2005, CayMay Press)

Matthew Smith. *The Soul Knows: A Path of Listening*. Bowen Isle, BC, Canada: Matthew Smith 2004. 141 pp US\$15.80, Can\$19.99, EUR13.00, £9.01
<http://www.trafford.com/robots/04-0962.html> matthew64@shaw.ca

This book deserves acknowledgment as a true gem in the literature on personal spiritual awareness and spiritual development. Matthew Smith's writing is somewhere between Robert Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (but several steps more likely to touch your heart), and Stephen Levine's books, such as *Who Dies*.

Smith presents brief vignettes from his own life and his encounters with others on their paths of exploring the meanings of existence – consciously or unconsciously. "Of the many gifts of the soul, the one gift that has occupied my interest these past twenty years of inquiry has been the gift of *soul meaning*: the soul's interpretation of each person, experience or event as it fits into the overall landscape of one's soul path." (p. ix) He follows each with discussions of the lessons he learned – cognitively, emotionally, and connecting with body and spirit. He rounds out each one with the 'soul journal' message he received during and following the lessons.

Smith's style is riveting in its poetic imagery, open explorations of inner psychological life challenges, and spiritual insights that surface from experiences with other people, and with his own shadow.

For instance, he describes his brother, John, who was a witty, entertaining, very gifted actor from early childhood. Sadly, as John grew up, he could not connect with his own essence, could not find *himself* outside of the roles he played. He ended up suiciding. Smith worked through his grief, connecting during this process with his brother's spirit. Smith comes away with profoundly helpful insights – here, as with each of the vignettes he shares in this sparkling book.

Acting fosters the personality and keeps the pure soul unrecognized and without a voice. It is necessary from time to time for you to exit the stage, return to a state of quiet, and reclaim the soul's voice, that it might infuse your thoughts, and influence your choices.

To allow your personality to surrender to the soul, as it must if you wish to become a spiritual being, it is necessary to be very still, very quiet, so that you will hear the current of soft awareness that flows beneath the current of louder awareness that drives and influences your personality. It is this soft awareness that you are.

The personality's voice, the ego, will put up a resistance to your idea to surrender. Love it into submission. Only love can control the ego, for love is the ultimate voice. Every cell of your body responds to love. Everything in this magnificent Creation responds to love. It is the universal key to understanding consciousness. (p. 23-24)

I strongly resonate with Smith's advice about inviting intuition to speak about the rightness and wrongness of therapies and remedies that we may consider, to help us deal with life's challenges.

In all healing allow yourself to be guided to those references and remedies that resonate with you, but in all cases make them pass the test of placing them as an offering before your inner sanctuary where your soul resides. It is only in the light of the

soul that any approach will be validated as right for you [...] Nothing is wrong, except when it is not right for you. (p. 37)

Smith extends his personal lessons to suggest insights into societal lessons:

...The shift from a Piscean to an Aquarian age. Of the many variables that are affecting us is in this shift, the one that strikes me as being most present in my life is the shift from an external to an internal referencing. No government, organization or corporation is immune from the effects of this shift. Nothing more deeply confronts the corporate bottom line than the heart that speaks the words, "Something tells me that this decision is not right." In time, I believe, the souls of people will take on a currency that will surpass the unceasing need for profit. (p. 7-8.)

This book is a lovely, leisurely read – inviting us to reflect on the web of our own existence and the lessons that the universe choreographs, with the participation of our higher selves, for our spiritual growth. Another one of the stories mentions a visit to a chocolate store, for a taste of a sweet made by a particular confectioner that has stood the test of time – reliable and unchanged, and the personal and spiritual lessons of that simple search. These stories have that flavor: a delectable collection of literary offerings, to be savored one at a time, when you are in the mood for a heartwarming taste of life that will sweeten your own awareness of your connection with the infinite.

Interspersed with the text are memorable quotes, such as:

*When we walk to the edge of all the light we have
and take a step into the darkness of the unknown,
we must believe one of two things will happen—there
will be something SOLID for us to stand on or we will
be taught how to fly.*

– Patrick Overton. (p. 43)

*Intuition comes as a certain feeling or a still voice....
If you use your intuition, you will know the very
purpose for which you exist in this world;
and when you find that, you find happiness.*

– Paramahansa Yogananda (p. 77)

*Letting go of the need to always understand is one of the most powerful steps toward
living a soulful life. Moving from know-it-all to spiritual trust is the bridge that carries you
into soulful spirituality.*

– Bradford Keeney (p. 107)

*Let the mountain speak through you. Let the bird speak through you. Let the river speak
through you. Give them voice and in the deepest caves of understanding you will hear a
song. It sings of your oneness, blessed in the eternal fragments of your mind. Let no
separation come between you and nature and you will become the guide who will
always find his way home.*

– Matthew Smith (p. 113)

Jeffrey Keen. *Consciousness, Intent, and the Structure of the Universe*, Victoria: Trafford/Jeffrey Keen 2005. 310 pp **US\$23.99**, C\$29.99, EUR19.50, £13.50 3 pp. Refs
Orders: <http://www.trafford.com/robots/04-2320.html>

Jeffrey Keen has an Honors degree in Physics and Mathematics from Imperial College, London University and is currently Chairman and Managing Director of Swisher Hygiene UK Ltd. While he was initially a skeptic about psychic phenomena such as dowsing, "he now accepts that science is not infallible and that there is enormous scope in investigating non-mainstream science." He has been studying dowsing and other aspects of consciousness for 20 years.

Keen's book is written for educated dowzers, researchers in psi, and scientists interested to know whether there are any systematic, lawful observations about dowsing. With Keen's book, the answer is a resounding 'Yes!' Keen has meticulously studied dowsed impressions of various objects such as crystals and ordinary rocks, plants and humans. He reports fascinating notes on the energy fields around single objects, paired objects, and groups of similar objects. Having explored dowsing for several decades, this reviewer was both delighted and dismayed at some of these notes.

He notes that crystals and other objects become charged with dowsable energy through being in the sun and being located over places with positive earth energies. Their energies are discharged or drained by being in a dark place, being located over places with negative earth energies, or being handled by humans.

The greater portion of the book is devoted to studies of regularly, repeatably dowsed observations of the intuitively perceived fields around various objects. With meticulous detail, Keen catalogues and classifies various dowsable fields and lines around objects, noting how they may vary under different circumstances, such as when pairs or circles of objects are present. Keen identifies seven distinct layers of energy fields around inanimate and animate objects. These fields attenuate with distance, and are perceptible only to a finite distance from the object. He also finds dowsable lines that project from objects in straight lines with no apparent attenuation. While these observations alone make the book worthwhile reading, many further findings open doorways into fascinating further studies.

Two items are of particular interest to practitioners and researchers of spiritual healing. First, Keen identifies seven dowsable bands that are distributed vertically on any object, be it animate or inanimate. This suggests that the seven major chakras present along the vertical axis of the human body may be special cases of sub-fields that are more universally present than has been acknowledged previously.

Second, Keen found that mental projections of images are dowsable from any distance. These remain permanently situated approximately where they are 'planted' but sometimes may drift Westward over time. This reviewer would see this as a caution to healers and medical intuitives. A mental construct of illness (as in an anxiety about having an illness that is not actually present) might be perceived as an actual illness.

Keen also discusses briefly the apparent awareness that prehistoric man had of dowsable phenomena.

Although pre-historic man may not have known about logarithms or graphs, he certainly comprehended this Field Strength-Mass law. Somehow, he not only sensed this dowsable Field Strength but also was sufficiently motivated to implement it by building such feats as Avebury and Stonehenge. He replaced lower field strength wood henges with as large stone megaliths masses as possible to generate maximum dowsable Field Strength! (p. 107.)

Keen acknowledges that people may identify these energies through tactile sensations, as a visual aura, or through kinesiology, but feels that a dowsing pendulum offers the most reliable means for assessing these. (See more on kinesiology below.)

Keen acknowledges that the person is actually the instrument, but writes as though anyone can sense these fields and reproduce his findings. Generally accepted observations of my own and of other dowsers I've spoken with (abbreviated below as "generally accepted observations") indicate that the instrument is not nearly as important in distinguishing dowsable fields as the sensitivity of the person holding the instrument. While nearly everyone appears to have a modicum of psi/intuitive/dowsing abilities, people gifted naturally and those who practice diligently to develop their abilities are far more sensitive to these fields. Sensitivity may vary, waxing and waning over time and under various physical and psychological conditions, even in the most gifted.

Keen suggests that a standard for strength of a dowsed field could be established as follows:

The field strength of 100 is the field strength produced by a flat face of a cube of pure quartz crystal, having a mass of 100 grams. (This quartz standard needs to be fully charged, placed in isolation, and not affected by local Earth Energies or local dowsing influences.) (p. 107)

Clearly, each person would have to establish her or his own scale for field strength. This would, however, vary over time and under various circumstances.

I am also troubled by the suggestion that a quartz crystal can be used as a standard for comparison. Generally accepted observations indicate that quartz or any other material is not a standard commodity in terms of dowsable energies. Each crystal appears (to sensitive dowsers/ intuitives) to have its unique properties. Keen acknowledges that any object may be charged and discharged under various conditions. It would be difficult to know whether a crystal that is fully charged is equivalent to another crystal.

Here are a few simple observations:

... hard igneous crystalline objects, such as quartz, produce a greater field strength than marble, wood, fossils, or clay pots. To achieve a field strength of 50 requires a wooden log of about 2,700 grams... or a quartz stone of 16 grams...." (p. 102-103)

Objects perceived to be emitting dowsable fields have been identified, as well as the sophisticated method of detection by asking the 'correct' questions. For example, it is possible to isolate the man-made bionic fields, created by the builders of prehistoric constructions, that have been superimposed on a site, from the "natural" dowsable energies of the stones employed, and from the local environment itself. (p. 144)

The initial dowsing impression is that each band is a few inches thick giving the impression of seven shells. However, more detailed measurements (e.g., using a needle as a pointer and the mind's eye to detect a dowsing signal rather than relying on the slow response of rods or pendulums) confirm that sharp boundaries are being detected. (p. 150)

Keen believes that kinesiology only reflects negative energies (p. 90). This is totally untrue. Kinesiology may reflect the influence of negative energies, as when muscles are weakened in the presence of negative environmental energies or in response to negative thoughts. They may equally reflect positive energies and thoughts, as when muscles reflect healing environmental energies and positive awarenesses. In fact, kinesiology can be used as another form of dowsing – with the strength or weakness of muscles reflecting *yes* or *no* answers to questions, just as a pendulum or dowsing rod can reflect the minute, unconscious muscle movements of the dowser.

Keen's strengths in this book are in his meticulous measurements of dowsable phenomena and his start at categorizing their regular and lawful nature. His weaknesses appear to be in limited awareness of healing and intuitive perceptions outside of dowsing.

Deepak Chopra. *The Spontaneous Fulfillment of Desire: Harnessing the Infinite Power of Coincidence*, New York: Harmony Books 2003 302 ppPB \$14.00.

Deepak Chopra reviews the evidence that confirms we are all linked together in a web of consciousness. Going well beyond this basic fact, he weaves a marvelous thesis suggesting that there are no coincidences. Every single event is pregnant with meaning. The challenge is to open ourselves to become aware of the invitations in what appear to be coincidences – to waken to our participation in the web of ongoing creation.

When we learn to live from the level of the soul, many things happen. We become aware of the exquisite patterns and synchronous rhythms that govern all life. We understand the lifetimes of memory and experience that have molded us into the people we are today. Fearfulness and anxiety fall away as we stand in wonder observing the world as it unfolds. We notice the web of coincidence that surrounds us, and we realize that there is meaning in even the smallest events. We discover that by applying attention and intention to these coincidences, we can create specific outcomes in our lives. We connect with everyone and everything in the universe, and recognize the spirit that unites us all. We unveil the wondrousness that is hidden deep inside us and revel in our newfound glory. We consciously shape our destinies into the limitlessly creative expressions they were meant to be, and by doing so we live out our most profound dreams, moving closer to enlightenment.

This is the miracle of synchrodestiny. (p. 28-29)

The more we are in the flow of the universe, the more often and the more profoundly our inner desires and wishes can manifest into outer realities. This is not to say that our every whim will be granted to us.

This reviewer was concerned at first that Chopra's suggestions could be misinterpreted by readers as an invitation to activating the powers of manifestation for selfish desires. Chopra quickly dissipated that concern, noting:

There are people who are so connected with the conscious intelligence field that their every intent manifests itself--the whole order of the universe orchestrates around it. Of course, it is not strictly true that their every personal intention is being met; in actuality, people who are connected with the conscious intelligence field adopt the intentions of the universe. Their intentions are being met, but that's only because the cosmic mind is using their intentions to fulfill its own desires. (p. 209)

Chopra presents a helpful series of exercises with each chapter, inviting readers to journey into experiential understandings of synchrodestiny. These include centering, meditation, clearing oneself of negativity that can lead to projections on others, and moving into deeper spiritual awarenesses.

This engaging book is warmly recommended for seekers on the path of spiritual awareness and healing ways of contributing to a world that is sorely in need of healing.

Lewis Mehl-Madrona. *Coyote Wisdom: The Power of Story in Healing*, Rochester, VT: Bear & Company 2005 230 pp \$16.007 pp Notes.

Lewis Mehl-Madrona is certified in family practice, geriatrics and psychiatry, and includes Native American traditions in his practice. Healing through storytelling is the principal approach he shares in this book – of the various Native American ceremonial treatments that he uses.

Mehl-Madrona's storytelling is rich with the wisdom of his Cherokee grandmother. He seems to have stories available for every possible circumstance and occasion. These tales provide insights into a person's hidden fears and hurts that often underlie and contribute to or even cause the development of many physical and psychological problems. The stories also suggest a variety of solutions and inspire hope that change is possible.

Through these stories, he helps people discover the inner healing resources that can transform their lives, including their illnesses. He reports dramatic successes – often with people who have struggled for many years with their health issues – including anorexia, lupus (a chronic form of arthritis), victimization through emotional and physical abuse, panic disorder, and more.

What I see as particularly helpful are the suggestions for change that Mehl-Madrona intersperses within the stories. These are very similar to the tales that Milton Erickson used to tell – in the process of hypnotic inductions, with imbedded suggestions that often slipped past the sentinel guardian defenses of his patients.

Mehl-Madrona believes that “if multiple treatments have failed to solve the problem, then we need to consider the context or stage upon which the problem operates.” To his credit, Mehl-Madrona readily admits that not everyone is totally cured through these approaches, as in the following story. For instance, he tells how he worked with Donna, who had suffered with fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome for many years, had visited numerous doctors but had found no cure for her illness. He told Donna a Choctaw version of a story about how fire came to the people.

In this story, the animals suffered because they had no way to keep warm when the weather turned cold. They heard that people the East had fire, but knew these people to be greedy

and unlikely to share the fire. Various animals ventured to the East but were unsuccessful in bringing back fire. Finally, the spider succeeded – by creating a clay pot in which to transport it.

Mehl-Madronna offered (among other suggestions sprinkled throughout the story),

Maybe in your own life, Donna, you can find a way to be like Grandmother Spider, the one voted least likely to succeed. You can rely upon your own talents and resources to save the day. We could wonder what those resources might be. We might decide that your spirituality would qualify, that it provides you with a kind of vessel or container, just like Grandmother Spider's clay pot. (p. 64)

Donna then wrote her own healing story with his help and invited a group of friends for a healing ceremony. She was disappointed that she experienced no apparent benefits following the ceremony. However, she stopped searching for external 'fixes.' She was less agitated by her symptoms, more calm and settled within herself. While she did not consider herself to have been substantially helped by this treatment, her friends reported that she was much more present in her interactions with them, much more invested in studies and work.

Mehl-Madronna credits the people he helps for discovering the sources of healing within themselves.

I had long ago abandoned the idea that I did therapy. Therapy contains the idea that I can "treat" someone else, an idea that seems specious and patronizing. I preferred the idea that I could tell stories that might inspire people to change. I saw the Native healers engaged in this same negotiation, a process that has been called 'reauthoring.' (p. 3)

Mehl-Madronna is most remarkable for having gained a measure of acceptance for his methods within western medicine.

At some time in our journey through life we all ask these questions. Stories contain our answers. They impose order onto the chaos of our experience. They help us organize our experience in time. They provide a beginning, middle, and ending. They locate our experience within cultural contexts and geographies. They tell us who we are, where we are, and what we are...

Humans of all cultures and historical periods share this problem of uncertainty which is uncomfortable. So we construct stories and tell them over and over to establish certainty.

We physicians think that the stories we tell ourselves about health and disease are fact. ... we swallowed the 'only biology' story hook, line, and sinker. We need to mature to a larger perspective that encompasses the role of the stories we tell in helping us to transform and to heal ourselves and our communities. We need to understand the power of our negative stories—for example, the ones in which we tell people that they have only six months to live. We need to understand that the context of our stories is as important as what we talk about. (p. 9)

Stories contain the hidden secrets of transformation, the alchemist's formulas for turning lead into gold. If we hear enough stories about profound transformation, we find ourselves

transforming, even in spite of ourselves. While we can't command transformation, we can create an enriched environment that makes it more possible. (p. 9)

For a book that contains generous portions of wisdom, this book is an easy and enjoyable read.

See also Mehl-Madrona's earlier books: *Coyote Healing* and *Coyote Medicine*.

Thomas Pakenham. *Meetings with Remarkable Trees*, New York: Random House 1998. 192 pp 60 specimens HB \$24.95 7 1/2 x 9 in.

Thomas Pakenham. *Remarkable Trees of the World*, W. W. Norton 2002. 192pp \$49.95 HB 10" x 11" pages

These are portraits, not just pictures, each book documenting the impressive presence of sixty venerable trees from around the world. Pakenham groups them by their histories: Natives, Travelers, Shrines, Fantasies and Survivors. Each is a testimony to the majesty of Nature's creativity, diversity and adaptability. Pakenham shares the unique history of each of these outstanding personalities, in the context of its species and its struggles for survival – ever threatened by man's over-cutting and under-husbandry of these irreplaceable resources.

Inspirational!



Terri Cohlene, Illustrations Dough Keith. *Something Special*, Bellevue, WA: Illumination Arts 2005. \$15.95 Suitable for ages 3-5.

Whimsical description of many variations on the theme of a 'something special' that is only revealed on the last page... A kiss.

TERMS OF USE

The International Journal of Healing and Caring On Line is distributed electronically. You may choose to print your downloaded copy for relaxed reading. Feel free to forward this to others.