

THE JOURNAL OF Creative Aging

SAGE-ING

with Creative Spirit, Grace & Gratitude



A PUBLICATION OF
THE OKANAGAN INSTITUTE
NUMBER 32, SPRING 2020
EDITED BY KAREN CLOSE

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When we allow our hearts to resonate with stories, we feel a reverberation, the echoing spirit of all humanity, and the universe itself, beating within. We are called into harmony, and we feel our spirits aligned with all that is. As Wedlidi Speck states in his introduction to this important book:

Reconciliation is storied differently by different people... In the end, by sharing the stories in this book, we may just find the definition of reconciliation is embedded in each story shared... Readers will find that reconciliation is personal, and it includes family and aims towards community. To that end, in order to understand the fullness and richness of reconciliation, we hope each reader will find a role in reconciliation by placing all these stories together in a mixing bowl of sorts and coming up with a broader view that will heighten our country's cultural awareness, deepen Canadian sensitivity, sharpen Canadian agility and grow cultural safety in all our country's homes, villages and work spaces.

The Journal of Creative Aging

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SAGE-ING
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GRACE & GRATITUDE

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Cover image by Harold Rhenisch

FROM THE EDITOR

Since our initial publication in Autumn 2011, *Sage-ing With Creative Spirit, Grace and Gratitude* has been sharing your stories on how creative expression through participation in arts and culture is deeply connected to the well-being of individuals and the vitality of our communities. We hope the Journal is contributing to reshaping a greater perception of the role for arts and culture beyond consumerism to wellness. An appreciation for recent research, indicating that making art, or even viewing art, causes the brain to reshape, adapt and restructure itself, will move our culture forward. Science is showing that our brains are eager for humanity to progress.

In *CREATIVITY AS HEART WORK* contributor Susan McCaslin suggests, "In your art-making, make art your heart work." I suggest that choosing this source of inspiration will reap the wisdom science is showing us our brains

are ready to find. The seeds for understanding the role of creativity were planted by artist Wassily Kandinsky in 1910. "To harmonize the whole is the task of art." It is my hope we are beginning to understand his message. In 2020, Dr. Nancy Hollis adds: "Feeding your creativity does not happen alone. Creativity is a reflection of your life and is central to feeling alive. Creativity is fuelled by connection – the connection of disparate ideas, the connection to yourself and the connection to others."

Technology and the Internet have given us the opportunity for connections unique to this century. The Journal is proud to nourish these deeper opportunities. Our contributors often express that, as they write, they learn more about who they are and feel the worth in contributing their discoveries to a world-wide information highway. In *A JOURNEY THROUGH COMMUNAL ART* Shirley Leswick notes, "Communal art ... energizes me and opens me to so many benefi-

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cial experiences. It literally feeds my soul.”

In *THE WISDOM OF LEAVES* Harold Rhenisch recalls an intergenerational connection and his kinship with nature and life force. In *CREATIVITY AND THE DISPARATE MIND* Jacques G. LeBlanc and Susan J. LeBlanc encourage us to move away from habitual patterns, “evolving our understanding of who we are and the potential we have.” It is time to let creative disparate minds lead us into the future that awaits us. When you choose to share your creative spirit in the Journal, we open to each other and connect to all we can be.

A new intelligence is born when we allow interest, attention and sensitivity to emerge into a state in which body and mind are collaborating together. In *MY JOURNEY TO TRUTH* Yvonne Salewski openly shares the challenges and seeming contradictions along this path to wholeness.

“In truth, to attain to interior peace, one must be willing to pass through the contrary to peace. Such is the teaching of the Sages.”
– Swami Brahmanada
KAREN CLOSE

SUBMITTING AN ARTICLE TO SAGE-ING

• **Article is to be related to aging and creativity, in any of its many forms, as a path to gaining wisdom and self awareness and/or the act of harvesting life’s wisdom as a legacy for future generations.**

- Article to be attached as a document in .rtf format;
- 500 to a 1500 word maximum;
- Photos: Please attach each photo separately including: the writer’s headshot photo and four or five photos, related to article . All photos should be attached in high resolution jpg format with a caption;
- Insert the word “**photo**” with its caption within the article where you would like each image placed (we’ll try to honour this request as layout permits).
- Please include brief bio information (one or two short paragraphs) placed at the end of your article; this is meant to give the reader an idea of who you are, your passions and/or what you do and have done with your life that feels relevant to the article. Include contact info: email, website, blog address – whatever you want to include. For each journal, due date is the 10th of the month preceding release date. We release around the equinoxes and solstices. **For next issue due date is May 10th, 2020**
- Email the article and photographs to karensageing@gmail.com

Antiquity identified a sage as a wise person ... wisdom is a form of goodness, and is not scientific knowledge but another kind of cognition.

– Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* 1246b

CREATIVITY AS HEART WORK

THREE MORNING MEDITATIONS

Susan McCaslin

On Movement, Change, Connection

“Like most people, I have moved from one residence to another at various times in my life – three times alone in the Fall of 2011. Yet, whether resident in the same house for decades or constantly on the move, as we age time seems to speed up, our bodies change, and we face more viscerally our mortality.

So how does a person maintain stability within movement and movement within stability? What is the yin-yang of movement and stillness?”

Be an energy field that is completely itself but that flows in and out of other energy fields. This is how things work in the universe – in the cells and in the stars.

Take your heart, for instance, which is complete in itself, not confused with the blood that flows in and out of it. It continues sounding its drum except in illness or death, when the patterns become irregular, dissolve, stop, perhaps reform. The heart is not the liver or the lungs; yet it could have been anything when forming out of the union of cells at conception. Somehow some cells agreed to come together and serve the whole as the heart. They are no longer in a state of potentiality. They are the heart.

The heart is a working dog, the shepherd of the body.

It is steady within constant change.

Be like the heart, sounding your drum so it reverberates into every cell. Wake up, toes! Wake up, brain! Wake to the resonating drum each morning.

To achieve stability within change and change within stability, listen each morning to your adorable heart. Become the heart as it deepens and slows into your breath, then advances into the pulse of each moment from its double chamber where the bride and bridegroom sleep. Their love is a bliss you have not made, but it is you. It is a bliss you have made, though you don't know what powers guided you in the making. In your art-making, make art your heart work.

Your heart is a muscled wing, dark, mysterious, pure, sustaining.

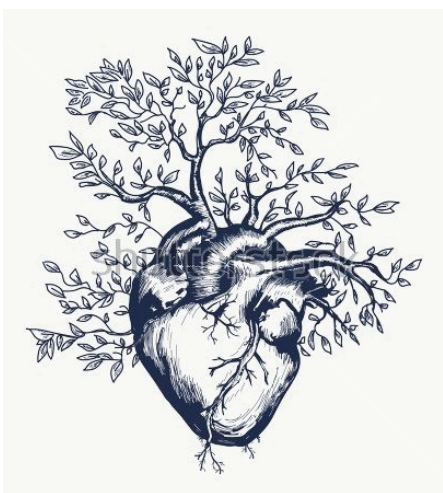
On Acting from the Heart

“How does a person come to develop empathy in art and in life?”

It isn't enough to open the heart to greater empathy. We need to act on our empathic feelings. Leonard Cohen sings, “I don't trust my inner feelings. / Inner feelings come and go.” Feelings pass into and out of each other – happiness and sadness, hope and despair. Inner feelings are evanescent. Spirit



Growth of a Heart



activates, arouses, balances.

The feelings awakened by unifying Spirit cannot be separated from fairness, action for justice, the relief of suffering. Before the feelings sink into rational awareness, the spirit-motivated one has sprung into action. Love is action for goodness in the world. This doesn't mean we can't strategize for the most effective methods of action in a given situation, but that our commitment to act is there from the beginning and becomes an unstoppable trajectory when called forth. When a mother bear defends her cubs from a predator, she doesn't think and then act. The thinking and the acting are one.

Those who remain with mere feelings and good intentions alone concerning the poor and disenfranchised cry crocodile tears. But maybe this old metaphor isn't quite fair to the crocodiles.

Let love's prayer pray you.

Let love's song sing you.

Let love's poem poem you.

On Carrying Another

"What moved through me when I was pregnant with my daughter at nearly forty? How are creativity and inspiration in the arts related to creativity in the womb?"

You in your egoic consciousness could not mechanically create the complex brain, spinal column, bi-chambered heart and delicate skin of a living child growing within your womb, an interconnected and soon-to-be separate being with a mind, heart and will of her own. Yet you and your daughter, cooperating, lived, moved, created, slept, woke together for nine full months. One of your husband's seeds united with one of your minuscule eggs, and a miracle began. Your daughter's otherness thrived within your womb as she continued growing and at last, finding the containment of the womb too small, leapt into the world. This same process is the process of all things in the universe, which expands and evolves in and through love. As macrocosm, so microcosm. One vital law, one emergent pattern always being made new. We know more than we know. We are more than we think. We feel more than we think we feel. In the secret, inner places we are whole. Having a child is only one way of participating in the creative flow that moves through all things. Art is another. Heart Art.

Susan McCaslin has published fifteen volumes of poetry, including her most recent, *Into the Open: Poems New and Selected* (Inanna, 2017). She has published a volume of creative non-fiction with fellow poet J.S. Porter, *Superabundantly Alive: Thomas Merton's Dance with the Feminine* (Wood Lake, 2018). Susan lives near Fort Langley BC, where she can often be found walking near the Fraser River with her dog Rosie.

www.susanmccaslin.ca

We know more than we know. We are more than we think. We feel more than we think we feel. In the secret, inner places we are whole.

AN ADDICTION I LOVE TO SHARE

Bonnie Anderson



I stumbled onto clay and pottery while at the University of Calgary. The second I opened up a bag of clay, touched and smelled Mother Earth, I knew this was for me. My sign is Virgo, the sixth sign of the Zodiac and the second Earth sign. It is from the solid and reliable nature of the earth element that Virgo people get two of their most outstanding traits: their practical natures and their desire to be useful. I have heard that they are fussy, worriers, fastidious, loyal. I think I am all of that and I am addicted to clay, the gift of Mother Earth.

After my studies at the University of Calgary, where I triple majored in painting, printmaking and ceramics, from 1986 to 1990 I worked as a ceramics art instructor for the City of Calgary at Village Square Leisure Centre. The City was about to up-grade their kiln and four pottery wheels, so I made them an offer of \$25.00 for each and they said SOLD. The City of Calgary had basically set me up to succeed in business. When my children grew up and were on the way to fulfill their own destinies, I made another important decision and made my move.

In 1990, the lure of the Okanagan brought me to Kelowna with a dream and goal of establishing a Ceramic Arts Centre. Since then I have been sharing my dream. My first studio was located over the garage of Kelowna Handy Bus, then owned by my aunt and uncle Dianne and Arlie Dawson. One day, while I was sitting in my attic studio in the new rocking chair I had just purchased, I made a list of ten names I could call my business, such as Potter's Corner, The Pottery Studio, Potters Attic, then Potters Addict, then Potters Addict Ceramic Arts Centre Hub, and decided to call it Potters Addict Ceramic Art Centre, because clay was my addiction, and my wish for others is to feel the same way too. It's an addiction you can't go to jail for. Potters Addict Ceramic Arts Centre became the first pottery school in Kelowna.

From that first studio I moved to Sexsmith Road where my addiction to Mother Earth and all her possibilities took hold of my life. I began teaching others who wanted an outlet, wanted to learn something new and wanted to escape into the world of clay. I teach clay art, sculpture, pottery wheel techniques, hand building techniques, decorating and glaze techniques and special firing techniques, which include the ancient method of Raku firings, my specialty. As well, I also paint and teach painting to children, adults and seniors throughout the Okanagan Valley. When I started, I was producing a lot of Raku figurative work; I entered shows in Penticton, Vernon and here in Kelowna, and then joined the Okanagan Potters Association. At different times in my life I was chair, vice chair, treasurer, secretary and director of the

Clay was my addiction, and my wish for others is to feel the same way too.



Association and Director and Volunteer coordinator for the Kelowna Clay festivals.

In 1992, I met my husband-to-be, Bob McIvor, who shared my love of art and pottery. After a year of making pots together we decided to take our art work on a run. It was time to enter into some art festivals, and we entered shows from Calgary to Victoria. In between shows we taught pottery and art classes. After almost thirteen years on Sexsmith Road, we moved to the Rotary Centre for the Arts in June of 2002, and



here we are to this day. In June we will celebrate eighteen years in business at the Centre. Our studio has four, sometimes five, ceramics art instructors. At Potters Addict we host a ceramics workshop two or three times a year. We teach the therapeutic, creative and educational value of clay. Our regular courses, like pottery wheel techniques, are on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, and hand building techniques are held on Wednesday evenings, while glaze and decorating techniques are on Mondays. Schools book in all throughout the year, introducing from ten to fifty school-age children to clay for the first time. We also have a Gift Certificate programme, host birthday parties for youth and adults, and as well we frequently host private classes or one to ones. Throughout the summer months, we run clay and art courses for vulnerable children. Many of our past students have become instructors and they have started their own pottery studios. I hope, I think, I taught them well.

Top: Everyone Has Fun
Above: Young Student

My personal style of pottery was developed over a period of years, specializing in the ancient art of Raku, which means joy, happiness, calm and love. This firing procedure takes place in an outdoor kiln over a period of an hour, rather than twelve hours in a regular kiln. It is a clay art form that is more decorative than functional. You cannot eat or drink out of it because the work can be metallic and porous and very delicate.

I love the connection with Mother Earth. A lot of my work encompasses some part or all of the female body. My most prized gadgets are my slab roller, which is used to roll clay into large slabs for slab work; my extruder, which is used for making unique handles and other ceramic forms; and our pug mill, which processes reclaimed clay.

I like to talk about the therapeutic, educational and creative value of working with clay and I like to teach these values to my staff and students. When you are working with clay all your problems leave. You don't think about anything but what you are doing – and the time goes by so fast.

“We can get stuck in our thoughts, and when we work directly with clay,



Top: Bonnie's Figures
Above: Gifts of Mother Earth

our habits are revealed in the material, which makes it very liberating to work with ... You're working with a material that's alive – as soon as you touch it, it moves, bringing the focus to the present.” –Suzanne Thompson, art therapist

You are working with the right side of your brain and it's as if you are in a trance in a way, and when you are working on the pottery wheel the right and left side for some reason work together – not so when you are drawing or painting. Since a large area of the brain is devoted to the density and movement of our hands, working with clay is an effective way to trigger those feel-good parts of our brain. People say they can't draw, but they don't say they can't work with clay.

The best sound in the studio is the sound of a kiln shutting off. After a simple click there is a twelve-hour cooling off. Everyone waits in anticipation of the opening of the kiln. It's a celebration, like Christmas – gifts of Mother Earth.

In our shop we have studio spaces for up to 35 members who want to continue their pottery career and clay studies. After taking two courses one can become a club member; each member is required to take the Glaze and Decorating course. Club membership includes a key to the facility, a personal space or cubby for tools and supplies, and full use of all the studio equipment.

I still remember when I opened that first bag of clay and smelled earth that could be five billion years old. People look at me as though I am nuts, but really, that beautiful five billion year old piece of mud can turn into something useful and beautiful and has the possibility of staying in that state forever. My paintings and pottery are

sold in my studio exclusively now. I only wish there were more hours in a day for me to play in the mud and paint.

Bonnie Anderson | Potters Addict Ceramic Art Centre | Come Play in the Mud With Us!

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LONELY ARTS CLUB

Mary Lou Johnson



As we age, we are often inclined to become more reflective, recognizing the passage of time and seeking contentment in knowing the person we are becoming. Thomas Merton, twentieth-century American Trappist monk, writer, theologian, mystic, poet and social activist, advised, “Art allows us to lose ourselves and find ourselves at the same time.” In the late nineteenth century, German philosopher, cultural critic, composer and poet Friedrich Nietzsche had advised, “We have our arts so we don’t die from truth.” Despite the advice of these sages, many are slow to understand that nourishing their creativity is a wellness strategy. Many need to be encouraged to embark on their creative journeys. Jean-Anne Copley has taken that challenge seriously for herself and for her community.

Born and raised on Vancouver Island, the offspring of a father of British origin and a Cowichan mother, Jean-Anne and her siblings were raised in the mainstream culture and encouraged to downplay their mother’s Indigenous roots. With the introduction in Parliament of Bill C-31 in 1985, Jean-Anne was able to initiate the process of regaining her previously denied, legal First Nations status both for herself and her children. This freed her to explore her roots and develop her identity as a part of Canada’s native population. She discovered the “Indigenous” creative process and found grounding and direction.

Copley worked as a preschool teacher and always loved all forms of artistic creative expression, much of which she says she learned from the children in her care, because children tend to live in the moment and are spontaneous and unobstructed in their expression.

Jean-Anne has been on the board of the Ki-low-Na Friendship Society in downtown Kelowna for several years, the mandate of which is “to provide support for the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being of all people through the development of community based services, while encouraging the community to preserve, share, and promote Aboriginal cultural distinctiveness.”

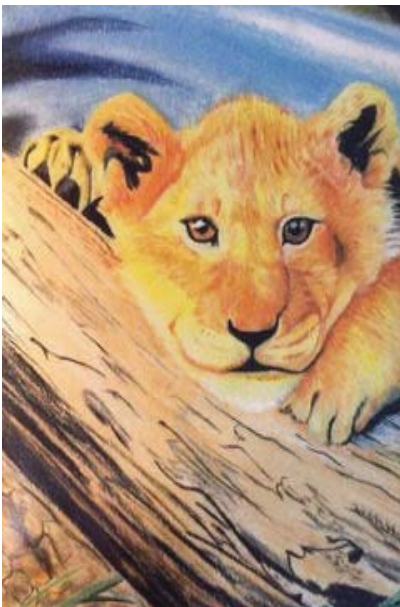
When they received a grant to build an affordable housing unit in a new development near downtown Kelowna, the board was unanimously committed to including an amenities room opening on to a community garden area. I-Spa-Us Ki-Low-Na now provides homes for 86 families and is in the process of constructing another building in the Black Mountain area, scheduled to be ready in October 2020.

After Jean-Anne attended the BCNPHA Annual Conference (B.C. Non-Profit Housing Association) – a three-day conference that provided

Jean-Anne discovered the “Indigenous” creative process and found grounding and direction.

Jean-Anne Copley





Top: Lonely Arts Club at work with leader Jean-Anne displaying a work
Middle: Gerald Siemens' wildlife drawing
Above: Corn husk dolls

discussions on not-for-profit housing and explored how this sector can be empowered to meet the needs of its residents more effectively – she was inspired to look at ways that the I-Spa-Us common room could be used to help combat isolation and create community within both the Friendship Centre and its housing project. In the Okanagan language, I-Spa-Us Ki-low-na means “Heart of Kelowna.”

Jean-Anne developed the “Lonely Arts Club,” a group that meets Monday mornings in the common room at I-Spa-Us to work on art projects. Some are committed regulars and some come when they can as a way to meet new people and share in the experience of creating together. Some are quite talented artists who are willing to teach others the basics of drawing, painting, beading or other creative endeavours that they have mastered. Others just come to doodle, colour or work on any craft item alongside others. There is a warm feeling of family and of the lost art of communal projects, such as quilting. Some of the older residents come just to watch and add what they are able to, be it a song or a poem or just their presence. The coffee pot is always on. All appreciate that they are at a place in their journey where they are committed to exploring their creative potential while receiving guidance and encouragement from the group. Finished art projects are displayed on the walls and in scrapbooks, and attest to the range of skills as well as willingness to experiment with various methods and mediums.

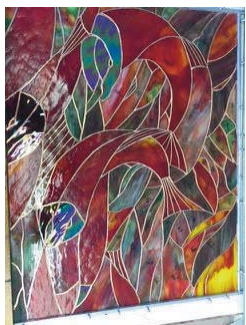
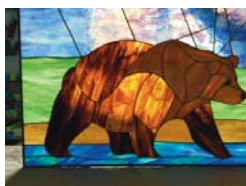
Gerald Siemens has been coming regularly since the inception of the group. He enjoys realistic drawing, especially of birds and animals. He has taught himself through textbooks on drawing, etc., and has achieved an admirable level of competence, which he is willing to pass on to anyone who asks for help with learning the basics. He is currently developing his skills in sculpting and carving.

Janet Goldammer is an accomplished watercolour artist, as well as adept at sketching, puppetry, felt work and many other modalities that she learned during her years as a Waldorf teacher. She, also, is willing to pass on what she knows to anyone who wants to learn. She finds that the group inspires her to create art in an unpressured atmosphere.

Alissa Bennett has been attending the group since she moved into the building two years ago. She considers it a part of her contemplative practice and commits to regular attendance. She has just completed making corn husk dolls from her dried corn stalks that grew in the community garden.

Leah Stringer is new to the group. She moved to Kelowna from Nelson seven years ago and has been exploring her Cree Indigenous roots in a Women’s Circle at the Friendship Centre. She heard about the Lonely Arts Club and decided to join in and see if she could let go of some of her ingrained self-judgment, competitive traits and prejudices about the value of using time for expressing creativity.

For myself, I have attended several times and, although I consider myself artistically challenged, I have enjoyed connecting with both the group and the supplied art materials in a warm, non-judgmental, accepting milieu. The



Top left: Grizzly – the name Kelowna derives from an Okanagan language term for “grizzly bear.”

Top right: Bitterroot – traditionally, the roots were gathered, dried for storage and used for food or trade.

Above left: Spawning Salmon – the people’s livelihood depended on fish as a source of life and food. It may also have a spiritual symbolism of returning to Source.

Above right: Saskatoon Berries – berries provided them with much-needed minerals and vitamins along with flavour and sweetness.

invitation to gather in a creative atmosphere is an ancient practice that is conducive to wellness and wholeness. I’m discovering that the creative process of clearing our minds and hearts and bringing forth some idea, emotion or memory can be spontaneous or deliberate, but never easy.

I’ve felt that some emotions, ideas or memories are simply things we don’t want to talk about, but I’m beginning to understand that, when we put that vision on paper or

canvas, we can express our feelings in a non-verbal way, giving us the freedom to interpret what we have experienced. Bringing our feelings forth in a new way allows us to take a fresh look at something in a tangible way and deal with it, or simply file it away for the time being. A group such as Jean-Anne has created gives us the space to work on our mental, spiritual and emotional wellness.

Jean-Anne’s example is inspiring. She has opened me to consider how she has made a valuable gift to her community by exploring her own creativity. She has won an award for a children’s book that she wrote and illustrated. She has expressed herself in a variety of mediums including beading, silk screening, papier-mâché and ceramics, but one of her favourites is working with stained glass. At present she has nearly completed four stained glass windows for the Ki-low-na Friendship Centre. The four stained glass windows represent the four food chiefs of the Okanagan people: Grizzly, Saskatoon Berry, Bitterroot and Salmon.

Jean-Anne Copley works tirelessly and generously to bring others together in creative spirit. The Lonely Arts Club extends an open invitation to anyone who wants to join on Monday mornings from 10:30 to 12 noon. Jean-Anne can be reached at 778-363-2547.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND MEMORIES

Murray Robertson

Some photographs,
bring back
forgotten things.

Memory like
a flour sifter,
catches stray bits.

So much
more forgotten
than ever noticed.
Time may never tell.
Memory may not
fit every need.

Incredible stories
when memory fails
or events
are just too
terrible to admit.

Might complicity
be forgiven
or simplified?

Some photographs
as complicated
as stories,
some do tell
a story.

Some have
nothing to say.

Like gods
who do not speak,
they are
spoken of.

Sometimes
in reverence.
Memories can
illuminate or
enslave us.

Dust, we will be.
Photographs fade.

Evil covers
its horrible tracks
rewriting toxic
histories. With
some success.

“This photograph was made by a wonderful octogenarian story-teller who we sometimes have coffee with. He’s climbed every mountain he could, through his life. He’s been a sled-dog handler in the Antarctic. He took this photograph while drinking coffee with us.”



A JOURNEY OF COMMUNAL ART

Shirley Leswick



As a child I drew and painted for my own pleasure. I never felt the need to share my pictures with anyone else; I simply loved to draw and paint. It wasn't until I was about ten that I discovered the joy a communal art experience can bring. An artist on television was going to lead his viewers through a step by step process to create a piece of cartoon art. My father set up a card table in front of the TV, and my parents, sister and I sat and followed the artist's instructions. We had such fun sharing our pictures, laughing and enjoying each other's results.

My love for art never waned. I became an elementary school teacher, deriving great pleasure from creative projects undertaken with my students. I still found time to paint at home, even after I was married, but later put it aside to raise our two daughters. Fortunately, collaborative art activities filled our days with joy. After returning to teaching, I continued to delight in my students' artistic endeavours. A gnawing need to return to my own art was not answered until my husband and I retired and moved to Kelowna.

Once settled in our new community in Gallagher's Canyon, I enrolled in a drawing class offered in our art studio. It was my first adult experience drawing alongside complete strangers. Whereas I thought I might be intimidated, the exact opposite feeling occurred. We were soon talking animatedly about our drawings, sharing our thoughts and offering encouragement to each other. Friendships were formed that have remained steadfast to this day. What a wonderful welcome to our new community.

After studying with and gaining knowledge from a variety of artists, I was blessed to meet the one that would become my longtime mentor. Once Tina Siddiqui became the art instructor at Gallagher's, my artistic life flourished. To this day our art studio is filled with artists of all levels working in all mediums. Tina has a system of circling the room, helping each artist as needed. She encourages feedback from all in a non-threatening way. The energy amongst us is almost palpable and our creativity and trust in each other has grown commensurately. We share feedback and opinions, not only about our art, but also about personal experiences. We tell others that we "attempt to solve all the problems of the world in the art studio." When one of us is struggling with a personal issue, the rest of us are there to provide support. We have become a community in every sense of the word.

Not long after Tina's arrival, a few of us decided to plan and organize Gallagher's first art show. None of us had prior experience doing so, but we persevered. We invited not only members of our art class but also anyone in the Gallagher's community who wanted to enter. The only stipulation was

The energy amongst us is almost palpable and our creativity and trust in each other has grown commensurately.



Working collaboratively on the painting commission for the Myra Canyon Trestle Society

The pleasure of working together on this communal project and our sense of pride in carrying off such a feat will remain with us forever.

that all works had to be original and every participant had to help in some way. Thanks to our collaborative efforts, the show turned out to be a huge success. Feedback from the community was nothing but positive. Over the past seventeen years, the show has grown exponentially, evolving into a mini art walk encompassing fine artists, potters and crafters. Gallagher's has turned out to be an enclave of creative artists. A few years ago, the Gallaghers Canyon Art Society was formed, and the annual show has become a social highlight for both residents and visitors from all over. Most GCAS members are retired. What a marvellous way to remain active, purposeful citizens in our senior years.

In the fall of 2018, the GCAS was commissioned by the Myra Canyon Trestle Society to create a 5 by 10 foot painting for the newest trestle storm shelter. Thirteen GCAS artists donated their time over the next several months, creating a scene representative of Myra Canyon. The artists worked around their own schedules. Sometimes two were available, sometimes eight or more. In August 2019, the original painting was installed in the Tourism Kelowna Visitor Centre. A digital reproduction on aluminum panel was later installed at Myra Canyon. The pleasure of working together on this communal project and our sense of pride in carrying off such a feat will remain with us forever.

During the GCAS annual art show, we have included volunteer demo artists. This can be a daunting experience for first timers, putting oneself in the public eye, not sure what reaction there will be from onlookers. However, it doesn't take long to realize that visitors are there to appreciate the creativity they are witnessing, no matter what the level. Sometimes a painting will evoke a memory of a personal experience they want to share. Sometimes they are interested in the process involved. Demo artists find they spend as much time chatting as they do working on their pieces, allowing themselves to open up and share a creative experience with others. Visitors, in turn, seem to truly appreciate this moment of sharing and often state they feel inspired to try, or return to, some form of art for themselves.

It was while working as a demo artist during our 2019 art show that I was introduced by a mutual friend to Susan LeBlanc. Susan explained how she and Karen Close are volunteers at Kelowna General Hospital, involved in running the Creative Wellness Programme. This programme provides a variety of art experiences for patients, theorizing that any form of art may help patients feel better and give them a means of expressing themselves and their feelings. Karen and Susan were attempting to expand the programme by setting up volunteer demo artists in the hospital lobby, providing an oasis of calm and creative well-being in otherwise often stressful surroundings. They hoped this would prove beneficial, not only to patients walking by, but also to staff and visitors. I volunteered for the programme and set up a meeting with other interested GCAS members. By October the volunteer demo art programme was up and running.

From our very first session we have witnessed the programme's benefits.



Top: Working as volunteer demo artists at Kelowna General Hospital: Shirley Leswick and Sandy Anderson
 Middle: Sandy's finished painting
 Above: Shirley's portraits are popular

Sharing our love of art with others does indeed seem to produce a healing, calming effect for all involved.

Doctors and nurses come out of surgery, still wearing their caps and booties, stopping to watch us paint. We receive comments such as “so relaxing,” “peaceful,” “beautiful,” as these staff return to work. One doctor mentioned she was caring for several long-term patients and was going to suggest they come and watch us paint when they feel up to it. Other staff and volunteers welcome our arrival and return each week to see our progress. Some of the most profound feedback we have received has come from patients themselves and their visitors. I will include just a few examples:

A lady stopped by to watch us paint. I said, “Hello! How are you today?” She replied, “Not well. I have to go upstairs for a procedure and I don’t handle anaesthetic well. I’m just so nervous.” I commiserated with her. She then asked why we were painting in the hospital. I explained the philosophy of the art wellness programme, that we were there to provide a moment of calm and peace for people. She replied, “Well you know, it’s working. I’m feeling much calmer now and am ready to go upstairs. Thank you!”

Another lady stopped by to admire our work. She said, “Do you mind if I just stand here and watch you paint for a while?” She asked many art-related questions, then asked why we were painting in the hospital. We explained and she replied, “I just came from visiting my sister. She refuses to eat or drink and may die soon. I left feeling so awful and helpless. I didn’t know how I was going to drive home. Then I saw you painting and now I’m feeling calm enough to carry on. So thank you for being here.”

A young man stood watching us paint, then approached and asked, “Can anyone learn to paint?” We assured him anyone can learn, and suggested he might try a basic drawing class. He said he suffered from depression and found sports to be a good outlet. After watching us paint, he thought art might be another means of coping. He continued chatting quietly for a while, took some photos, thanked us profusely, and left smiling.

Even one such encounter would make the demo art programme worthwhile, yet we continue to receive amazing feedback each and every week. Sharing our love of art with others does indeed seem to produce a healing, calming effect for all involved. How wonderful to be able to volunteer while doing something that we love. When I’m painting by myself, I become fully immersed in what I’m doing and lose all track of time. I love these solitary sessions and they are absolutely essential to my creative process. Communal art, on the other hand, energizes me and opens me to so many beneficial experiences. It literally feeds my soul.

Shirley Leswick lives with her husband in Gallagher’s Canyon, Kelowna. She specializes in child and pet portraits and has received commissions from across North America. She also takes joy in creating landscapes, and is inspired by the beautiful surroundings here in the Okanagan, as well as by her travels throughout the world. Her favourite medium is pastel. [Shirley-leswick.fineartamerica.com](mailto:sjleswick@gmail.com), sjleswick@gmail.com

SUSTAINING OUR HEALING RESERVOIR



Elaine Hanlon

The exhilaration of a brainstorming session where creative solutions to problems have been discovered is a wonderful example of how one idea can spark other ideas or thoughts and lead to true innovation. Such collaboration facilitates the exchange of ideas and leads to a path thus far undiscovered. Humankind has flourished, according to some theories, because of its ability to collaborate and cooperate. The sharing of tasks such as hunting and gathering led to more efficiency in daily survival, and in part allowed people to have more time to devote to such things as new tool making designs and perhaps cave wall drawings and paintings. When our basic human needs are met, then people have the ability to self-actualize or attend to things that lift them up from the drudgery of just trying to survive, according to the American psychologist, Abraham Maslow.

Creativity flourishes in a collaborative setting, as it provides the necessary conditions that maintain and support its very existence. Creativity is catching and inspirational. As an example, just look at the success of Pinterest, a website that allows the sharing and collaboration of ideas on art and decorating to inspire the reader. Encouragement from your painting or writing group can help you push the limits of your creativity, or provide a launch into a new direction unthought-of alone.

Early in my life, while working in London, England, a city rich with culture, I came to appreciate that when we engage in a creative activity, whatever it may be, we actually nourish ourselves. The ability to go with the flow and lose track of time feeds into another aspect of ourselves that is so often neglected. People often think that chores and errands must be done first before something as frivolous as participating in a creative outlet is allowed. The process of engaging in a creative activity is proven to lift our mood and sense of well-being. Positive personal effects are gained regardless of skill level or ability; it is the taking part that matters. Arts councils in the UK believe that great art and culture inspire us, bring us together and teach us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. <https://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/> is about more people choosing, creating and taking part in brilliant art experiences in the places where they live. Funded by Arts Council England, there are now 21 independent projects in areas where people have fewer opportunities to get involved with the arts. The Get Creative Festival is held every year with the BBC being one of its supporters. Its partnerships consist of 64 million artists, arts councils, libraries

**Creativity is catching
and inspirational.**



Top: *Knees Up*, performed by residents from a local housing project

Middle top: Inspiring local people to take the lead

Middle bottom: Making Art A Part of Everyday Life

Above: Art on Lorries

and various associations across the UK. Residents and community groups generate the programme ideas, influence local activities and take part in change conversations about the place where they work and live.

As part of the festival in 2018, an online BBC survey of over 50,000 people was done in conjunction with the University College London. The results from that research revealed that not only is self-esteem elevated, but negative moods are ameliorated when people pursue creative endeavours. “This study is the first to show the cognitive strategies the brain uses to regulate our emotions when we’re taking part in creative activities,” said Dr. Daisy Fancourt, who led the research. https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=26&v=ISLH0Cu3HhM&feature=emb_logo

The Great British Creativity Test research showed that creativity is used as a coping mechanism that helps control our emotions in three ways. Firstly, as a distraction tool to help avoid stress; secondly, as a means of contemplation, freeing up our minds to reassess problems and make plans; and, lastly, as a self-development tool that builds up our self-esteem and assists us in facing issues with more confidence.

The research showed that although we derive benefit from a single creative effort, there is a cumulative effect when we regularly participate in the creative activity. The greatest benefit was made, however, by those in face to face activities, such as singing in a choir or painting in a class. The research conclusively stated that creative pursuits done in a group provide an additional psychological boost to the participant.

Creative wellness initiatives that expose patients and staff to the therapeutic effects of art and music have sprung up of late in hospitals and nursing homes. Current research supports that art, music and other forms of creative involvement can be useful for each of us to include in our tool boxes to promote health and well-being. The Ottawa Art Gallery and the Ottawa Hospital have an agreement to bring art into the hospital setting. The director and CEO of the Ottawa Art Gallery acknowledged that the initiative came about because of the growing awareness that art and creativity have a role in wellness. The Kelowna General Hospital uses volunteer Wellness Coaches, who come in on a weekly basis, giving patients the opportunity to pursue different artistic activities, including creative doodling.

Pain management, better health outcomes and shortened hospital stays are some of the positive side effects of patient art interventions. “Through creativity and imagination, we find our identity and our reservoir of healing. The more we understand the relationship between creative expression and healing, the more we will discover the healing power of the arts.”¹

Augustin Fuentes, author of the book *The Creative Spark: How Imagination Made Humans Exceptional*, states that creativity is what makes us special as human beings. Our creativity has shaped the planet we live in today, and it required both imagination and collaboration to achieve. “Without art, we’re not human. The ability to imagine and to take that imagination and make it into reality is one of the things that is really distinctive about humans.

**Creativity,
collaboration,
innovation and art are
intrinsic to shaping our
humanity.**

And there is no better way to flex that creativity muscle than to do art, be exposed to art, and to think about art.”²

With our lives becoming increasingly stressful because of daily demands and the constant plugging in to technology and our devices, the need to nourish our souls and hearts is paramount, not only to our collective lives as humans, but to people as individuals. Creativity, collaboration, innovation and art are intrinsic to shaping our humanity. So put aside the need to be perfect or good at something in order to continue your creative engagement; look at it as a prescription to better mental and physical health and a springboard to vitality. The synergistic benefits of collaborating with others in a creative environment can help notch up our creative game while nurturing us in the process.

1. Stuckey, Heather L., and Jeremy Nobel. “The Connection Between Art, Healing, and Public Health: A Review of Current Literature.” *American Journal of Public Health* 100, no. 2 (2010). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2804629>

2. Simon Warrall. “How creativity drives human evolution.” *National Geographic*, April 23, 2017.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2017/04/creative-spark-augustin-fuentes-evolution/>

Elaine Hanlon was born and educated in Ottawa, Ont., but has called Alberta and British Columbia home for the majority of her life. She worked in various capacities for the Alberta government in Edmonton, Calgary and Toronto; however, her stint working in London, England, was a particular highlight because of her exposure to the arts, theatre and cultural scene of the capital. She worked in the career counselling and employment field for college and government sponsored agencies in Kelowna, B.C., where she still resides as an active and flourishing retiree.

CREATIVITY AND THE DISPARATE MIND

Jacques G. LeBlanc, Susan J. LeBlanc



Top: Jacques G. LeBlanc
Middle: Susan J. LeBlanc
Above: Sketch, *A Disparate Mind*

“Creativity is just connecting things. When you ask creative people how they did something they feel a little guilty because they didn’t really do it, they just saw something. It seemed obvious to them after a while.” – Steve Jobs

The relationship between creativity, insanity and genius has long captivated philosophers, playwrights and poets. The idea of the mad artist, the tormented musician or the tortured poet continues to have a strong grip on the human imagination. What is it that draws our attention to the connection between creativity and insanity, or creativity and genius? Is it the drama that seems to accompany many of the lives of such individuals? Or are creativity, madness and genius all versions of the same thing? Perhaps it is in the way our minds work that we consider the outcome of creativity – what is produced, expressed or formed – as genius or madness. Is it just our minds that form this distinction? Does a disparate mind exist within all of us?

Webster’s dictionary defines disparate as “being markedly distinct in quality or character, and containing or made up of fundamentally different and often incongruous elements.” Creativity has a very similar definition. According to dictionary.com, creativity is “the ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships, or the like, and to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, interpretations, etc.” As Steve Jobs noted, creativity is “simply connecting things.”

Popular culture has tended to glorify aberrant or erratic behaviour in artists. Over the years, artists like Vincent Van Gogh, legendary for cutting off his ear as well as producing astonishing paintings, have proved more captivating to the public than a more mild-mannered artist like Claude Monet. Public interest may be as much about the behaviour of the individual as the works of art created. Historically the idea of the “mad” artist has been so compelling that more studies tracking psychological imbalance in artists exist than for other professions. For instance, the composer Robert Schumann’s manic episodes, during which he produced much of his music, have received considerable notice, but few people would take seriously an attempt to analyze a baker’s mood swing and the resultant quality of the loaves of bread he makes, or anybody else’s using their creativity on a daily basis. At the same time, research has revealed disproportionately high rates of mood disorders, particularly manic depression (bipolar disorder) and chronic depression, among creative people. Dr. Kay Redfield Jamison, a professor of psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore, concluded

in her study “Touched With Fire: Manic Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament” that, among distinguished artists, the rate of such depressive illnesses is 10 to 30 times as prevalent as among the population at large.

Of course there are many gifted artists, writers and performers who do not pursue their craft while teetering on the edge of insanity and many more people who are not artists, yet are deeply creative. However, few who have studied the subject would argue that some form of instability is not associated with what we call extremely creative people. Is this association the case, or do we need to look at creativity, instability, madness and genius in a different way?

Our minds are full of thoughts, beliefs and ideas that form our understanding of the world and influence our behaviour and our choices. Perhaps instability is a characteristic of creativity, the creative energy that allows us to make connections between disparate ideas, and for some people this trait is much more pronounced or developed. Some people are more prone to making connections that border on the unknown or unseen. Is it their “instability” or their “creativity” that is central to making the connections between deeply disparate elements, ideas, beliefs, etc.? Perhaps it is the degree of creativity, or the ways in which one manages/expresses/forms creative energy, that makes the difference in the outcome and how it is experienced by the creator/artist and others. The connections being made and expressed by an artist, what we call “art,” offer the viewer the unique opportunity to grow his or her understanding of the ideas presented.

According to Henning Beck, author of *Scatterbrain: How the Mind’s Mistakes Make Humans Creative, Innovative, and Successful*, our brain is made up of a default mode network that allows us to daydream, to generate new ideas, to create, and of a decision-making network that filters out our ideas and decisions about our daily life. Can we say that creativity is the energy of creation and that our brains form that energy into ideas and link them together? In some cases the brain’s default mode network overwhelms the decision-making network. Swings of emotion trigger the reorganizing of disparate thoughts into a new order, forming the essence of creative genius or madness. The theory holds that a manic state of excitement in many ways simulates the “high” of the creative process. However, not all geniuses and creative people have a mental or manic disorder.

Stress, on the other hand, is shown to be a creativity killer, as the brain switches to a crisis mode, increasing the level of concentration that diminishes creative thinking. Meditation and mindfulness practice indirectly increase creativity by calming the individual and reducing stress. It should be noted that these activities do not directly increase one’s creative thinking because they do not engage the daydreaming process and our ability to connect new ideas.

There are countless techniques that are thought to get our creative juices flowing, such as brainstorming, design thinking, the morphological matrix and many others. These techniques attempt to steer our unregulated power

Can we say that creativity is the energy of creation and that our brains form that energy into ideas and link them together?

Perhaps habitual responses and actions are the result of not engaging or developing the creative spirit. Embracing the disparate mind as positive and evolutionary speaks to change and renewal.

of creativity into following a set of rules. Creativity, creative energy in its unconditioned state, is open, full of potential; it is less bound by rules. When the individual expresses his or her creative energy, often by applying rules, it may reduce or increase the potential for unexpected connections and outcomes. Perhaps the relationship between creativity, madness and genius is in the individual's application of rules or preconceived ways of connecting ideas, or in beliefs and thoughts about oneself.

We often comment that we are creatures of habit. This may be true, but perhaps habitual responses and actions are the result of not engaging or developing the creative spirit. Embracing the disparate mind as positive and evolutionary speaks to change and renewal, a seemingly positive direction.

We believe creativity is important to everyday life because it nourishes us, gives us life that is infinitely interesting and fulfilling. Creative engagement offers a way of living life that embraces originality by accepting unique connections between seemingly disparate ideas. Creativity fertilizes our growth as human beings, evolving our understanding of who we are and the potential we have.

Jacques LeBlanc has been a paediatric and adult cardiovascular and thoracic surgeon at B.C. Children's Hospital in Vancouver. He retired eight years ago after 35 years of practice and found himself looking to understand and develop his interests beyond the practice of medicine. In so doing, Jacques realized that he had a lot to give back to his profession in the way of experience as a doctor, a teacher, a student of life, a husband and a human being seeking wellness in this rapidly changing world.

Susan LeBlanc began an ongoing exploration into her own creativity through the art of intuitive painting, or what Susan now calls The Art of Becoming. It has been a journey into the deeper reaches of her soul, which has nourished her heart and opened her being to creative potential. Susan's journey has shown her the importance of recognizing and developing the creativity that dwells within each of us and how that can be central to our sense of well-being. For the past year, Susan has been heading a team of Creative Wellness Coaches at the Kelowna General Hospital and Jacques has been working in Cardiology at the hospital.

P.S.: CREATIVITY IN COMMUNITY

Penn Kemp and Sharon Thesen



Sharon (L) Penn (R). Photo by Roberta Pyx Sutherland

P.S. began as an exchange of poems between us, two long-time friends. We are both poets who have published for decades and have long been involved in Canada's literary community. As we live in different provinces, we seldom have the chance to meet, except through those occasional Canada Council readings that bring us together.

On a whim, we committed to a year-long "writing buddies" project, in which we promised each other we'd write a poem every month and send these to each other. Writing poetry is such a solitary vocation, but our connection, as friends and poets, created the opportunity to bridge both solitude and distance. Our exchange was based on trust and shared concerns, both personal and literary, that we needed to express. Throughout a year of writing poems back and forth between Lake Country, B.C., and London, Ont., we supported each other in our very different voices. As a double-calendar long poem, *P.S.* presents a sort of life's work postscript: what goes on beneath the days, their depths and surfaces, their "by the way" inferences. There's an elegiac and celebratory feel to the poems, something autumnal and serendipitous in the themes of transport that emerge: movement, travel, time, birds.

The making of a chapbook is a communal effort that emerges over time. Throughout 2018, we wrote to one another without thought of collecting the pieces. Our creativity flowed without the encumbrance of possible publication constricting us. But as the poems had a life of their own, we could envision them together in a chapbook. We discussed the possibility when Penn was Kalamalka's writer-in-residence at the Caetani Centre in Vernon, B.C., throughout October, 2018. Sharon lived nearby in Lake Country, and we were able to meet and talk, do readings together, and deepen our friendship.

The Caetani Centre is part of a vibrant literary and arts community in Vernon that includes local artists. Writers, poets and book designers associated with Okanagan College and Kalamalka Press, as well as the Caetani Centre, gathered others together to be involved in the production of *P.S.* as a chapbook. The publishing project was originally proposed to the Press by Kerry Gilbert. Once the manuscript was accepted, poet John Lent edited it and Jason Dewinetz designed the chapbook, matching the elegant and rather restrained typeface Bembo to the elegiac tone of the manuscript. Jason produced the book with digitally printed pages and a letterpress cover. Once

"My creation of this Journal is an effort to build a nucleus of community motivated by creative spirit and seeking to connect and share. Common purpose and passion are human forces that will create union. Penn Kemp and I were brought together in 2015 by an interest in nourishing creative expression. Twice we have been in close geographic proximity, but circumstances prevented meeting, yet creative energy continues to forge generative connection and a union that is building creative the community." —Karen Close

APPLAUDING PENN KEMP'S RIVER REVERIE

Katerina Vaughan Fretwell

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lf_apKTzpgQ&t=126s

Through playful trickster words and alliteration, Penn Kemp leads the reader/viewer into an appreciation and comprehension of what we have lost and will lose.

Dedicated to her grandchildren Ula and Kai, Kemp's opening poem, *River Revery*, pulls no punches: "Water abounds here, with this river// five times normal width for winter ... Climate change is certainly upon us/ from eleven below to eleven above in/ hours ... Weird how all reverts, reverberates in/ spring clarity as old detritus is dredged." The Thames River, which runs through Kemp's hometown of London, Ontario, is presented as main character and environmental symbol. Penn's poems depict the severe impact of our unpredictable weather systems and ends in alliterative wordplay, with Spring standing for hope and renewal, echoed in the ending of the closing poem, *Snow*: "Tundra swans have been spotted, thousands/ to alight on snow melt by the marsh. Soon/ surely. Spring. Again."

the work was printed, Kerry Gilbert folded the pages while Jason printed the wrappers. Further sessions had the two of them settling in to sew the covers. Thus the chapbook itself is an exercise in creative community.

We celebrate how much creativity, skill, cooperation and experience is involved in such a project. When readers pick up a copy of this book from Kalamalka Press, the creative process will come full circle. May you enjoy *P.S.* as much as we enjoyed the process of writing it.

Penn Kemp and Sharon Thesen

Penn Kemp, poet, playwright and performer from London, Ont., has recently published *River Revery*, *Fox Haunts*, *Local Heroes* and *Barbaric Cultural Practice*. www.pennkemp.weebly.com.

Sharon Thesen, poet, writer, editor and UBC Okanagan emeritus professor of Creative Writing, lives in Lake Country, B.C. Her most recent book is *The Receiver*. www.sharonthesen.com

Here are two poems from our ongoing conversation, published in *P.S.*, Kalamalka Press, Vernon, B.C., 2020.

CONVERSE for Sharon

I offer you the scarlet of cardinals in return for a glimpse of a red-shafted flicker at your feeder. Let 'em meet.

We are in the same weather thousandsof miles apart and yet I carry an imageof you shoveling alongside the walk,heaving snow with a cheeky grin thatby the end of the driveway is grimace.

Though we talk, I can't quite figure outwhat you're saying. Your mouth moves,your lips shape words that fly like birdson the frost breath, cartoon apparitions, and conversation curls in upon itself.

Response quickens into a new poem.Exhalation is exhilaration in the cold.

INJURED for Penn

For the hazards of life for people making things anyway, pottery and such, and then painting the plates. For the guy up on the ladder trimming tall hedges in the spring, making them level and elegant. For the poor quail I found dead on the stones perfectly beautiful his curved head-feather proud and princely. For the big pine tree leaning ever more to the right pushed by invisible energies, the astrological days leading this person and that to do the things they do, & putting their back out. These recently: two people slipped on ice one person tripped over the dog one person had a heart attack one person lost an eye when a stone flew up & Penn, sprained by a fall after finishing a book.

The hidden fox taking his tax? or just Spring's marvelous distractions.

THE WISDOM OF LEAVES



Harold Rhenisch, the tree whisperer

I learned to write poetry by pruning fruit trees. It is a form of sculpture that shapes light and air.

Poetry pours in vertical rivers out of the soil. It leafs out. In his book *The Metamorphosis of Plants*, the scientist, Thuringian state administrator and poet, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, set the leaf as the original form of all plants. In his conception, all other forms – branch, bud, bud-scale, root, blossom, fruit, seed, ovary and twig – followed. Blossom, bud-scale, seed and ovary are expressions of the flat of the leaf. The branches and roots express its veins. Its twigs are extensions of its stems. All are the leaf, opening.

To prune an apple tree is to work with its leafing out. One holds in mind an image of what the tree would look like in a new form, as the evening's first coyotes begin to call from the hills. One sees the clipping developing towards that form. One cuts out the branches that don't fit this story, to leave space for new ones to grow into the air and the light. One learns to pay attention.

It's never a personal judgment that determines whether a cut will be fruitful. It is the action of sun and wind, of starlight, water, frost and bees in the coming year. A pruner learns to read that, out in the wind.

Like other songs of power and prayer, every apple and every tree is a call and response. When the wind enters the big cottonwood trees of the valley floor, for instance, they meet it with the sound of a river rushing over a bed of stones. They *are* a river. It pours vertically through their trunks.

Everything is pouring forth. The Similkameen, my blue valley in the mountains, tumbles with shale slopes. When you walk across them, they say their name: screeeeee! You are walking across a moving sea of sound, made by feet and stone together. I was young when I learned this art. The scree slopes were so high and steep they were the sky. White mountain goats tracked across them single file, always with their young in the centre of the herd. A kilometre below them, bees settled on wind-tossed blossoms of apple and pear branches rooted in gravel. I moved among them. Wind tugged at my shirt. When I was four years old in the spring wind, I was helping my mother hang the washing on the line. Suddenly, a clatter of rocks dislodged by the goats cracked across the valley air. The call of that sound lifted my head. I was goat and boy and the moment between them. I walked away from the cold wet sheets. My mother came to look, too. Dust trailed across the sky. The wet washing slapped me across the back. It snapped and shouted on the line.

The art came one midnight in the early summer. It was a time for children to be sleeping. My father had fetched me from bed, where I wasn't

It's never a personal judgment that determines whether a cut will be fruitful. It is the action of sun and wind, of starlight, water, frost and bees in the coming year. A pruner learns to read that, out in the wind.



Top: Red Haven Peaches
Above: Trembling Aspen



sleeping. It was an adult gesture, and I understood it as one, and was grateful. My father led me outside, sat me on the porch railing, and together we watched lightning breaking out of dozens of points in the floor of a cloud a kilometre overhead. More and more points broke out, until there was lightning cracking out of the clouds across the entire sky. It was close and black overhead. The house shook in the thunder. I felt each of my bones vibrate like tuning forks, just faintly, like split pieces of wood.

It was an early exercise in reading my body in the world. When I stepped back into the house, the brightness of the electric light was so intense I had to screw my eyes shut. My mother led me down the hall, then, laid me in bed, kissed me on the cheek and turned out the light. Later, when the room was quiet and I closed my eyes, there was only the sky. When I woke in the morning, light poured through the window and lit up beams of dust. Lightning was in every stretch of my body. I was lightning slipping out of bed and walking.

When I was five years old, I learned to read. My book was the jigsaw-puzzle park of the Ponderosa pine below my childhood house. She rose out of the dry bank of an ancient river fan, among yarrow, snow buckwheat, sagebrush, prickly pear cactus and bunchgrass. High above them, each intricately-shaped flake of her bark was a thought, laid down in layers of orange and gold. I sat on a branch and lifted them apart one by one. I held them in my hand. I brought them up to the light, turned them over and slowed my thoughts down to the speed of their patterns. I believed that if I could just understand hard enough, I would be looking at the entire language of the world. A blue jay leaped through the branches above me, knocking down twigs. Occasionally a pine cone dropped onto the rocks below me and skittered down the slope of cactus and snow buckwheat: wooden water.

Fifty years later, I was living on the Cariboo Plateau. In those years, all the forests died, fallen to a blue fungus carried by tiny beetles, whose larvae burrowed under its bark. One early winter afternoon at the end of the light I knocked the bark off the trees in the forest behind my house with a kick, baring the intricate calligraphy and writing of these insects. I was back, reading my pine tree in the Similkameen, except now these manuscripts lay in the wind and snow across the high plateau, under scudding clouds and spreading stars. I knew, just as I had so long before, that if I could gather all these bark codices together, I would have a library. It would be a map of the universe, written in a non-human language. That day, I paged through a wing of that library. I squeezed through the strands of barbed-wire fences, on moose trails, watched by red foxes and wandering cattle. I had a big black wolf-dog at my side. A raven flew overhead. The snow was violet on its drifted peaks and deep purple in its shadows. The first stars were out. The sky was apricot on the horizon. I was reading again.

Life leafs out everywhere. On the dry grassland hills of the Similkameen Valley, leaves of lichen open on stones stranded by glacial rivers. Many of these tumbled stones are high in the sky. Each is a well. It gathers rain. Their



Top: Filbert and Stag Horn Sumac In Back
Above: Photo Transparent Apples

shadows, away from the sun, keep the rain from evaporating away. In these small patches of damp soil, wild roses sprout from seeds dropped by birds. They extend knotted roots. They hang on.

Trees are just as much stones opening into the sun. A thorny sapling apple tree in blossom is as much a tree as its young, thorny sapling or the mature tree in September, with branches hanging to the ground heavy with fruit. In all that time, the seed that grew into the tree is as much the tree as the newest leaf breaking out of last year's bud, or its pink-tipped white blossoms, or its aromatic fruit. You could just as well call it "blossom tree" or "perfume-fruited rose tree."

This is the wisdom of a box of apples smelling of roses that I bring up from the orchard in September and set down in the shade by the back door for the night frost to cool them. They live in the air. The branches of their trees are roots, reaching into the sun. The apples themselves are thickenings of flow – sculptures of time. They have beautiful blossoms, to attract bees and people. Their scent carries for miles, to attract bears. Bears eat the perfumed fruit, wander on, and shit out the seeds in mounds of fertilizer. In this way, apples walk across the land.

Apples are no fools. Their perfume evaporates within 24 hours of harvest. Scented fruit has no point in the winter, when bears curl up under trees and stone. Apples that have fallen must remain hidden from bears, because they have already found the earth. Moving on inside a bear is too risky then. Then comes the winter, when both bears and apples hibernate. Then comes the spring, the birds find winter's apples, fermenting in the grass and the thickening sun. Now the birds carry them, dropping the seeds nearby, never far. In this way, they deepen the thickets first laid down by bears. The apples themselves have the shape of the human mouth. They attract humans in this way – inviting themselves to a feast. One just wants to bite them. Their seeds are so bitter, though, that while walking on you will throw them away. Don't worry. You're not throwing anything away. They will sprout in time. You are doing the apple's work.

In this way, they weave the world in the image of their branches, extending out into the land, and on the very tip, a leaf, going further. That's you. That's the way things are.

Harold Rhenisch, now a Vernon, B.C., resident, was born three months early, in a blizzard, on January 5, 1958, and grew up on an orchard in Cawston, in the Similkameen Valley, the second son of German immigrant Hans Rhenisch and second generation Canadian Dorothy Leipe. He started writing poetry when he was 15, under the dramatist Bill Greenland. From 1976-1980 he studied Creative Writing at the University of Victoria. From 1981-1992 Rhenisch worked in the vineyards and orchards of the Okanagan and the Similkameen, eventually running his own pruning, grafting and nursery business. Rhenisch's poetry explores the land on which he lives and where he grew up in an immigrant culture developing orchards and vineyards in the fertile Okanagan Valley. His new book *The Tree Whisperer* is forthcoming from Gaspereau Press, Fall 2021.

MY JOURNEY TO TRUTH



Yvonne Salewski

A few years ago, I attended a seminar facilitated by Jan Phillips, author of several books, including *No Ordinary Time: The Rise of Spiritual Intelligence and Evolutionary Creativity*. What an amazing weekend that was! She put forward ideas I had not considered, one of which has truly empowered me to tell my story, to speak my heart and to allow my experiences to move others to share in their own journeys. I awakened to her challenge:

“Each day you awaken to a canvas of twenty-four hours, ready for what only YOU can create.”

I believe that when truth cannot be found, real truth, the kind that leads us to share in the richness of our inner worlds, unapologetically and unabashedly, we abandon ourselves, and our true creative potential may be lost.

Gabor Maté, MD, author of *When the Body Says No*, maintains that it is essential for our health and well-being to use our voices and allow our experiences and emotions to be known. The consequence of not finding an outlet to share with others can be tragic. Maté makes a compelling argument supporting the link between life-threatening illnesses and emotional repression. The body will speak for you, if you do not.

“There are two basic values that can assist us to heal and remain whole, if we honour them. The first value is our own creative self.” –Gabor Maté

With my dear friend Mary Lou Johnson, I have facilitated classes to help others find their voices and connect with the creativity of their own spiritual journeys. We dedicated one of our courses to looking at the Hero’s Journey and how we can apply that model to the seeing of our lives in their unfolding. It was not comfortable for many, and we felt some disappointment around that. How sad it is to live in a society that still favours hiding our stories and not allowing our human frailties to be shared.

Let’s all push the envelope, shall we? Let the wealth of our knowledge and the richness of our experiences open up for us all as a means for healing and creative inspiration. Our stories can be a tool for others to learn and grow from. And so I write: *Am I a Hero in my own journey?*

I would never think of myself as a hero. Nor had I ever really considered how my journey would bring me to the place I am today. How does my journey make me a hero? A friend said, “You are so courageous!” I was puzzled by that remark. I was in the midst of a very painful episode with my chronic illness – this mish-mash of autoimmune disorders that leaves more questions than answers. I could barely get myself off the couch at the time, and I hurt everywhere. “Courageous?” I wondered. I looked back in contemplation about my life.

“Each day you awaken to a canvas of twenty-four hours, ready for what only YOU can create.” – Jan Phillips

I believe my unhappiness contributed to the progression of my illness; indeed I wonder if unhappiness had not caused my illness. I felt nervous energy building up inside that had no means to escape.

As a young person, I had wanted so much to learn more, experience more, and most of all understand what my purpose on this planet is and why I am even here. Could my birth have been a mistake? I felt frozen – trapped in a life that made me unhappy and unfulfilled. Depression and even thoughts of suicide plagued me in my teenage years.

I took my first big step into the larger world, onto the canvas of my life and ready to create, when I was sixteen. At this age, however, I thought “finding myself” meant obtaining an identity for the purpose of feeling as if I was somebody important. I pursued a modeling career in Japan and fantasized being able to return home from overseas with a new construction of who I was. “I’m an international model! I travel around the world. I make lots of money. My family is very proud of me and they really love me. Maybe I can help them if I am successful and then I will really be the hero; their hero!”

My naïve teenage plan came crashing down when the first signs of illness began to appear. I was losing the identity my ego was bent on creating. My ego’s loss saddened me deeply, and I continued on my dark journey of not knowing who I was for many years. This dark journey led me to many teachers in many religious and spiritual traditions. The path seemed unfruitful as I could not find anything that truly satisfied my spiritual hunger or calmed the storm brewing inside me.

In this slow-moving quest to find meaning, I settled into a very mundane and yet safe life, much like the life I had had as a child. I was sickeningly unhappy. I use the word “sickeningly” because I believe my unhappiness contributed to the progression of my illness; indeed I wonder if unhappiness had not caused my illness. I felt nervous energy building up inside that had no means to escape. I felt trapped in my own “pain body.”

I took great strides to release myself, finally, from the bonds of the life I could no longer stand. I chose to travel and I fell in love in Mexico. This love pushed me out of my life, which I despised, and into a new one far away. Although love for a man was the catalyst, I was unknowingly being called to begin my biggest journey – learning to love myself. It was a rocky journey, to put it mildly. I was tested and challenged greatly. I took chances that I had never taken before and reached out for help in ways I never thought I would. This led me to my most significant spiritual teacher. He lived a quiet and simple life in a small coastal village and, over the course of many months, taught me to feel the wonder and beauty around me, but most importantly, to let go of incessant thought and enjoy the stillness of each moment.

Letting go of thought, heedless to consequences, allowed me to become a mother. Thank God for this divine intervention. It seemed unlikely that I would ever experience motherhood, but here I was entering a new chapter of my journey. Although I had great hopes and dreams for the family in creation and the love relationship, I realized it was an illusion that was soon over. Then I was experiencing a new “true love,” the undying, unwavering, untainted love of a child.

Again, I experienced resistance to the next call of my journey. I did not



View from Mamacita, the name of the home in Acapulco which I chose to leave.

want to return home to Canada. "What was I going to do in Canada alone with a baby and an illness?" My mental chatter terrified me. As I looked out my open window, admiring the most beautiful sights and sounds of the ocean waves crashing against the rocks, the bluest sky ever, palm trees swaying in the warm tropical air, squirrels playing and birds singing, I cried out loud, "GOD, please help me get out of here!"

Somehow, some way, I managed to find the strength to pack all my belongings in the suitcase I had come with and bundle my now one-year-old baby. I left. I found a new place to call home in the Okanagan region and began this most incredible journey as a mother. I returned to school part-time and completed a degree in sociology, a longing I'd had my whole life. I continued my search for meaning and Divine Connection to all that is. My life has had many challenges, but so much love. And for that, I am deeply grateful.

Yvonne Salewski, now 50 years old, continues to live in the Okanagan Valley, a place she loves deeply with all its natural beauty and close connections with like-minded people she calls her family. Her son, now 18, has enjoyed a joyous childhood growing up in the Okanagan. Yvonne has dedicated her life to parenting and volunteering in various capacities, her favourite being the work she has done for the past 13 years with other single mothers and children. At the age of 43, she was very proud to receive a Bachelor of Arts degree majoring in Sociology. The one message she likes to share with others is to not let health challenges or age deter you from pursuing your goals. Yvonne is now happily engaged and is currently working on a project to bring meditation and spiritual teachings to those starting out on their healing journeys.

CARVING INTO NEW INSIGHTS

Cara B. Hochhalter



My book interprets forty stories from the Gospels through block print images created by me. I believe there are universal truths in the stories.

My book, *A Challenging Peace in the Life and Stories of Jesus* is for anyone who is curious about the stories of Jesus, yearns for peace in their own lives and in the world today, or appreciates the intersections of art, story, faith and justice. The book interprets forty stories from the Gospels through block print images created by me. I believe there are universal truths in the stories around Jesus that reach beyond the limits of Christianity and may help to unite us all in creating a more peace-filled world.

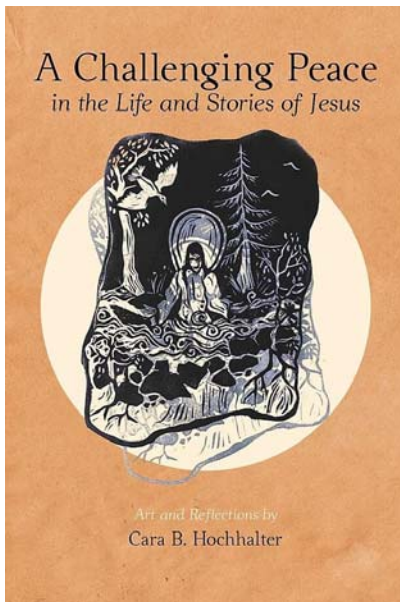
In the book, the relief print images, biblical texts and my own reflections hold up Jesus as, ultimately, a peacemaker. With three interpretations of the different stories (39 from the Gospels and one from Isaiah), we are invited to be challenged. I believe Jesus offered us ingredients for making peace: truth-telling, love, compassion, forgiveness – and they reach beyond the limits of Christianity.

Jesus's life and stories are a challenge to us and a challenge for us to live in this way. The stories engage us to seek an individual relationship with God in our unique ways of understanding God, and to hold an inclusive love for others. It is a challenge to draw from this faith to put principles of truth-telling, love, compassion and forgiveness into action to promote peace.

There are three parts to each of the interpretations of the stories. First is the visual image. After meditation and study of the biblical texts, the images were created through the process of block printing. Each block was carved so that what would be dark was raised in relief, and the white areas were removed so that the ink did not remain there. Ink was rolled over the block and paper was placed on top. A spoon was used to press the paper against the block and then pulled off carefully. The print always looks backwards from what was carved on the block, which is a little surprising. But, after all, Jesus's stories were often a reversal of what people expected.

The interaction of light and dark is important in each image. One cannot have one without the other because the light defines the dark, and vice versa. I find this to be theological as we look to the whole. As an individual or a small group, you might begin by looking at the image first. What do you see there? Are there parts of it that make you wonder or question? Do you see humour in it? What do you remember about the story that it interprets? Does it remind you of something in your own life?

The second interpretation is the scripture text itself, taken from the New Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible. You might read it in a fresh way by paying attention to the visual descriptions. What do you see in the story? Is this depicted in the block print? Are there parts of the scripture that you



The process itself seems to unleash a creative spirit that brings surprising interpretations.

have not imagined before? Does the art offer new ideas about the story? How do the text and the art affirm the idea of Jesus as peacemaker? Do you feel yourself being challenged in some ways?

The third interpretation is my reflection on both the text and the image. I share how new insights become relevant through the process of creating each block print. The images themselves become interpretations rather than illustrations, and the texts take on new meaning through the art.

When I started creating images through block printmaking to accompany spiritual ideas and scriptural texts, I discovered something unexpected. The process itself seems to unleash a creative spirit that brings surprising interpretations. First, I meditate on a text, noticing the visual aspects and letting the whole text unfold in my imagination. Then I make several pencil sketches the same size as the block that I will be carving. The sketches are adapted until one feels right, paying attention to the areas that will be light and those that will be dark.

In the image, light and dark are defined by each other, each one dependent on the other. I find this to be theological and hopeful, as we see this in life as well: the light and the dark, the joy and the despair, the peace and the conflict – all under an umbrella of Divine Love that yearns for wholeness.

In cutting the blocks, I sometimes struggle with proportions of the human figures and getting the faces and hands to look all right. Amazingly, the figures take on personalities of their own, quite apart from my intentions.

As I mentioned, the printing process involves rolling ink over the block, placing paper on top, pressing it all with the back of a spoon, and then pulling back the paper to view the image. When I like the image, I may play with adding a second “ghost” or “shadow” image, either by turning the block upside down or shifting it a bit. This happened quite by accident one time, but I liked how it added another dimension – and sometimes illuminating ideas. Look at the photo of the image on the cover of the book. When I shifted the block to print again, see what appeared on the chest of Jesus. It reminds me that God said, “You are my beloved!”

I refer to the visual image when writing the reflection. Often, aspects of the image and what it means are surprising. I also love to hear what other people see in the images. So often they bring fresh perspectives of the story that have not occurred to me.

In workshops, I let participants experience this same process – meditation on a text, using art materials (clay, wire or watercolour) as tools to interpret scripture. I stress that it is not about creating beautiful art, but using the process of art-making to allow the scriptures to be revealed in new ways that are relevant to their lives. It is always surprising how Creative Spirit seems to be at work in this process!

What Readers Say About the Book

"In a brilliant combination of visual creativity and interpretive sensitivity, Cara Hochhalter has crafted an insightful series of meditations rooted in the life and teaching of Jesus. Her intricate and imaginative block prints reveal new aspects of the scriptural passages that we would not realize by attending to words alone. Infused with pathos, exegetical acumen, as well as touches of wit and whimsy, this book challenges us to respond to the loving path of peace woven throughout the gospel."

— Judith H. Newman, Professor of Hebrew Bible and Early Judaism, Emmanuel College of Victoria University, and Department for the Study of Religion, University of Toronto

Reverend Cara B. Hochhalter is a retired United Church of Christ (UCC) minister. She received her Masters of Divinity from United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities in Minnesota, where she studied the intersections of art, theology and justice. She says, "I find that the process of creating images becomes a means to break into biblical texts and themes that are meaningful in today's world." Cara is an artist, a teacher, a peacemaker, and has served as minister for a church in Charlemont, Massachusetts, for ten years. She now resides in Hyde Park, New York, with her husband, Jeffrey.

The book is available from Wood Lake Publishing:
<https://tinyurl.com/r2r8h85>

Maundy Thursday Foot-Washing

In the account from the book of John, it was the night before the Passover meal, where Jesus had supper with the disciples. This is the only Gospel version that includes a foot-washing. Jesus sets an example of humility, of forgetting ourselves in serving one another. But Simon Peter is so closed-up that, in the image, his toes are curled under as he tries to refuse to let Jesus wash his feet. He asks why Jesus doesn't wash his hands and head as well. Jesus says that if one has bathed, only his feet need washing. (Remember the dusty roads they surely walked each day.)

Jesus says that he is setting an example for them of serving others in this intimate and humble way. He breaks down the divisions of servant and master by recognizing equitable relationships of care and compassion. This story of Peter's refusal makes me wonder how often I resist opportunities to make myself vulnerable to others in ways of serving and/or receiving blessing. After all, Jesus looks pretty excited to wash our feet!



From the Lord's Prayer

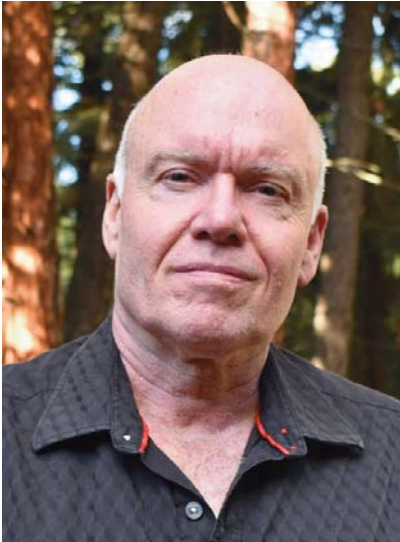
We hear the "Lord's Prayer" a little differently in the version from Luke 11:1-4. I focused on feeding and forgiving, the two aspects of the prayer Jesus taught. Being hungry and being in debt make people poor in our country and the world. Then, so often people become victims of their own poverty.

In my image there are two loaves of bread, and the whole image is also in the shape of bread. Jesus implies that our food comes from God's great ecology. How do we show our gratitude? What is our responsibility as consumers in a system of food production and distribution? Are the ways that we are fed helpful or hurtful for the world's hungry? The hands in the image are clasped in demonstration of reconciliation and forgiveness. Perhaps God's kingdom (kin-dom) comes on earth as we focus on feeding and forgiving, on bread and friendship, and finding equitable solutions for those who are in debt.

I turned the block upside down for a secondary printing, which adds complexity and dimension to the image. Peace is not a simple process. It may seem like a tangle of issues and politics, yet Jesus affirms that feeding and forgiving play a large part in moving us towards peace.



REGENERATION BY DESIGN



Douglas McLeod, PhD

We are only now beginning to understand that we have the capacity to regenerate both our world and ourselves. Design is the key to this process, since it mediates between our external and internal worlds. The things we design do have the potential to change the environment (for better or worse), but in the process the things we design also, literally and figuratively, change our minds.

In the developing field of regenerative design, we *can* change the way we relate to the world around us. We can restore rather than destroy; we can produce rather than consume; and we can purify rather than pollute – not just the Earth but our bodies and minds as well. This is the potential of regenerative design.

The power of regenerative design is most evident in the built environment. The built environment consists of our neighbourhoods, towns, cities and infrastructure. We are very close to being able to create communities that generate more energy than they consume; clean more water than they pollute; grow more food than they require; sequester more carbon than they emit; recycle more waste than they produce; and even restore more of the natural environment than we occupy. This will create a sea change in the way we live.

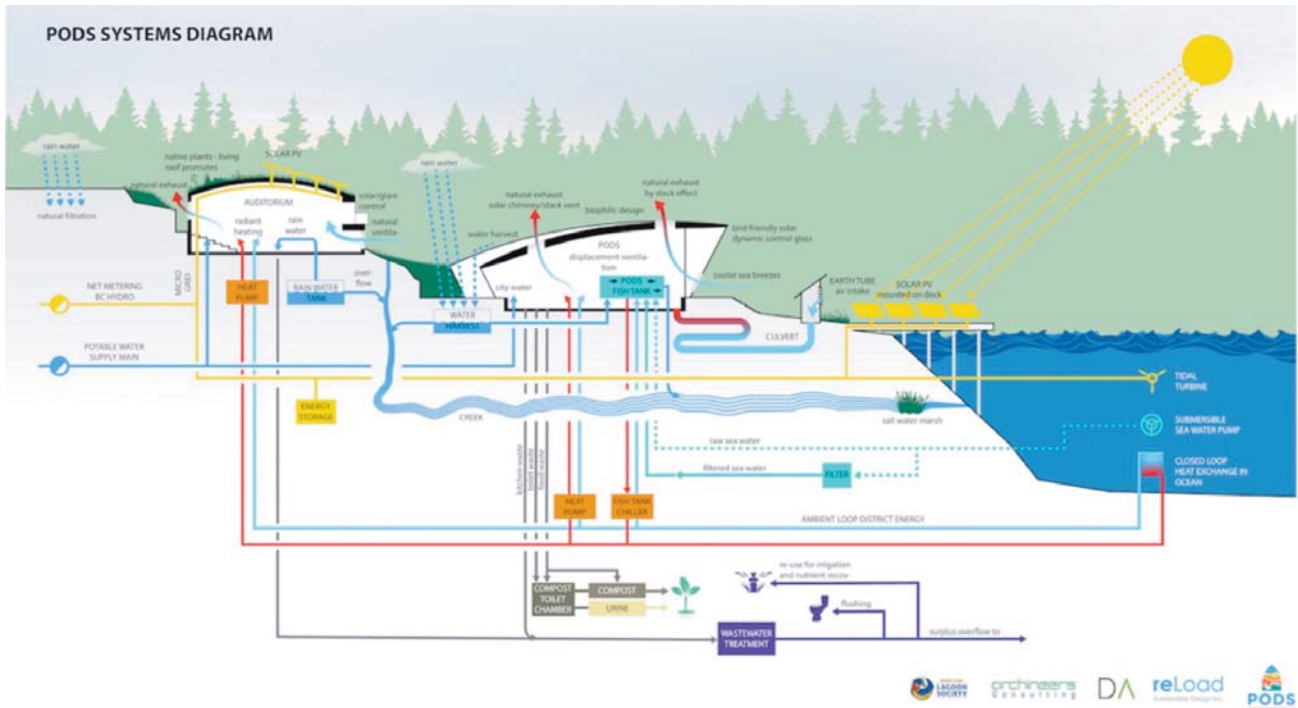
We don't need any miraculous new technologies to accomplish this, but we do need to change our way of thinking. As Gandhi said, "If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change."

This link between our mental and physical environments is the critical aspect of regeneration, and it does begin with how we think. Nobel laureate Gerald Edelman has suggested that your memories are akin to water flowing over the landscape of your mind. The greater the flow of water, or the more you remember an event or experience, the deeper the creeks and gullies become that funnel your memories. On the other hand, if the memory stops flowing that creek or gully may be filled in and cease to exist.

There are two important points about this model. First, your mindscape is flexible, adaptive and always evolving. This is referred to as neuroplasticity. Second, while you may not be able to control your experiences in life, you can control how you remember them. If you dwell on an embarrassing event, then you will dig a deeper and deeper rut in your mind. Focus on the positive and you will create a different kind of mindscape that you can use to regenerate yourself.

Neuroplasticity is almost miraculous. Stroke victims, for example, can learn to use injured limbs once again. Obsessive compulsive behaviours can

...we do need to change our way of thinking. As Gandhi said, "If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change."



PODS Kelowna-based engineer, Trevor Butler, principal and CEO of Archineers created this image in partnership with Martina Soderlund of reLoad Sustainable Design for Jeremiah Deutscher (Deutscher Architecture) and Michael Jackson of the Ruby Lake Lagoon Society (RLLS). It shows how the systems and components of the Pender Harbour Ocean Discovery Station (PODS) will work together with the natural environment to create a superb example of regenerative design.

Physical changes in the brain depend for their creation on a mental state in the mind – the state called attention.

be channeled into more useful activities. To do so, however, requires significant effort and depends on “deliberate practice.”

Deliberate practice is the act of repeating a task while paying attention. It is that simple and that difficult. It is difficult because you need to focus your attention on what you’re doing – without distractions. It is simple because you can start slowly, but through repetition after repetition you can improve your skills – any skill.

I see this constantly in my students who are studying architecture. We ask them in their first design to draw by hand studios, and the results are not pretty. Drawing, however, is not just a means of graphic representation – it is a means of thinking. If they persevere (and it really is about perseverance), their drawings become better and better and better as they think more and more deeply about their designs. In truth, you need to produce 100 bad drawings to get one good one and many more to become a good designer. There are no shortcuts, but by investing your attention in the skill you want to master, you can achieve incredible results.

The formula is straightforward: Focus all your attention on what you’re doing. Don’t allow distractions. Start slowly, performing the correct motions and sequences, and then repeat, again and again and again. Focus is critical. As some researchers have noted, “Physical changes in the brain depend for their creation on a mental state in the mind – the state called attention. Paying attention matters. It matters not only for the size of the brain’s representation of this or that part of the body’s surface, of this or that muscle. It matters for the dynamic structure of the very circuits of the brain and for the brain’s ability to remake itself.”

But that’s only part of the story. In reference to a 1995 experiment by

Design mediates between the internal reality of our thoughts and the external reality of our circumstances. In doing so, design changes both the structure of our minds and the structure of our environment.

Alvar Pascual-Leone, the same researchers noted, “What Pascual-Leone did was have one group of volunteers practice a five-finger piano exercise, and a comparable group merely think about practicing it. They focused on each finger movement in turn, essentially playing the simple piece in their heads, one note at a time. Actual physical practice produced changes in each volunteer’s motor cortex, as expected. But so did mere mental rehearsal, and to the same degree as that brought about by physical practice. Motor circuits become active during pure mental imagery. Like actual, physical movements, imagined movements trigger synaptic change at the cortical level. Merely thinking about moving produced brain changes comparable to those triggered by actually moving.” In other words, imagination is essential to the structuring of our minds through deliberate practice.

When it comes to design, deliberate practice as a means of enhancing your imagination is essential. Design mediates between the internal reality of our thoughts and the external reality of our circumstances. In doing so, design changes both the structure of our minds and the structure of our environment. We can do it well or we can do it badly, but in the end we all play out Gandhi’s quote and create a feedback loop between our minds and the world around us.

Deliberate practice is the key to regenerative design, which in turn will enable us to unlock the potential of the planet and ourselves in a positive and healthy manner. In this respect, we can use regenerative design to create a place where our physical and mental environments don’t just live in harmony, but in synergy. A place that cleanses and restores the air we breathe, the water we drink and our bodies, minds and souls. A place where our minds work with our bodies, which work with our rooms which work with our homes which work with our neighbourhoods which work with our cities which work with our countries which work with our planet—in one seamless mesh of shared, healthy and sustainable mental and physical resources for the greater good of everyone.

Over the last 30 years, **Dr. Douglas MacLeod** has been creating visionary projects that have transformed the arts, architecture and education. From pioneering work in virtual reality at the Banff Centre to eduSourceCanada – the country’s largest e-learning initiative to date – MacLeod has led the work that defines our future. A registered architect, he is currently the Chair of the Centre for Architecture at Athabasca University – an online program that has quickly grown to be one of the largest and most innovative in the world.

RAIC Centre for Architecture at Athabasca University

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SAGE-ING WITH CREATIVE SPIRIT, GRACE & GRATITUDE

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Sage-ing With Creative Spirit, Grace and Gratitude exists to honour the transformational power of creativity. We are a quarterly journal intended as an initiative for collaboration and sharing. We present the opportunity for the free exchange of wisdom gleaned from creative engagement. We invite all ages to contribute their discoveries.

Sage-ing is about seeking - satisfying inner gnawing and transforming it to knowing and action. Ageing can be alchemy when one allows the realisation that to *Know Thyself* and contribute that knowing to our culture is indeed one of life's highest purposes. That knowing brings the gratitude, grace and integrity that a life deserves. The creative journey into self is a strong aid to health and well-being for the individual and to our culture.

This journal exists for all those serious in exploring their creativity, in a chosen expression. It is a forum for publication and exposure to other artists, both novice and established. This journal is an easel for any form of artistry undertaken out of personal intuition and imagination.