

*DANCING IN
THE SHADOWS
OF THE MOON*

MACHAELLE SMALL WRIGHT



PERELANDRA

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JEFFERSONTON, VIRGINIA*

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by Machaelle Small Wright

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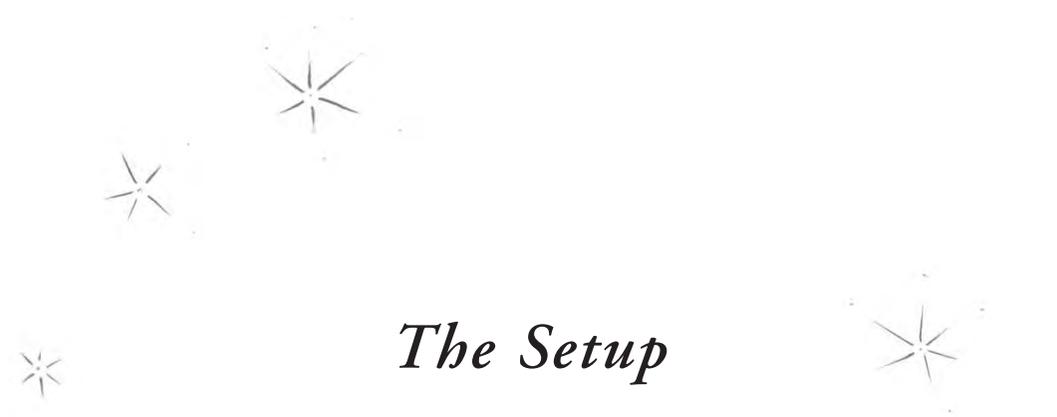
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*To David,
Tex, Butch, Mickey,
Max, Seamus, Lorpuris
and Hyperithon.
Thank you.*

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The Setup

THE CHOCOLATE SUGGESTION

THIS IS IMPORTANT. Have a large box of the best chocolates you can find at your fingertips while reading this book. This may not make any sense to you now, but about halfway through the book you will be grateful for this suggestion.

THE KEY WORD:

EXPANSION

This is also important. There will be times while you are reading when you will look to the heavens and ask the question, “What is this book about and why am I reading it?” That’s when you’ll need to turn to this page and read the word “Expansion.” Then pop a couple of those chocolates in your mouth, and continue reading.

READER INSTRUCTIONS

Pace yourself well. While reading this book, pay close attention to your physical and emotional reactions. If you *begin* to feel uncomfortable, put the book down and let what you have read settle in. This may take fifteen minutes, a couple of hours, a couple of days or several weeks. When you feel comfortable again, continue reading.

For those of you who use flower essences, I suggest that you test yourself for essences after each reading session. This will assist you in integrating the material. And for those of you who use MAP (the Co-Creative White Brotherhood Medical Assistance Program), tell your team that you are reading this book and have frequent MAP sessions. If you do not know what MAP or flower essences are, have patience. They are explained in this book

SETTING THE TONE

Imagine you are in the middle of Manhattan, and you are suddenly faced with this somewhat defiant-looking bag lady. She's clutching several junk-filled shopping bags. She's wearing an old, stained raincoat that you know is going to smell if you get too close, and she has several scarves loosely draped around her shoulders. She has one of those umbrella hats plunked on her head—the umbrella open, of course. She's wearing a high-top sneaker on one foot and a running shoe on the other. Only the running shoe has the added benefit of a shoelace. And she has on stockings. You know this because she likes to wear them rolled down to her ankles. She puts down her bags and starts scratching herself. You react a little. She notices your reaction and explains that she scratches so much because her neurons are on fire. At hearing her razor-edged voice, you react again. She tells you she got her raspy voice because she has to yell all the time because nobody ever listens to her. Her name is Trudy, and she starts talking:

TRUDY:

I know what you're thinkin'; you're thinkin' I'm crazy.
You think I give a hoot? You people
look at my shopping bags,
call me crazy 'cause I save this junk. What should we call the
ones who
buy it?
It's my belief we all, at one time or another,
secretly ask ourselves the question,
"Am *I* crazy?"

In my case, the answer came back: A resounding
YES!

You're thinkin': How does a person know if they're crazy
or not? Well, sometimes you don't know. Sometimes you
can go through life suspecting you *are*
but never really knowing for sure. Sometimes you know for sure
'cause you got so many people tellin' you you're crazy
that it's your word against everyone else's.

Another sign is when you see life so clear sometimes
you black out.

This is your typical visionary variety
who has flashes of insight
but can't get anyone to listen to 'em
'cause their insights make 'em sound so *crazy!*

In my case,
the symptoms are subtle
but unmistakable to the trained eye. For instance,
here I am,
standing at the corner of "Walk, Don't Walk,"
waiting for these aliens from outer space to show up.
I call that crazy, don't you? If I were sane,
I should be waiting for the light like everybody else.

They're late
as usual.

You'd think,
as much as they know about time travel,
they could be on time *once* in a while.

I could kick myself.
I told 'em I'd meet 'em on the corner of "Walk, Don't Walk"
'round lunchtime.

Do they even know what "lunch" means?
I doubt it.

And "round." Why did I say "round"? Why wasn't I more
specific? This is so typical of what I do.

Now they're probably stuck somewhere in time, wondering what I meant by "round lunchtime." And when they get here, they'll be dying to know what "lunchtime" means. And when they find out it means going to Howard Johnson's for fried clams, I wonder, will they be just a bit let down? I dread having to explain tartar sauce.

This problem of time just points out how far apart we really are. See, our ideas about time and space are different from theirs. When we think of time, we tend to think of clock radios, coffee breaks, afternoon naps, leisure time, halftime activities, parole time, doing time, Minute Rice, instant tea, mid-life crises, that time of the month, cocktail hour. And if I should suddenly mention *space*—aha! I bet most of you thought of your closets. But when they think of time and space, they *really* think of Time and Space.

They asked me once my thoughts on infinity and I told 'em with all I had to think about, infinity was not on my list of things to think about. It could be time on an ego trip, for all I know. After all, when you're pressed for time, infinity may as well not be there. They said, to them, infinity is time-released time.

Frankly, infinity doesn't affect me personally one way or the other.

You think too long about infinity, you could go stark raving mad. But I don't ever want to sound negative about going crazy. I don't want to over-romanticize it either, but frankly, goin' crazy was the *best* thing ever happened to me.

I don't say it's for everybody;
some people couldn't cope.

But for me it came at a time when nothing else seemed to be working. I got the kind of madness Socrates talked about, "A divine release of the soul from the yoke of custom and convention." I refuse to be intimidated by reality anymore.

After all, what is reality anyway? Nothin' but a collective hunch. My space chums think reality was once a primitive method of crowd control that got out of hand.

In my view, it's absurdity dressed up in a three-piece business suit.

I made some studies, and reality is the leading cause of stress amongst those in touch with it. I can take it in small doses, but as a lifestyle I found it too confining.

It was just too needful;

it expected me to be there for it *all* the time, and with all I have to do—

I had to let something go.

Now, since I put reality on a back burner, my days are jam-packed and fun-filled. Like some days, I go hang out around Seventh Avenue; I love to do this old joke:

I wait for some music-loving tourist from one of the hotels on Central Park to go up and ask someone,

"How do I get to Carnegie Hall?"

Then I run up and yell,

"Practice!"

The expression on people's faces is priceless. I never could've done stuff like that when I was in my *right* mind.

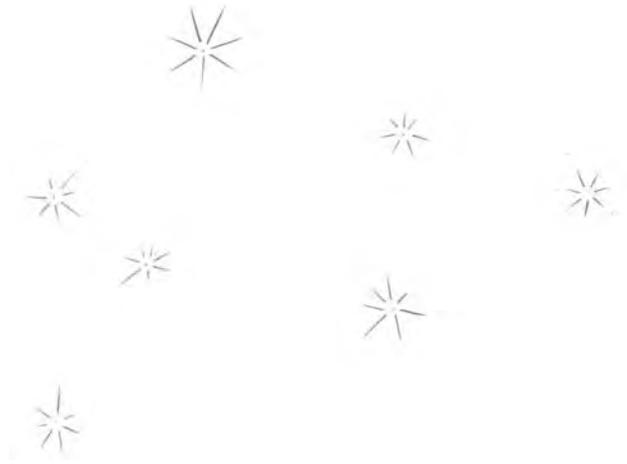
I'd be worried people would think I was *crazy*.

When I think of the fun I missed,

I try not to be bitter.

See, the human mind is kind of like . . .

a piñata. When it breaks open,
there's a lot of surprises inside. Once you get the piñata
perspective, you see that losing your mind
can be a peak experience.*



* From *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe* by Jane Wagner.
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Explaining Tartar Sauce

The Concepts and Terms

IN 1982 I EXPERIENCED THE EXPANSION that I describe in this book. Prior to that event, I did not have the benefit of any information or understanding of the following concepts and terms. As I moved through the long process of integrating the expansion, I gained this knowledge. I feel that by becoming familiar with the terms *before* you read the story, you will be able to more fully absorb, understand and learn from my expansion experience as you read about it.

EXPANSION

A person undergoes expansion when an experience or event affects the electrical, central nervous and sensory systems *in new ways*.

Everything in our immediate environment affects us physically. We experience stimulus first in our electrical system, a complex electrical gridwork that is located within and surrounding the body. Once the electrical system responds to the new stimulus, the new impulses are immediately shifted to the central nervous and sensory systems for identification, sorting and integration. All of this happens within a split second.

There are two main areas of difficulty in an expansion experience. The first is physical. Because an expansion experience affects these three systems in new ways, if the systems are unable to immediately adjust to the new input, they may become over-energized, over-loaded and, as a result, nonfunctional as far as the new experience is concerned. As a consequence of this physical breakdown, the person feels confused and is unable to discern what he is actually experiencing. What a person intellectually perceives is a direct result of the function of and interaction between the electrical system, central nervous system and sensory system. Sometimes an experience is so far beyond a person's present ability to sort, identify and integrate within these three systems that he is not even conscious of being influenced by it at all. It is as if the experience never happened.

The second area of difficulty is intellectual. During expansion, our intellectual understanding of what we are experiencing is challenged because it is new to us. If we try to force understanding, we shove the experience through the framework of what we already know. An expansion renders that framework obsolete as far as this experience is concerned. If we persist in pushing the experience through the old framework, we end up confused and we (via these three systems) misinterpret the experience.

We can actually distort an expansion by forcing it through our old intellectual framework. In essence, we experience what we *think* we are experiencing. I have met a number of people who have described some pretty frightening "sixth-sense" events to me. While I listen to them, I can see that their ordeals were actually benign in nature, but because it was new to them, they quickly shoved it through their already-existing intellectual framework. Invariably, these were people who had read a lot about other people's frightening tales or black magic. So they pushed their benign experience into a frightening framework and literally forced themselves to have a frightening experience that they could describe, even understand. In the process of finding intellectual satisfaction, they managed to scare the bejeezus out of themselves.

The way I've been taught to deal with the intellect during expansion is to simply *suspend* the intellect: I just focus on the experience,

let it integrate—and observe. This enables the organic formation of a new logic or intellectual framework. As a result, we gain a completely different understanding. Before expansion, we don't have the ability to understand because the new pieces aren't yet in place. The experience itself builds the new logical framework. By approaching expansion in this manner, I allow the intellect to work for me and not against me.

THE OZZIE AND HARRIET SCHOOL OF EXPANSION VS THE SCUZZBALL SCHOOL OF EXPANSION

If we believed the stuff that is written about expansion experiences, “enlightenment” or eureka moments, we'd swear that all we need to do to achieve such heights is to desire, apply ourselves a little, maybe have a life-threatening accident or two to knock some sense into us and, voilà—we come into enlightenment. Oh yes, it also helps to be special in the first place. Our lives magically change, and we now live in enlightenment. Our hair never gets mussed, our fingernails never break, the crease in our pants (if we have one) never flattens, and we never lose that saintly smile of the enlightened one. This is what I call the Ozzie and Harriet School of Expansion. Nothing ever goes wrong.

This book is about the Scuzzball School of Expansion, the one I belong to. We get down and dirty. We also have a strong yearning to demythologize and deglamorize expansion. After all, it's not a gift from God. We are all evolving, and sometimes this means we have the opportunity to expand in major ways. If we take the step, we feel like we just got blown to smithereens. There's nothing subtle about this kind of expansion.

Expansion, by definition, implies that we are now faced with an experience that was heretofore unknown to us. If we are already personally familiar with the experience, it's not expansion—it's just an experience. Now, the people from the Ozzie and Harriet School want us to believe that we function well when faced with the unknown. Well, balderdash. I happen to find the situation very challenging (as they say), and I suspect this is true for most of us.



MUNDANE-FANTASTIC LIFE

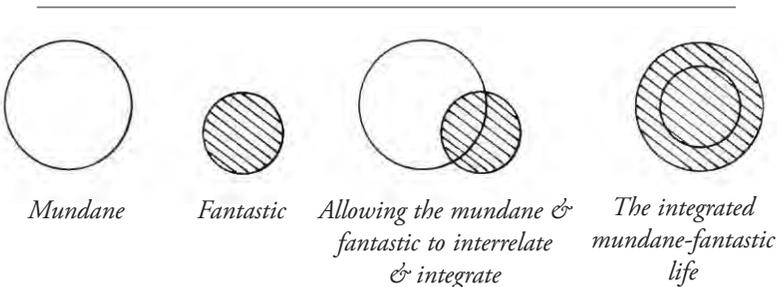
“Mundane” refers to our everyday life. It’s getting up in the morning, drinking coffee, going to work, doing the laundry, picking up the kids, reading the newspaper and watching your favorite TV program. The mundane is the glue that holds our life together.

“Fantastic” refers to those experiences that are beyond the mundane. They are the magical part of life. They are those moments or events that fall out of the scope of our logic—they are unexplainable. This includes expansion.

Often, people keep a separation between the mundane and the fantastic in their lives. They don’t see a relationship between the two. They see the mundane as boring, tedious and a necessary evil—sometimes even a trap. They see the fantastic as the “perfect” life, as something to aim for, if they could just release themselves from their mundane trap.

But there is a strong relationship between mundane and fantastic. The mundane part stabilizes our life, provides life’s tools and training, and creates the platform from which the fantastic springs. The fantastic—those magical moments and events that propel us beyond our logic—then wraps around and becomes integrated in the mundane, resulting in an enfolding and expansion of the breadth and depth of the mundane. The fantastic gives new meaning to the mundane. The more we allow this interrelationship to occur, the more the mundane and fantastic come together and the more they feel indistinguishable. They each become an extension of the other. When the mundane and the fantastic fully interweave, we have what I call the “mundane-fantastic life.”

The story I present in this book is an example of the interweaving of the mundane and the fantastic events into one cohesive mundane-fantastic life.



FORM: Defined by Nature

We consider reality to be in the form state when there is order, organization and life vitality combined with a state of consciousness.

We do not consider form to be only that which can be perceived by the five senses. In fact, we see form from this perspective to be most limited, both in its life reality and in its ability to function. We see form from the perspective of the five senses to be useful only for the most basic and fundamental level of identification. From this perspective, there is very little relationship to the full understanding and knowledge of how a unit or form system functions.

All energy contains order, organization and life vitality; therefore, all energy is form. If one were to use the term “form” to identify that which can be perceived by the basic five senses and the word “energy” to refer to that aspect of an animal, human, plant or object’s reality that cannot be readily perceived by the basic senses, then one would be accurate in the use of these two words. However, if one were to use the word “form” to refer to that which can be perceived by the basic five senses and assume that form to be a complete unit of reality unto itself, and use the word “energy” to refer to a level beyond form, one would then be using these two words inaccurately. From our perspective, form and energy create one unit of reality and are differentiated from one another solely by the individual’s ability to perceive them with his or her sensory system. In short, the differentiation between form and energy within any given object, plant, animal or human lies with the observer.

On the planet Earth, the personality, character, emotional makeup, intellectual capacity, strong points and gifts of a human are all form. They are that which gives order, organization and life vitality to consciousness.

Order and organization are the physical structures that create a framework for form. In short, they define the walls. But we have included the dynamic of life vitality when we refer to form because one of the elements of form is action, and it is life vitality that initiates and creates action.



NATURE: Defined by Nature

In the larger universe and beyond, on its many levels and dimensions, there are a number of groups of consciousnesses that, although equal in importance, are quite different in expression and function. Together, they make up the full expression of the larger, total life picture. No one piece, no one expression, can be missing or the larger life picture on all its levels and dimensions will cease to exist. One such consciousness has been universally termed “nature.” Because of what we are saying about the larger picture not existing without all of its parts, you may assume that nature as both a reality and a consciousness exists on all dimensions and all levels. It cannot be excluded.

Each group of consciousnesses has what can be termed an area of expertise. As we said, all groups are equal in importance but express and function differently from one another. These different expressions and functions are vital to the overall balance of reality. A truly symbiotic relationship exists among the groups and is based on balance—universal balance. The human soul-oriented dynamic is evolution in scope and function. Nature is a massive, intelligent consciousness group that expresses and functions within the many areas of involution, that is, moving soul-oriented consciousness into any dimension or level of form.

Nature is the conscious reality that supplies order, organization and life vitality for this shift. Nature is the consciousness that is, for your working understanding, intimately linked with form. Nature is the consciousness that comprises all form on all levels and dimensions. It is form’s order, organization and life vitality. Nature is first and foremost a consciousness of equal importance with all other consciousnesses in the largest scheme of reality. It expresses and functions uniquely in that it comprises all form on all levels and dimensions and is responsible for and creates all of form’s order, organization and life vitality.

REALITY: Defined by Nature

From our perspective, reality refers to all levels and dimensions of life experience within form and beyond form. Reality does not depend on an individual’s perception of it in order to exist. We call an individual’s

perception of reality his “perceived reality.” Any life system that was created in form—which occurred at the moment of the Big Bang—has inherent in it all dimensions and levels that exist both within form and beyond. How a person relates to an individual, object or event depends on his present ability to enfold and envelop its many levels. The scope within which one exists, the reality of one’s existence, is truly beyond form, beyond description. If one understands that the evolutionary force that moves all life systems forward is endless—beyond time—then one must also consider that it is the continuous discovery of these vast levels inherent in all life systems that creates that evolutionary momentum. Since that dynamic is beyond time, it is endless.*

RING-PASS-NOT

I did not coin this term. It’s something I picked up in my travels. I have since made the term mine, and the following is what I mean when I say “ring-pass-not.”

All reality is available to every one of us. Now, I know there are some people who would like us to believe that some reality is available to most of us and more reality is available to a chosen few. But the fact is, reality is not withheld from any of us.

However, we have chosen to function in form. This means that reality has to become integrated in order to become operational in our form life. Integrating reality is called evolution. It is a gradual process and it is a learning process. At any given time we have a range of reality that we are capable of integrating and using. Beyond that range is the rest of reality. No one is withholding this larger reality from us. It’s just that we have not figured out how to physically incorporate it and successfully activate it in our life. Consequently, we have no use for it—yet.

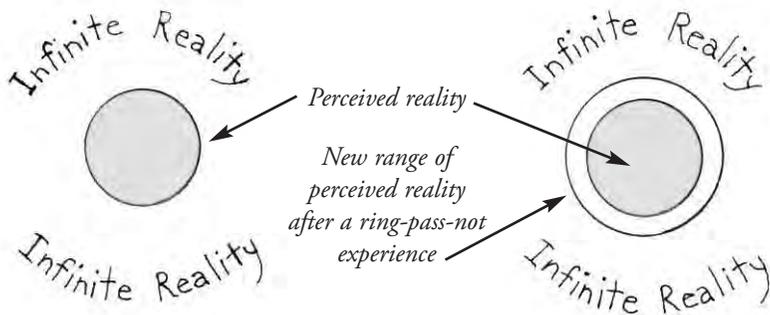
The ring-pass-not refers to the “dividing line” or “mystical membrane” between the part of reality we can work with (our perceived

* The Big Bang: The gigantic explosion in which the universe, as we know it, began. According to scientists, it occurred between 12 and 20 billion years ago. The Big Bang brought about two major dynamics: individuation and the fusion of soul to form.

reality) and the rest of infinite reality. It's like we have a ring around us. Inside the ring is a "safety zone" and outside the ring is something larger than we can presently handle. Therefore, the ring becomes a "border" beyond which we should not venture—if we're smart.

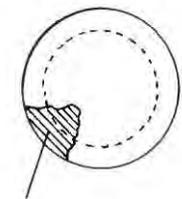
But I've said that reality is not withheld from us. At some point, we have to be able to access what is beyond the ring-pass-not. When we are capable of integrating and working with a larger picture, our ring-pass-not is triggered and we have what I call a "ring-pass-not expansion." When this occurs, the ring expands, we suddenly see a larger picture, and *everything* we had previously experienced, known or understood gets thrown into the air and must be reexamined in light of the new information.

This kind of expansion does not happen every day. If we're lucky, it happens once in a lifetime. If we're unlucky, it happens twice! I'm one of those unlucky ones. My first ring-pass-not expansion occurred in 1976 when I opened to the world of nature intelligences. An expansion such as this forces us to redefine and upgrade every aspect of our life. It can be exhausting, bewildering and even scary. However, it never creates a situation that is beyond our coping ability. This expansion is triggered by the soul, and it occurs only when we are ready to take on a larger picture.



A ring-pass-not expansion is not a subtle event. You won't miss it when it happens. (You also don't have any clear warning that it is about to happen.) It is something that occurs inside you even though it may be triggered by an external event. You will feel as if the entire rug has been pulled out from under you and your life. It comes without clear warning, so you will feel both surprised and, often, confused. One day you are peacefully driving the kids to school, and you feel life has never been better. The next day you are driving those same kids to that same school, and you cannot for the life of you figure out what it's all about and what you are doing. You start doing things like questioning the purpose and meaning of stop signs. You chalk it up to having a *really* bad day that will go away after a good night's rest. But you wake up the next morning, and everything is still floating around in the air. The real meaning of stop signs still alludes you. After a few days of this, you realize that the feeling of uncertainty and everything being airborne is not going to resolve itself.

I have said that ring-pass-not expansions are exhausting. They require that you diligently identify *every* element of your life and life's knowledge, and expand it to include the larger picture. This does not happen automatically. Only the expansion itself, which is triggered by the soul, happens automatically. Once it occurs, we are left with the job of making the larger reality useful. This can take many years. For the first two years, you will feel like you are holding on to your sanity for dear life. (Because a ring-pass-not expansion suddenly includes reality that is beyond your present range of logic, questioning your sanity is something that will come up fairly often!) As you address each area of your life, you will apply what you now know from the larger picture to it and experience a mini-expansion as that area "upgrades" to incorporate the new information. I call this an "in-house expansion," meaning that it is not an all-encompassing ring-pass-not expansion but an identification and upgrading of one area among many in your life that was affected as a result of the larger expansion. In-house expansions can feel so dramatic at times that you could mistake them for the larger



In-house expansion

ring-pass-not expansion. But, unlike the larger expansion, in-house expansions focus on one specific area at a time. Once you upgrade it, you will feel comfort and stability in that area again.

You may feel by now that if you should ever have a ring-pass-not expansion you might as well quit everything and go hide out in Tahiti for a few years while you work on getting your life back in order. But don't forget that I have said it does not happen until you are ready. And despite all the "symptoms" and feelings I have described, you are still capable of functioning. Your mundane life becomes especially important during these times. You will still be quite capable of driving the kids to school and functioning at work. It's just all the questions and changes that arise as a result of doing these mundane things will threaten to drive you mad.

In *Dancing in the Shadows of the Moon*, I describe what I faced as a result of my 1982 expansion, its effects on me, what I learned that might be helpful to you, and the tools we created as a result of this expansion that might also be helpful.

HOW WE PHYSICALLY SUPPORT EXPANSION

A Perelandra Coning Session

An expanded experience does not by definition mean it is nonphysical or beyond five-senses form. It simply implies that the experience is beyond that which the person has experienced prior to that time—thus, the sense of expansion. We have said to Machaelle that the band of form is quite complex, and this is true. It includes all that a person can potentially experience while participating within any given level of form such as Earth. . . .

The laws of form are much broader than what is encompassed when one thinks of the five-sense sensory system. In fact, an expanded experience is simply learning or allowing the sensory system, as most individuals know it, to operate in a fuller capacity. The problem is that individuals tend to see the five-senses system as the one and only sensory system, and anything beyond or outside this basic functioning as being something entirely different. In fact, they are both functions of the same system.

When a child is born, its sensory system is quite sensitive and expanded. It is, after all, just moving from a state prior to birth in which the sensory system naturally functions in a broader state. If left on its own, the child would continue to develop its sensory system from the point of this broader perspective. And what one might call “expanded experiences” would be the norm. Societal preconceptions are what encourage the child to limit the sensory scope, and the development of the sensory system throughout childhood then takes place from this more limited perspective. Along with this, the limited definition of the sensory system and its scope of discernment becomes the rule of thumb by which to judge experience.

Now, if the sensory system is naturally capable of operating in a much broader scope than most individuals can at present imagine, it follows that the physical body must respond to and support that operation. The sensory system itself is a part of that overall body response and support system. Everything works as a team, ideally. Consequently, one cannot have what is known as an expansion experience without the sensory system and the physical body system as a whole responding to and attempting to support it. So, one may see entering a meditative state as an expanded experience, but, in fact, it is a broader use of the sensory system and draws appropriate response and support from within the physical body itself. Just as one cannot move a finger or toe without the entire body’s muscular and skeletal systems responding, one cannot shift from one state of mind to another without a similar physical response and shift.

There is a saying many on the Earth level use: “If you don’t use it, you lose it.” Normally, this refers to muscle and body tone. When a child limits the scope of operation within the sensory system, the complementary scope of physical response and support is no longer needed or utilized. In those areas, a person stiffens and atrophies. Then, later on, when the individual is an adult and consciously chooses to reactivate the sensory system in a broader way, the physical body no longer “knows” how to respond and support that expansion. The person will experience nothing, no matter how much willpower he musters, or the experience will be partially perceived and most likely distorted, as well.

Let’s address the body system itself and what happens when the sensory system responds to an experience. Any experience initially strikes the human body through the electrical system. This occurs whether the

experience is easily perceived or not. The initial receptor of experience is not the brain or the senses but the electrical system. The impact immediately, almost simultaneously, shifts and translates into the nervous system and routes itself throughout the nervous system appropriately as it begins its identification and experience process. This includes activating the sensory system in an appropriate manner. (All this occurs within a split second.) The point to remember is that the initial level of impact is electrical, followed by an impact on the nervous system. If the experience is within the individual's perceived notion of "acceptable," the person probably knows how to perceive the experience on all levels operating within the physical body.

Two things can occur if the individual does not know what to do with the experience. Either the physical body does not know how to respond and support the experience and is in need of assistance, or the experience itself is so beyond the person's operating scope of reality that it takes on an intensification that literally overwhelms the body and requires of it a level of operation well beyond its present range of capability.

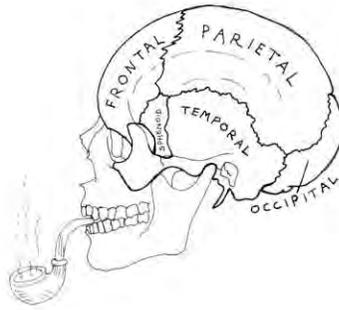
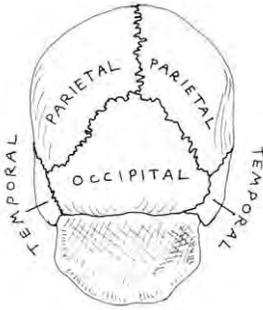
In the latter case, the person must have a good foundation for such a stretch, or else he risks damaging himself physically. You would not want a person who is not capable of walking a half-mile to suddenly be forced to run three miles. But you could expect someone who easily runs three miles to be able to tackle a seven-mile run without sustaining damage. It's a challenge, but it is not beyond the scope of possibility—and most likely not dangerous, but it could result in soreness and discomfort until the body learns to better support the longer run. . . .

Let me sum up the relationship of the cranials, spine and sacrum in the expanded experience. The experience is received electrically and shifted to the central nervous system for sorting and identification. At this point, the physical body systems move to support what is being identified. If the body cannot adequately shift, the electrical system will overload or break, and the corresponding vertebrae, sacrum or cranials will most likely react by misaligning. Hence, you have the sensation of trying to catch six balls all at once while only being able to catch four.

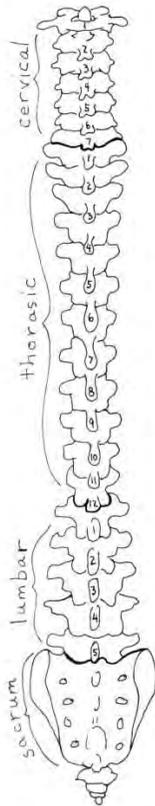
A special note about the cranials: An expanded experience carries with it an intensity that registers through the electrical system, moves into the nervous system and continues its impact into the cerebrospinal fluid

PERTINENT ANATOMY IDENTIFICATION

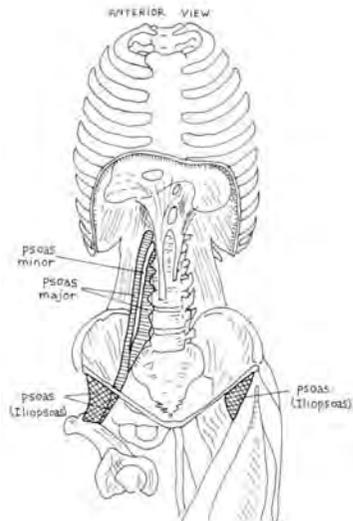
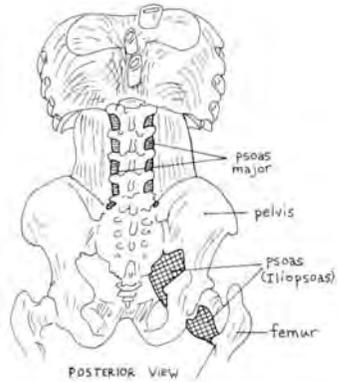
The Cranials



The Cervical, Thoracic and Lumbar Vertebrae, and the Sacrum



The Pelvis and the Psoas Muscles



(CSF). The brain is impacted by both the nervous system activity and the CSF pulse response to the impact. The cranial plates must respond accordingly to accommodate this two-pronged impact. The range of plate movement will be affected. If the cranials have lost their knowledge of how to move within this new range or if they are three-milers stretching for the seven-mile run, they run the risk of jamming or misaligning. This is when you have head pain associated with expanded experience. Cranial adjustments may be necessary over a period of time in order to allow the plates to properly adjust to and move in a more expanded range.

Just as the leg muscles need to adjust to the seven-mile run, the cranials need time to adjust to expansion. Because of the close working proximity with the electrical and nervous systems, the cranials must be considered one of the primary areas for assistance during times of expansion. In a relatively short period of time, the cranials, as well as the rest of the physical body system, will learn how to operate within the expanded range of experience with ease, accuracy and efficiency.

BASIC SENSORY SYSTEM PERCEPTION: Defined by Nature

We define basic sensory system perception as being that which the vast majority of individuals on Earth experience. The acts of seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling fall within what we acknowledge as a basic, fundamental range of sensory development that is dominant on the Earth level. What is referred to as an "expansion experience" is, in fact, an act or experience that is perceived by an individual because of an expansion of the range in which his sensory system operates. Expansion experiences are not perceived outside or beyond an individual's electrical system, central nervous system and sensory system. These three systems are interrelated, and an accurate perception of an expansion experience requires that the three systems operate in concert. Therefore, it is quite possible for something to occur in an individual's life that registers in the person's electrical system and central nervous system but then short-circuits, is altered or is blocked simply because the person's present sensory system does not have the ability to process, due to its present range of operation, what has registered in the other two systems.

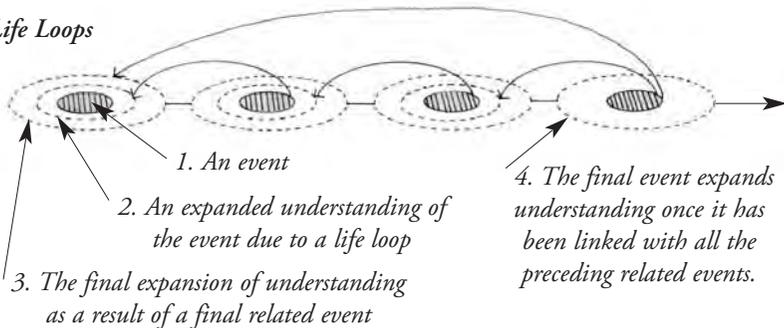
People say that “these kinds of strange things never happen to me.” This is inaccurate. “Strange” things, experiences and moments beyond the present state of their sensory systems are continuously happening around them and to them. They are simply not at the point where their sensory systems are capable of clear, useful processing. They waste time by directing their will and focus to “make things happen.” That is useless since things are happening all the time around them. Instead they should relax and continue through an organic developmental process that is already in effect and that will gradually allow them to accurately perceive what is happening around them. In some cases, events or experiences are vaguely perceived or processed in outrageous, useless ways because their sensory system is expanding but still not operating in a range where events can be usefully processed.

LIFE LOOPS

This is a term I coined. It may sound like a breakfast cereal, but it’s really a term I use to describe a specific dynamic in life.

You are going along in life, and you experience an event or moment that in itself feels complete once it’s over. At the time it may not strike you as being important. The event itself may not even make much sense to you. It is just something you experienced—and now it is complete and you go on with the next thing in your life. Then you get further down life’s road—it may be a week, a month, ten years, fifty years, even lifetimes—and you experience something else. Suddenly you remember the original event, and you realize that this latest happening is actually related to the earlier event. In fact, it is so

Life Loops



related that you realize it is a continuation of the earlier event. This is a “life loop.” The most recent event loops back and connects with the original event right at the point where the original event stopped. As a result, the original event combines with the latest event, and you move forward with a new understanding about both events. At the time, you were convinced that the original event was complete. It felt self-contained—like it had a period at the end of it. But in actuality, the original event doesn’t make sense until you connect the later event to it. The original event actually had a comma, not a period, after it.

Life loops can encompass several events that stretch out over much of your life. Each one loops back to the previous event and adds more information. At some point the last piece falls into place, and the whole series of events has meaning and clarity. *Now* you sense the period. There are no more commas.

Life loops are not karmic patterns. They are simply related experiences that in themselves have little meaning, but when put together, create one larger, significant experience. When you complete a life loop, you are likely to say, “Oh, *that’s* what it’s all about!”

We all experience a lot of life loops. They can be particularly maddening to people who insist on knowing the meaning of everything that is happening to them at the moment it is happening. Actually, it is a waste of time trying to figure out what a life-loop event is all about—until after all the loops are in place. In short, the experience isn’t really over until all the life loops are in place. Then the events clarify themselves with no effort on our part. With a life loop in progress, the most efficient thing you can do is shrug your shoulders, mutter “I don’t know what the hell is going on” and tuck the event in your back pocket. Trust that at some point, after another loop or two, it will clarify itself.

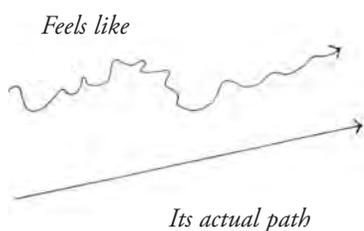
Life loops are particularly prevalent just before and after ring-pass-not experiences. As I tell you the story of my expansion, I point out several life loops by ending the sentence with [comma]. This way you will get a clearer idea of what they are and how they operate.



SPIRITUAL THREAD

This is another term I coined. The spiritual thread is woven within the fabric of our mundane life. It is comprised of the experiences that serve to teach and train us for moving forward in evolution. In short, it prepares us for the next stage. It is also an integral part of the mundane foundation from which expansion springs.

The interesting thing about the spiritual thread is that it does not feel spiritual at all. It is not only woven into the mundane fabric, it



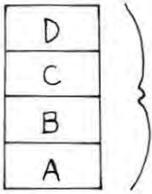
is also part of the mundane that creates that life fabric. It feels ordinary to us, and as we move along it feels like the thread is meandering all over the place. In reality, the spiritual thread cuts straight through the life fabric and gives us all that is needed for the next stage.

One other thing about the spiritual thread: It is nearly impossible to identify our spiritual thread as we move along its path. It is only in hindsight that we can look back and see the clear and undeniable events that make up the thread. Sometimes the events can be difficult, sometimes joyful; sometimes they are so subtle that we nearly miss them. But once we move into the new stage, how they prepared us is unmistakable.

BAND OF FORM

At some point in my early twenties, I heard or read that Earth was the only form planet that existed, and souls on Earth were the only souls operating in form. Since I saw no evidence to the contrary, and since I really didn't care anyway, I didn't bother to question this piece of information—for years. Even after I began to work with nature in 1976, I still didn't challenge it. Although nature was teaching me a lot about form and the underlying dynamics of form, I assumed that what I was learning applied to my Earth reality only.

In order to understand my ring-pass-not expansion, I had to learn something new about this form business. I learned that form as I

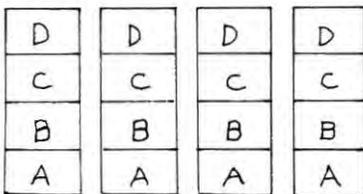


*One reality
unit showing
four of its
dimensions*

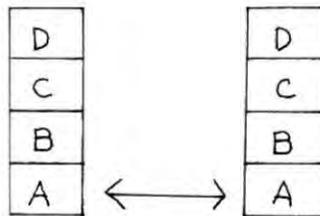
experience it on Earth is not the only form experience there is. In fact, there is a complex, broad “band of form” made up of many different dimensions—some of which we on Earth are capable of

seeing and some of which we can't see—or experience—in any of our usual ways. I eventually learned that no matter how “unique” the dimension, it operates with the same universal laws of form as every other dimension within the band of form. Only the way those laws are demonstrated are different.

I learned that there are many realities. Within each reality there is a corresponding large, complex band of form. We presently experience the one reality that includes our Earth. Perhaps a better way of saying this is that there exists one large, complex band of form that moves through and is reflected in all the different realities. Within any single reality there are dimensions that are comparable in every way to specific dimensions in all other realities. In short, each reality has a dimension or “sister dimension” that corresponds in every way to what we are experiencing on Earth. This does not mean that each reality's “Earth” dimension is the mirror image of everything that exists on our planet. Rather, it means that our sister dimensions have a planet *similar* to ours. People live on these planets in dwellings similar to the ones we use. The planet has trees, mountains, deserts, rivers and oceans. There are animals and plants that we would recognize. There are also



*Four different realities
within the band
of form*



*“Sister dimensions”:
Comparable
dimensions within two
different realities*

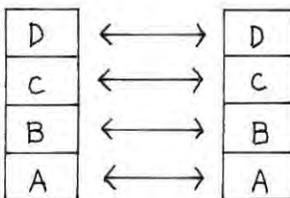
some we wouldn't. The people wear clothes, work in jobs and travel by means similar to ours. And their social structures are comparable.

A ring-pass-not expansion may occur if you begin to *consciously* perceive and experience another dimension within your "base" reality. That is, another dimension within the reality in which you currently reside and operate. In fact, this is a common ring-pass-not expansion. Although rare from the Earth perspective, you may also undergo expansion if you begin to consciously perceive and experience another dimension from a reality other than your base reality. In either case, the level that you live on remains your "home base." It functions as your foundation. You aren't released from it. The new level that you begin to consciously perceive and experience is an expansion of your perceived reality as lived out on your home base, and what you learn from the experience becomes integrated into your home-base life. As you might imagine, this adds a whole new meaning to "life on Earth as you know it!"

HORIZONTAL COMPATIBILITY PRINCIPLE

Horizontal Compatibility is a universal principle that occurs between "sister dimensions" where the laws of form are demonstrated in similar ways. For example, we on planet Earth live out and experience life that is horizontally compatible with every level in all other realities that live and experience life in comparable ways.

The Horizontal Healing Principle that is often referred to in the Perelandra material is part of the Horizontal Compatibility Principle. In short, the easiest, most efficient and effective means of healing are horizontally compatible with the object, being or person in need of healing. *Like healing like*. The most effective means for healing those



*Horizontally compatible
dimensions between two
different realities*

of us living on Earth are found on this planet or created as a result of combining several ingredients native to the planet.

To take this a step further, because of the Horizontal Compatibility Principle, what constitutes quality health practice on Earth can have a similar positive health impact for those living on a “sister dimension” in another reality and vice versa.

SOUL RAYS / LIFETIMES

A Perelandra Coning Session

When souls took on individuation as a result of the Big Bang, they became involved in a vast array of experiences that were also created during the same Big Bang. As a result, individuated souls had to have the tools for experiencing. Not to have these tools would have rendered the soul incapable of experience. In essence, souls that are incapable of experience are also beyond experience, and are in the same state they were in prior to becoming individuated by the Big Bang.*

The tools souls use to experience come from nature and are fully contained in one “package”—the human body. Nature supplies the order, organization and life vitality that create the human body. All the various elements and systems that make up the human body are the tools needed by souls for functioning in form.

All experiences after the Big Bang have been and are in form. The Big Bang was a soul/nature phenomenon that added order, organization and life vitality to the One, and from this came individuation. Consequently, in order for the soul to function in a post–Big Bang dynamic, it needed to fuse with a form that could expand and modify in ways that would allow the soul to operate appropriately on any level or experience.

When most people consider the human body, they conclude that the form of that body is the form that is needed for operating on Earth, and that this form is unique to Earth and Earth-related locations. They reason further that once beyond this level, the human body is no longer needed and, therefore, does not exist. These conclusions are wrong. The basic

* The Big Bang: The gigantic explosion in which the universe, as we know it, began. According to scientists, it occurred between 12 and 20 billion years ago. The Big Bang contained two major dynamics: individuation and the fusion of soul to form. (I have repeated this footnote for your reference.)

“design” of the human body was created by nature at the moment of the Big Bang. Once the One Soul individuated, it was imperative that the individual souls immediately fuse with appropriate form. The elements and systems present in the human body on Earth are the same as the basic elements and systems that made up the original form that received the individuated soul at the Big Bang. The form system as you see it today is the appropriate system through which the human soul can best operate, experience and express. It forms a structure and foundation through which the soul operates—no matter what level, state or dimension the soul chooses to participate in. It is not unique to the Earth level.

This is not to say that on every level and dimension the human body is present exactly as you experience it on the Earth level. Remember, every level and dimension was created at the time of the Big Bang. Therefore, because everything created at the Big Bang is form, every level, whether it is seen or not, is also in form. But the many levels and dimensions within the band of form are quite extensive, complex and comprehensive. The body through which the soul operates must be fully compatible with the prevailing life dynamics of the level upon which the soul is presently choosing to participate. This is natural law and falls within the scope of the Horizontal Compatibility Principle. So, although the human body is capable of being present on any level and dimension, the state of that body at any given time will correspond with the prevailing life dynamics of the actual level it is on. For example, from Earth’s perspective, the human body is visible to the naked eye. On another level, that same body may be invisible. But the body is fully present and operating on each level whether it is visible or not.

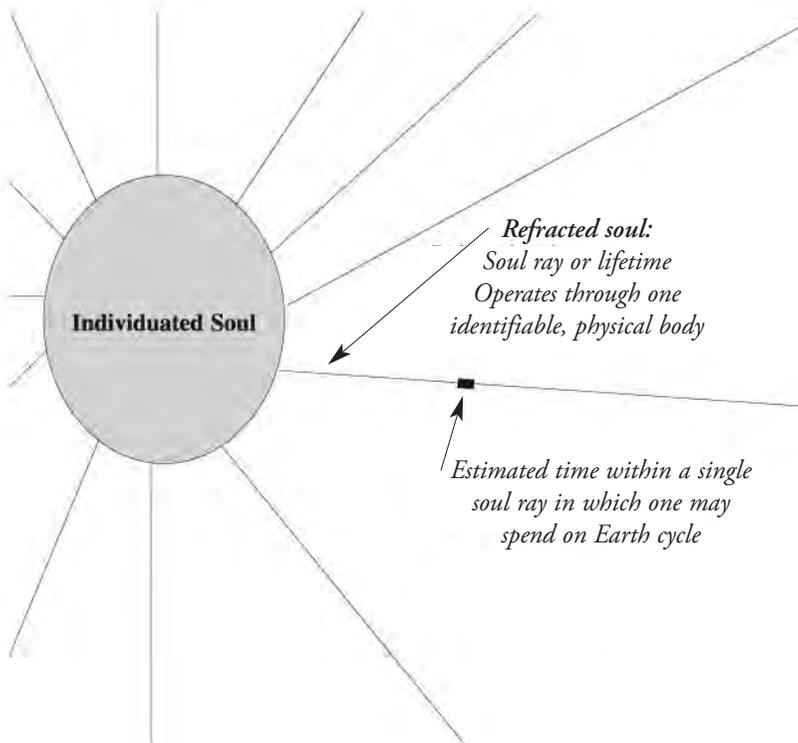
In short, the relationship between the soul and its physical body has been present since the Big Bang. Soul and body have worked in partnership through every soul experience, no matter the level on which it has occurred. It is important to understand that the relationship of soul to body has been present since the moment that soul originated in its individual expression and has not been solely a relationship unique to Earth.

No matter what level or dimension a body is functioning on, it still has all the components that make up the physical body that is familiar to the person on Earth. It has a basic form with all its parts. Although the basic form may modify itself to accommodate the prevailing dynamics of

a specific level or dimension, its parts all function in surprisingly similar patterns despite the level. A sensory system on the Earth level functions in much the same manner as the sensory system on any other level. Only the range of function may differ.

Individuated souls operate beyond time and space. Although time and space are form structures, they do not meet the criteria in the definition of form. Form is any reality that has order, organization, life vitality and consciousness. Time and space are but two kinds of order and organization. There can be form reality without time and space. Individuated souls are in a form reality that does not include time and space.

Because of this, all that is experienced by the individuated soul, no matter what level or dimension, occurs simultaneously. That is, all that is experienced by the individuated soul is beyond time and space. It has no linear or spatial dynamics to it. However, many of the levels and dimensions within which a soul may have an experience include time and space as part of their dynamics. In order to participate within these levels



and dimensions, the individuated soul must modify itself to accommodate time and space. To do this, the soul creates what have been commonly called “lifetimes.” At Perelandra, these are called “soul rays.” The individuated soul refracts itself into a smaller unit that includes all of the qualities necessary for experiencing within a specific range of time and space. Each individuated soul has countless such refractions that are functioning in concert with it at all times.

Each lifetime or soul ray has a body through which the refracted soul operates and experiences. The soul-ray bodies are linked to and harmonious with the individuated soul’s body. The common notion on the Earth level is that a lifetime begins at conception or birth and ends at death. The soul-ray lifetime is much more extensive than this. Its birth / death cycle on Earth is but a small part of the overall range of experience that occurs within a soul-ray lifetime. It may include many different experiences on many dimensions and levels—Earth being just one of its levels. [See diagram on previous page.] What distinguishes one soul ray from another is its human body. Each soul ray has one consistent human body that is uniquely developed for allowing the refracted soul of that ray to operate and have experiences on its many different levels and dimensions.

The soul-ray body is capable of functioning well beyond what is required in a birth / death cycle on Earth. It operates in an overall range that envelopes all activities that make up the full soul-ray experience. What is important to understand for anyone on the Earth level is that this massive array of functioning within a soul ray is occurring in a complex, highly synchronized manner every day. The fact that a person on the Earth level is not aware of this expanded activity has to do with the unique development and expansion of consciousness that is part of the Earth experience. The Earth experience includes a highly structured sense of time, space and consciousness. These properties do not make the Earth experience lesser in importance than experiences on other dimensions. They are simply elements of reality that the refracted soul, in partnership with its body, must learn to operate with. So, from the perspective of the Earth experience, one may not be consciously aware of any other activity being experienced except for the present Earth activity. As one moves through the Earth experience and one’s understanding of time, space and consciousness expands, the Earth body develops and is able to process

that greater understanding. There will come a time when an individual operating on the Earth level will be consciously aware of the full scope of his refracted soul activity.

We have said that a single soul ray contains a single body. Yet the refracted soul of that ray may have many experiences on many different levels and dimensions. In order to understand how one body functions simultaneously on many different levels and dimensions, one must understand that the body has a far more expansive reality than what you know from the Earth perspective. We have said that the Earth experience includes a highly structured sense of time, space and consciousness. While operating within the Earth level, the body functions with a comparably high structure of time, space and consciousness. However, this is but one small range of function for that body. It is also capable of operating in any structure that comprises any of the other levels and dimensions that are part of that soul-ray experience. So, for example, the sensory system as viewed from the Earth perspective can be defined scientifically as to its properties, characteristics and range of operation. But this is just the sensory system as viewed from the Earth perspective. From a different perspective in the soul ray's experience, the same sensory system includes different properties, characteristics and range of operation. It can also include some of the same elements that are part of the sensory system from the Earth perspective. Properties, characteristics and range of operation can overlap.

Perhaps an easier way to understand this is to see the sensory system as a vast, expanded unit capable of functioning on many different levels. Within each separate level, the sensory system operates with only those properties and characteristics needed for functioning within the range appropriate to that level.

From the Earth perspective, the key to knowing one's soul-ray activity is consciousness. As the refracted soul and body learn to work with and through the highly structured elements of time, space and consciousness from the Earth perspective, they (the soul and body) will be capable of expanding their awareness and equally capable of processing the results of that awareness. They will operate with a greater and more conscious expanded sense of the self.

Expanding one's consciousness to incorporate new levels of operation has an impact on the body. One does not simply expand consciousness. The body must shift to incorporate this new consciousness, and it must

then learn to function in light of the new consciousness. To consciously understand that one's sensory system is capable of functioning in a more expanded manner than is defined by one level of experience literally allows that sensory system to expand. At that point, it can begin to operate in its more expanded manner. It feels as if the one sensory system as defined from one level is uniting with the sensory systems that are defined by other levels to form a larger, more complex unit. Because they may have different properties, characteristics and range of operation, they feel like completely different sensory systems. In fact, it is the different levels of functioning of one sensory system that are being united within one consciousness.

VERIFICATION

When something fantastic happens to us, we get catapulted out of our framework of logic. Many times, the fantastic event includes verification. It is as if a “hand” reaches out of the fantastic event and touches our mundane life in a small but special way that will catch our attention and serve to say, “You are not crazy. This is really happening.”



Verification: A fantastic event touches our mundane life in a small but special way.

For example, one morning something fantastic happens to you that has really challenged your sense of logic. You wonder if it is actually happening or if somehow you are conjuring the whole thing up in your mind. That afternoon, as usual, you walk to the mailbox at the end of your driveway. You take the same route you take every day. But this afternoon you notice a wildflower in full bloom growing where you *know* no flower was growing the day before.

And this is a plant that you have never before noticed growing wild in your area. There is absolutely no question in your mind that this flower is new on the scene—and it is gorgeous. And at the same time, you know that this flower is saying to you that the fantastic event that occurred that morning really did happen. This is verification.

One of the characteristics of verification is that it is extremely personal in nature. It is designed to communicate only with those involved with the fantastic event. Consequently, when you try to describe verification to others, they tend to look at you as if you're obsessing or have truly lost your mind. In the example above, *you* are the only person who knows for certain no flower was growing in that spot the day before because you are the only one who routinely goes for the mail. Verification alters *your* mundane and no one else's.

What generally happens when we try to share verification with others is that everyone will come up with theories that will satisfy them and reposition *your* verification back into *their* framework of logic. In short, they try to shoot it down. My suggestion to you is to share verification carefully and only with those who already support the "illogic" in your life. Having people pick apart your verification can be painful—and unnecessary.

THE PC PAT ON THE BACK

This is a concept I use to honor a friend of mine named Peter Caddy (hence the "PC"). Peter, who just recently died, was one of the co-founders of the Findhorn Community in Scotland. We met when I visited that community for three months in 1978, and we have been friends ever since. From all outward appearances, Peter always looked like the proper English gentleman. He generally wore a sport coat and turtleneck—or tie. And he abhorred the American custom of drinking coffee out of a mug. He liked a cup and saucer. Once, when he was visiting Perelandra, we put the half-gallon milk carton on the table as a creamer for coffee. He didn't say a word, but I could tell he thought this was crass.

But Peter had another side, and this is where the pat on the back comes in. Early on in life, he had a spiritual teacher who had a lot of drill-sergeant qualities about her. She taught him to act immediately on intuition and guidance: Never stop to question it. Just do it. Peter listened—and learned—well. As a result, he went through one crazy, totally insane adventure after another—all because of his intuition or someone else's guidance. When he was on the move—and he traveled

a lot—it was as if the whole world would reposition itself to accommodate whatever he needed to do. His adventures were nuts, and his stories were magical.

As I have moved through the years since meeting Peter, I've been challenged to do some pretty outrageous things myself—as this book will attest to. Whenever I have hesitated moving forward into absurdity, I have thought of Peter. And I'd say to myself, "Peter wouldn't even blink an eye at this." Then I'd go ahead, knowing that I'm not the only person who'd be crazy enough to do this thing. In this way, he's given me terrific support. And that's his "pat on the back."

I suspect—and hope—that by the time you finish this book, you'll look at my life and use it as your "MSW Pat on the Back" when you need a little encouragement to keep moving.

PISCEAN ERA

The Piscean era is that period of time, roughly 2000 years long, out of which the planet Earth and the universe are presently passing, and during which specific universal laws were grounded on the planet. In a broad and loose sense, one may say that the Piscean era explored, developed and worked with the dynamic of the parent/child, higher/lower and masculine-energy-dominate relationship, and expressed this dynamic in both action and structure throughout all levels of form.

AQUARIAN ERA

The Aquarian era is the term used to describe the coming phase of evolution facing not only those on planet Earth, but all souls and all life forms within the universe as well. Although it is termed "Aquarian" because of its loose connection to the astronomical alignment of Aquarius, it is more importantly a term that connotes an emphasized pattern and rhythm in life behavior. The Age of Aquarius will see the coming to the fore of the concepts of balance, teamwork and partnership played out on all levels of life.



THE INFORMATION POLICY

I began operating with what I call “The Information Policy” after my 1982 ring-pass-not expansion. To put it simply, those involved in the expansion suggested, and I agreed, that they would give me information about what I was experiencing only when I specifically asked for it. This meant I had to ask a direct question, and then I’d be given only the information that was needed to answer that specific question. We did this so that I would not be overwhelmed by the mammoth task of identifying and integrating everything that was involved in the expansion. It was—and still is—critical that I move through the post-expansion process at my own rate and in my own timing. (This happens to be true with anyone moving through post-expansion.) The only way we could assure that my timing was being fully adhered to was to address only what I could question.

Actually, it was more complex than this. The issue centered around the information I was ready to integrate. This didn’t just hinge on my asking a direct question. We all can override our ability to integrate information by asking questions for purely intellectual curiosity. We are taught to do this in school. I had to also *need* the information.

I had to learn the difference between an intellectual question and an integration question. When we ask a question just for the sake of asking the question, and have no intention of doing anything with the answer, this is an intellectual question. It springs from our curiosity about something. An integration question is one in which the answer is received in right timing, and we are able to integrate the information we receive from the answer into our life. It can change the way we think, how we perceive the reality around us, how we act, and how we move through our daily schedule. It is a question whose answer moves through a complete experiential grounding process. It is information we need.

There is no general, hard-and-fast formula for discerning an intellectual question from an integration question. What is intellectual for one person is integration for another. But here is what I did to learn to distinguish between the two for myself:

1. I stopped asking questions that did not apply to whatever I was experiencing at that moment. That automatically cut out a lot of questions.

2. When I mistakenly asked an intellectual question, I paid attention to how the answer affected me. I noticed that when I could not integrate the answer, it would bounce off me as a rubber ball off a brick wall. I could physically hear the words, but my body felt “hard,” and the word energy was bouncing off it. As a result, I had difficulty comprehending the answer or retaining it. I wasn’t ready to absorb it. Whenever I felt an answer bounce, I would disregard my question and the answer. If I could discern the bounce fast enough, I would stop the person who was answering, tell him I wasn’t ready to ask that question, and apologize.

3. After a while, I could anticipate the effect an answer would have on me by thinking out a question I had doubts about ahead of time and feeling whether the energy would be absorbed or bounce off. Even if I didn’t know the answer, I could still feel an “answer energy.” Once I felt the impact, I could decide whether or not to even open my mouth.

Don’t forget: I went through this exercise because the expansion I took was so large that, had I not learned to discern intellectual questions from integration ones, I would have quickly become overloaded with information. This would have made it extremely difficult to function in the post-expansion stages. I still adhere to the Information Policy. I found that my life became so much more efficient when I didn’t weigh it down with useless information that I extended the policy into my mundane life, as well.



FREE WILL, OPTION,
SYNCHRONICITY, ACCIDENTS

Our lives operate on free will. When a human soul individuates, it takes on free will. Without it, we could not experience individuation. When an individuated soul activates a soul ray, we take on the task of developing *conscious* free will. Conscious free will is the dynamic that allows us complete freedom of choice in all that we do and how we develop within a soul-ray lifetime. In order to fully participate in the larger universal picture, we must learn to function responsibly, intelligently and ethically in ways that are consistent with the universal dynamics of that larger picture—and we must choose to do this consciously and freely.

Within each soul-ray experience, we intentionally choose (from our individuated soul level) to focus on specific areas of experience and learning. This is the extent of our “preplanning” prior to birth. As a result, we are born with a sense of direction and purpose.

After birth we take on the challenge of how best to accomplish our direction and purpose. Some people like to think that we come into a lifetime not only with direction and purpose, but also with the exact game plan we need to execute to fulfill that direction and purpose. If you think about this for a minute, you’ll see that this pre-set game-plan idea eliminates conscious free will. Our participation in the larger universal picture is so important that we simply cannot sidestep our growth and development in the area of conscious free will. It seems like everyone in the universe and all the intelligences in nature know this—except us. Some of us work awfully hard to sidestep our responsibility in this matter. We must learn to consciously weigh situations and issues, and to say “yes” and “no” and “maybe.” In this way, we learn to deliberately choose options that are consistent with universal dynamics and law and to consciously participate in the larger picture. Full participation implies knowledgeable and free participation. The only way we can learn this is through conscious growth and development around free will.

At any given point along the way, we are faced with many options for accomplishing direction and purpose. Some options are harmonious with our direction and purpose—and the universal larger picture.

Some are not. We have to learn to discern and choose. We choose one option over the others for various reasons. It is the one that we find most attractive or exciting. It is the one that seems easiest. Perhaps it is the option that seems most efficient. Maybe it is the one we have the strongest gut reaction to. Or perhaps it's the option that seems the most difficult out of all the others, and, for whatever reason, we feel it is the important one for us to take. As we choose each option along the way, we begin to weave a unique pattern based on who we are and our ability to use free will to make choices. And over time we learn the formula for choosing that works best for us.

Three issues tend to come up whenever I have talked about this. The first is synchronicity. Usually people use synchronicity to describe an event where one's need or desire is suddenly and unexpectedly met by the perfect opportunity. There is a sense that "someone has heard them" and magically met their need.

In actuality, this kind of synchronicity is an illusion. They have simply chosen the option out of all the different ones available to them that allowed for their need to be met in this manner. They could have chosen another option that was equally available to them that would have also met their need, but in a different and less "magical" manner.

At any given point along the way, we are surrounded with a number of options for meeting need and desire. Most of them are positive in nature and can meet need and desire well. If we choose one of these, we experience our lives moving easily and well—even magically. This causes some to think that they "received" the one and only option for fulfilling need and desire. In fact, they chose one of several options. And had they chosen one of the difficult options or one of the options that was not consistent with their direction and purpose, their tough experiences might have been labeled "bad luck."

Both concepts—synchronicity and bad luck—distance us from our personal responsibility in life and complicate our growth and development in the area of conscious free will.

The second issue that is raised has to do with victimization and/or terrible outside circumstances that seem to eliminate any possibility of choice. When a person is suffering from victimization, he has already

relinquished free will to another person or social structure. For whatever reason, he has chosen to step back from his life's responsibilities. When we look at these situations, we tend to focus on the difficult (and real) circumstances they now find themselves in as a result of victimization and say that this person's situation is caused by these circumstances. In order to understand free will, we have to look at the choices (or lack of choices) the person made prior to the situation. What decisions led the person into the situation in the first place? The situation is the *result* of these decisions. And now they are faced with far more difficult decisions to make in order to extricate themselves from the situation—and reestablish control over their free will. If the circumstance itself was the sole reason a person experiences victimization, then all we would have to do is remove any person from their circumstance to eliminate their problem of victimization. Addressing these kinds of issues have shown us that the real answers come from within, and without those internal answers—without personal growth and change—the person will simply move into another victimization situation.

There is no doubt that some of these situations are horrible—child or spouse abuse, institutional abuse, prison, genocide, mass starvation, the Holocaust. . . . Obviously, children are the most vulnerable to difficult and dangerous outside circumstances. They have the least-developed conscious free will and the fewest options. But children do have a strong survival instinct that pushes many of them to take control as best they can and reach out to options. Don't misunderstand me. I'm not suggesting that it is okay for children to face survival situations. I feel deeply that it is not fair and it is wrong. What I am saying is that, when addressing difficult or dangerous outside circumstances, the survival instinct gives children options and opportunity that is relative to their age and ability. Children can survive, and many do.

Adults are another matter. They have had the opportunity to develop free will and the ability to identify, consider and choose options. Some adults make decisions and choose options that enable them to avoid the difficult situation altogether. Others make choices that seem to "flirt" with fate. Still others position themselves in such

a way that the situation becomes inevitable. But the fact that people who are faced with these horrible situations manage to have very different experiences (some disastrous, some breathtakingly heroic) illustrates that there are many different options available to each of them prior to the situation and during it. These situations may *limit* free will and choice, but they do not *eliminate* them.

The last issue generally raised centers around accidents. Many feel that there are no accidents in life. All events and opportunities are in right timing or predestined. Although this concept can be comforting at times—especially when dealing with what we call “someone’s untimely death”—it eliminates free will. You simply cannot have over five billion people running around the planet exercising free will and not have accidents occur.

One last thing about free will: You will see in this book that I did not *consciously* know that a major expansion was before me or what impact it would have on my life. This is not at all unusual about expansion. On the surface, it appears that I moved into the expansion blindly and had no opportunity to exercise my free will. But as you read along, you’ll see that at every critical juncture along the way, I had to consciously decide if I chose to go on. I didn’t know what I was heading into, but I had to say “let’s go” before the expansion continued. Had I decided to go no further (which would have been based on my gut instinct), I would not have continued beyond that point. I would have put the whole expansion experience on the back burner until I *felt* ready. Remember, ring-pass-not expansion is triggered by the soul and *only occurs when we are able to enfold it into our perceived reality*. However, this is all unconscious. Once we start to *consciously* move into the expansion we may feel unprepared, but we can still call a halt. Expansion overrides intellect—but not free will. *And the growth and development of free will is so critical to our evolution that, during our soul-ray lifetime, we do not relinquish free will to our own soul.*



FACTOR-X

Sometimes, something comes into our lives suddenly that we were not expecting, and we have no plans for dealing with it. This is factor-x. It can be part of whatever we are dealing with that we simply didn't know existed until it popped up. Or it can be the result of an accident. Something has happened that was not only unexpected but was also never meant to be part of whatever we are trying to address. Wherever it originates, we have to deal with it.

No matter how well we plan, how hard we try to figure things out ahead of time, a factor-x will show up. In fact, we're damn lucky if only one factor-x hits us! They like to travel in packs.

The keys to dealing with a factor-x are flexibility and creativity.

CONINGS

A coning is a balanced vortex of conscious energy. The simplest way to explain a coning is to say that it is a conference call between levels. With a coning, we are working with more than one intelligence simultaneously.

The reason a coning is needed for multilevel processes is because of the greater stability, clarity and balance it offers. With multilevel processes, we are working with many different facets and levels of intelligences at one time. Consequently, it is better to work with an organized team of all those involved in the area we are focusing on.

A coning, by nature, has a high degree of protection built into it. Because of the larger scope of multilevel work, it is important to define exactly who and what are involved in that work. All others are excluded by the mere fact that they have not been activated in the coning. In essence, a coning creates not only the team but also the "room" in which the team is meeting. It is important, when activating a coning, to discern between those team members who are a part of the work to be done and those others who are not involved. The coning is created and activated by us—the human team member. Only those with whom we seek connection will be included. Members will not "slide" in and out of a coning on their own. This adds to the exceptional degree of protection contained within the coning.

Any combination of team members can be activated for the purpose of simultaneous input. But this does not constitute a coning. A true coning has balance built into it. By this I mean a balance between nature and the human soul. In order for us to experience anything fully, we must perceive it in a balanced state; that is, it must have an equal reflection of the soul dynamics (evolution), combined with an equal reflection of the form or nature dynamics (involution). A coning contains both dynamics.

CONSCIOUSNESS: Defined by Nature

The concept of consciousness has been vastly misunderstood. To put it simply, consciousness is the working state of the soul. In human expression, as one sees it demonstrated on the planet Earth, the personality, character, emotional makeup, intellectual capacity, strong points and gifts of a human are all form. They are that which give order, organization and life vitality to consciousness.

We say “working state of the soul” because there are levels of soul existence that are different than the working state and can best be described as a simple and complete state of being.

Humans tend to think of the soul as being something that exists far away from them because they are in form. This is an illusion. The core of any life is the soul. It cannot exist apart from itself. Like the heart in the human body, it is an essential part of the life unit. A human in form is, by definition, a soul fused with nature. Personality and character are a part of the nature / form package that allows the soul to function and to express itself in form. Personality and character are not the soul; they are the order and organization of that soul.

Consciousness physically fuses into the body system first through the electrical system and then through the central nervous system and the brain. This is another aspect of nature supplying order, organization and life vitality. Consciousness itself cannot be measured or monitored as a reality. But what can be measured and monitored is the order, organization and life vitality of consciousness. Consciousness is the working state of the soul and is not form. It is nature, not consciousness, that supplies form.

We wish to add a thought here so that there will be no confusion about the relationship between nature and the soul. Nature does not, with its own power, superimpose its interpretation of form onto a soul. We have said that nature and soul are intimately and symbiotically related. This implies a give and take. No one consciousness group operates in isolation of the whole or of all other parts of the whole. When a soul chooses to move within the vast band of form, it communicates its intent and purpose to nature. It is from this that nature derives the specifics that will be needed for the soul to function in form. It is a perfect marriage of purpose with the order, organization and life vitality that is needed for the fulfillment of that purpose. Nature, therefore, does not define purpose and impose it on a soul. It orders, organizes and gives life vitality to purpose for expression in form.

SOUL: Defined by Nature

It is most difficult to define soul since—at its point of central essence—the soul is beyond form. Consequently, it is beyond words. However, it is not beyond any specific life form. As we have said, an individual is not separate or distant from his or her soul. Souls, as individuated life forces, were created and fused with form at the moment of the Big Bang. Beyond form, souls are also beyond the notion of creation. So we refer to the moment of the Big Bang regarding the soul, since this gives you a description of soul that will be most meaningful to you.

The Big Bang was the nature-designed order, organization and life force used to differentiate soul into sparks of individuated light energy. The power of the Big Bang was created by intent. And that intent originated from the massive collective soul reality beyond form.

It is reasonable to look at the Big Bang as the soul's gateway to the immense band of form. To perceive the soul and how it functions exclusively from the perspective of human form on Earth is akin to seeing that planet from the perspective of one grain of sand. The soul's options of function and expression in form are endless. What we see occurring more frequently now on Earth is the shift from the individual soul unknowingly functioning in an array of options, all chosen only because they are compatible with the immediate purpose of the soul, to the individual

beginning to function with discrimination and intent in more expanded ways. Using the words in their more limited, parochial definitions, we can say that we see the beginning of a shift from soul function in which an individuated personality remains unaware of many of its options to soul function in which the personality begins to take on conscious awareness of all its options.

INTENT: Defined by Nature

Intent refers to the conscious dynamic within all life that links life vitality (action) with soul purpose and direction. When an individual uses free will to manipulate what he or she willfully desires instead of what is within the scope of higher soul purpose, then intent is combined with the manipulative power of free will and this combination is linked with life vitality. Life vitality adds action to order and organization. It both initiates and creates action. To maintain harmonious movement with soul purpose and direction, life vitality must be linked with the soul dynamic. This linkage occurs on two levels. One is unconscious, allowing for a natural patterning and rhythm of action through form that is consistent with soul purpose. As the body/soul fusion moves through its own evolutionary process as a functioning unit, it takes on a greater level of consciousness and an expanded level of awareness and knowing. As a result, the unconscious link between soul dynamic and life vitality takes on a new level of operation, thus shifting it into a state of consciousness. The shift is a gradual, step-by-step evolutionary process in itself. Intent is therefore defined as conscious awareness of soul purpose, what is required within the scope of form to achieve soul purpose, and how the two function as a unit. Consequently, when one wishes to express soul purpose, one need only consciously fuse this purpose with appropriate form and action. This act is what is referred to when one speaks of intent.

Intent as a dynamic is an evolutionary process in itself and, as we have said, does not suddenly envelop one's entire life fully and completely. Intent is only gradually incorporated into one's everyday life. Therefore, one does not suddenly and immediately function within the full scope of the dynamic in those areas of life where intent is present. Intent as a dynamic is as broad a learning arena as life itself. And in the beginning,

intent can often be confused with or intermingled with free will. However, as it is developed, it becomes the cutting edge of the body/soul unit and how it operates. Intent is the key to unlimited life within the scope of form.

INTUITION: Defined by Nature

Intuition, as it is popularly defined, relates to a sixth sense of operation. This is false. This is not a sixth sense. When individuals experience a phenomenon that they consider to be beyond their five senses, they tend to attribute this experience to another category, the sixth sense, and call it intuition. The fact is that the phenomenon is processed through their five senses in an expanded manner.

Intuition, in fact, is related to and linked with intent. It is the bridge between an individual's conscious body/soul fusion—that state in which he knows and understands the body/soul fusion and how it functions—and the individual's unconscious body/soul fusion. Intuition bridges the unconscious and the conscious. This enables what is known on the level of the unconscious body/soul fusion to be incorporated with and become a part of the conscious body/soul fusion. Intuition is the communication bridge between the two that makes it possible for the conscious body/soul unit to benefit from those aspects of the unconscious body/soul unit. This benefit results when the conscious unit opens to and moves through the lessons surrounding intent. Where intent is functioning fully, these two levels, the unconscious and the conscious, are no longer separate but have become one—the expanded conscious level. Consequently, there is then no need for the bridge known as intuition.

However, lest you think otherwise, intent is not considered greater than intuition; rather, they are two excellent tools utilized equally by the highest developed souls functioning within form. We say this to caution those who read this not to think intent is “greater” than intuition and to be aimed for at the exclusion of intuition. Evolution as seen from the highest perspective is endless. Therefore, discovery of all there is to know about both intuition and intent is endless. For all practical purposes, an individual can safely consider that there will never be a time in which the development of intuition will be unnecessary. As we have said, the highest souls who function to the fullest within the scope of form do so with an equal development and expansion of both intent and intuition.

GROUNDING: Defined by Nature

Quite simply, the word “grounded” is used to acknowledge full body/soul fusion or full matter/soul fusion. The word “grounding” refers to what must be accomplished or activated in order to both ensure and stabilize body or matter/soul fusion. To be grounded refers to the state of being a fused body (matter)—soul unit. To achieve this fusion and to function fully as a fused unit is the primary goal one accepts when choosing to experience life within form. Functioning as a grounded body (matter)—soul unit is a goal on all levels and dimensions of form, whether the form can or cannot be perceived by the five senses.

Nature plays two key roles in grounding: First, it is through and with nature that the grounding occurs. Nature, which organizes, orders and adds life vitality to create form, is what creates and maintains grounding. Second, the levels of nature know what is required to fuse the soul dynamic within form. Nature provides the best examples of body (matter)—soul fusion. Humans have recognized the form or matter existence of nature on the planet, but have only recently begun to understand that within all form there are fully functioning soul dynamics. On the other hand, humans acknowledge or concentrate on their personal soul dynamics but have little understanding as to how they, in order to be functional within form, must allow the soul to fuse with and operate through their form body. Humans do not see the examples or learn the lessons of the master teachers of body (matter)—soul fusion that surround them in all the kingdoms of nature. Humans also deny the fusion within themselves. The relative extent of this denial interferes proportionately with the quality and stabilization of the fusion.

BALANCE: Defined by Nature

Balance is relative and measured, shall we say, by an individual’s ability to faithfully demonstrate the various elements that make up his larger reality through the specific frameworks of form in which one has chosen to develop. When what one is demonstrating is faithful in intent and clarity with these elements and the larger reality, he experiences balance. And those interacting with this individual will experience his balance. One

experiences imbalance when there is distortion between what he demonstrates through the form framework and the intent and clarity of the elements that make up the larger reality as well as the larger reality itself.

If you seriously consider what we are saying here, you will see that balance as a phenomenon is not an elusive state that only an exalted few can achieve. Balance is, in fact, inherent in all reality, in all life systems. Balance is defined by the many elements within any individual's reality. And it is the dominant state of being within any reality and any form system. It is also the state of being that links individual life systems to one another and to the larger whole. When someone says that he is a child of the universe, what he is acknowledging is the relationship and link of his higher state of balance to the universe's state of balance. Whether he feels linked to or distant from this relationship depends on the closeness or distance he creates within himself with respect to his larger personal state of balance—that dynamic that is part of his overall reality.

THE WHITE BROTHERHOOD

Much has been written about the White Brotherhood, but I think a lot of it is garbage. Some people have felt or said that they were the sole “channellers” of the White Brotherhood, and this simply isn't true. The Brotherhood is a huge organization that is constantly connected to us in general and to many of us individually. It's just that usually they are only able to work with us on an intuitive level, and our link with them is unconscious on our part.

The White Brotherhood is a large group of highly evolved souls dedicated to assisting the evolutionary process of moving universal reality, principles, laws and patterns through all planes and levels of form. They hold the major patterning and rhythms now being utilized for the shift we are all going through from the Piscean to the Aquarian era. When we link with them, they support and assist us by assuring that any work we do maintains its forward evolutionary motion and its connection to the new Aquarian dynamics.

They exist beyond time and history. I first heard about them during my stay at the Findhorn community in Scotland in 1977. St. Germaine, who had a close relationship with several Findhorn

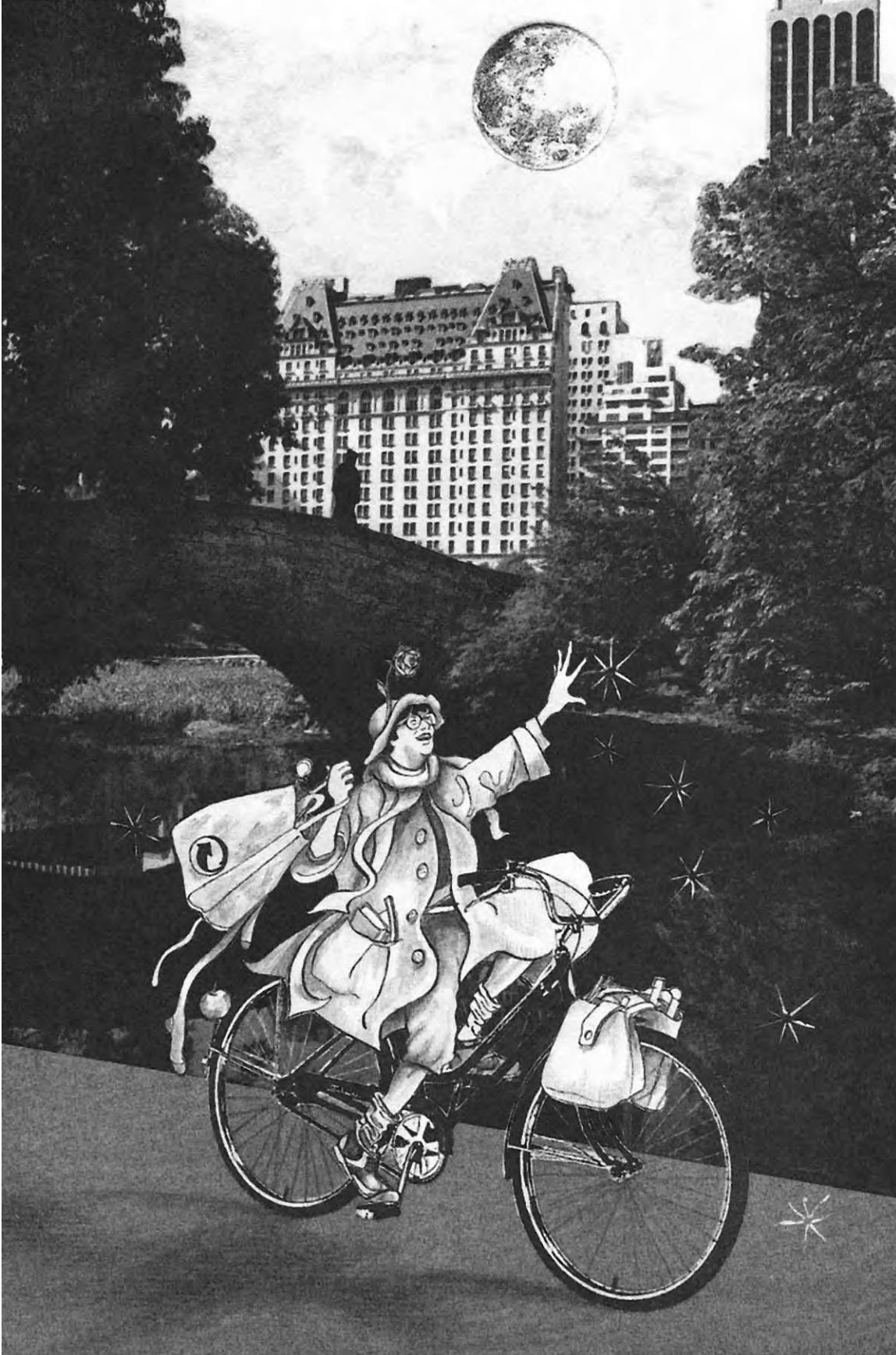
members, was referred to often and described as being a master teacher from the White Brotherhood. I was also told that the Order of Melchizedek was a part of the Brotherhood, and it is from this group that all of the major religious leaders come who have been a part of our history. I ignored the Brotherhood and its existence for years, assuming that they knew how to do their job, whatever that was, very well without me and that my focus was primarily on nature, not on human-oriented evolution. After all, this is the age of specialization.

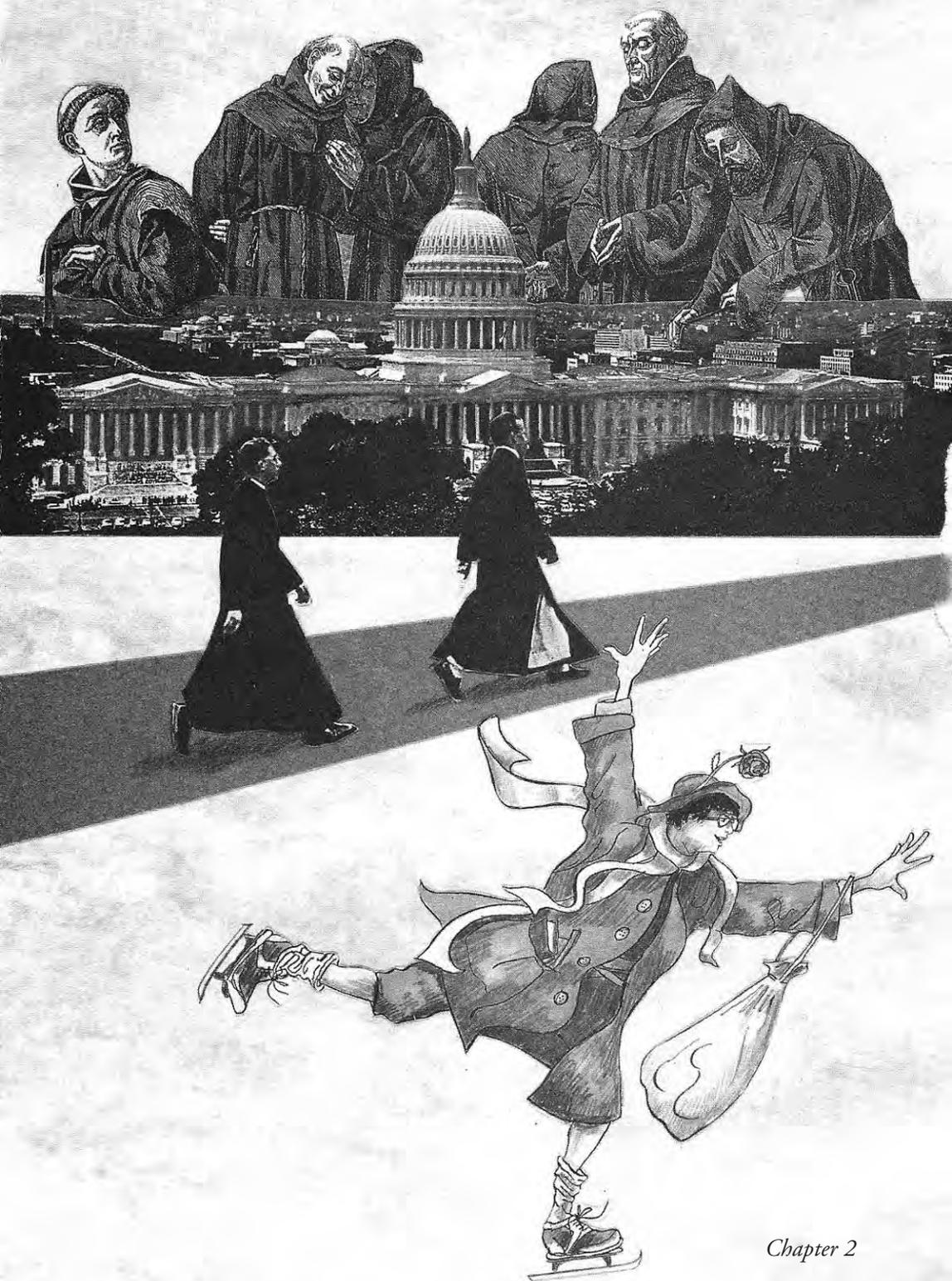
My understanding of how the Brotherhood functions is, I'm sure, somewhat simplistic. I see them operating in a *co-creative* role with us on this planet. As a result of this role, they design and infuse purpose and direction into the various frameworks of social order through which we on Earth move in order to learn, experience and evolve. In essence, they create the schools through which we move. We call these schools religions, governmental structures, educational movements, philosophy, science . . . all those massive social frameworks with which we associate and within which we function.

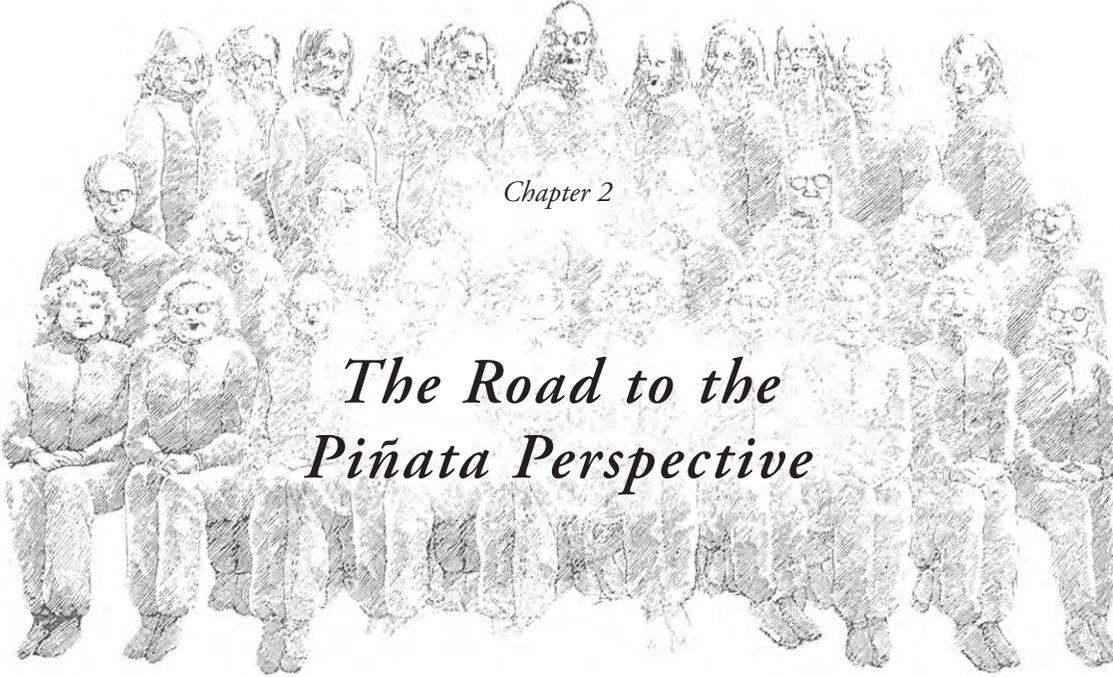
Let me say something about the name "White Brotherhood." Several people have written to me questioning—and sometimes complaining about—that name. They want to make sure this isn't some white supremacist/sexist organization. Trust me, the White Brotherhood is neither. It includes males, females and souls beyond both persuasions, and some of them can outdo us any day when it comes to color.

The name "White Brotherhood" has been used for this group for centuries. We did not coin the name here at Perelandra. It was coined by those folks on the Earth level who first began to consciously work with this group. It is not a name the group chose for itself. It is a name *we* chose for it. The words "white brotherhood" maintained the intent and integrity of the group, so it has always been acceptable to them. "White" is used to signify *all* the rays of the light spectrum. "Brotherhood" is used to signify not only the family of all people but also the family of all *life*.









Chapter 2

*The Road to the
Piñata Perspective*

THE STORY BEGINS
1862

SOMEWHERE NEAR JAMESTOWN, VIRGINIA.

A schizophrenic plantation owner had many slaves who constantly tended to his land and enlarged its productivity. The opportunity in that lifetime for him to understand the law of karma was to see it outside of himself in the form of slavery. Simultaneously, he was being exposed to talk of revolution and the formation of a new order, a new country, giving equal vote and equal taxation to all. In that life, the three extremes—the high and mighty soul, the personality repressed unjustly and unfairly by the rule of the country, and the exposure to serfdom and slavery outside of self—*rent* the personality in two. At age forty, he had a complete nervous breakdown, manifesting that one must split in order to understand the reality that is Oneness. [comma]

THE STORY CONTINUES

1969

WASHINGTON, D.C.

In 1969, I was twenty-three years old. I had survived a childhood of abuse and abandonment.* Today the experts would say that I was a “throwaway child.” I had been on my own since age twelve. But back in the late 50s and early 60s, when I was a girl faced with the somewhat formidable task of surviving on my own, this term had not yet been coined. I had also survived two years in a Catholic boarding school for girls. I’m not sure which was tougher. By 1969, I had successfully come through the survival years and was now building my own life.

I had been working at the National Gallery of Art for two years. I managed to land this job after my return in 1967 from a year traveling in Europe. Hiring me had been a major gamble on the Gallery’s part—not only did I not have a master’s degree in fine arts or art history (a Gallery requirement in those days), I had not even attended college. I convinced the head of the publications department that spending a year looking at the real paintings of the masters had more value than studying reproductions in an art history book. I further wowed her with stories about my three-month job with the Florence marble restoration team that had taken on cleaning all the marble art that had been damaged in the devastating 1967 Florence flood. When I told her about working on some of Michelangelo’s pieces, she was convinced I would be an asset to the Gallery and overlooked all those college requirements.

I wanted to work at the National Gallery of Art after my return to the States because I wanted to continue the “softer” lifestyle I had discovered (and appreciated) in Europe. I didn’t want to return to the fast-paced life I left behind when I departed on a freighter for England. I had worked in the classified advertising department at *The Washington Post* for three and a half years. Although it was an exciting job,

* I describe my childhood and early life in the book *Behaving As If the God In All Life Mattered*.

and although I had been invited to rejoin *The Post* after I returned, I came back to the States knowing I needed to change my life. I might have functioned quite well under the daily pressures of a major newspaper, but it was no longer a lifestyle that made me comfortable. In Europe, I realized it was too hard-edged for me, and I was afraid I would not like the person I might become if I spent year after year in that environment.

Just before I went to Europe, a friend hauled me to the National Gallery of Art for a two-hour crash course in art history. I had no interest in this kind of thing, but he was sure I'd be a better person for it. And it was "good preparation" for my Europe trip. After being dragged from room to room, I can honestly say that I left with a headache, nausea and an even stronger disinterest in art.

I wasn't sure what I was going to do in Europe. I only knew that it was important for me to go. I didn't even have an itinerary. In fact, I left the States not knowing where the freighter was going to dock. It all depended on the weather. If we had good weather—which was doubtful for a January crossing—we would dock at Southampton. If we had questionable or bad weather, we would dock at Liverpool. Two days before we arrived, I found out I would be disembarking at Liverpool.

And so, I arrived with no plans. I spent only a few days in Liverpool, then I headed to London. I was nearly paralyzed by the shock of realizing I was in a foreign country and I didn't know one other person. I quickly became homesick for the States—actually I think I was just yearning for *anything* that was familiar. There I was—twenty-one, in England, and without a clue as to why I was there. But I couldn't turn back. I had worked too hard to earn the money for the trip; I had quit my job, given up my apartment, stored my stuff and farmed out my cat. So I took a deep breath and slowly, *slowly* began to pull myself together. Sort of. I had a copy of *Europe on \$5 a Day*, which listed inexpensive places to stay, inexpensive places to eat and equally inexpensive things to do. Museum-hopping is very inexpensive. It was also about the only thing listed that I felt comfortable doing. I wasn't interested in the night life in bars and pubs. I had lived with an alcoholic mother before being thrown out

on the streets, so I really was not drawn to people who sat around getting half looped and acting silly. Besides, I didn't drink or smoke. I did not have enough money for fancy restaurants, and I was not that interested in food anyway. That left museums, art galleries and your basic historical points of interest.

I wish I could say that I walked into my first museum in London and fell madly in love with what I saw. It's not that I hated what I saw. I just didn't understand what the big deal was. Oh sure, some of the objects were interesting and some of the paintings were actually quite pretty. I continued visiting museums because I wanted to figure out what was the point of it all. After about my fourth country and approximately the thirtieth museum, I began to gain an appreciation and respect. (Years later, when I was working at the Gallery, a boy about nine years old came up to me and asked, "What's the big deal with all this stuff? All they had to do was follow the numbers." I said, "Oh no. *These* are the fellows who figured out what numbers to use." Well, this kid left with a whole new respect for what he was seeing.) By the time I got to Florence and joined the marble restoration team, I was actually beginning to feel a little knowledgeable about art.

Now, if you're beginning to think that culture was influencing me by the time I arrived in Florence, and that this is the reason I joined the marble restoration team, don't. I arrived in March 1967. The Arno River overflowed in November 1966 — just after everyone in the city had received their first delivery of heating oil for the winter. The flood waters burst all the storage tanks. The water alone, which reached a height of twenty feet in some streets, did a great deal of damage. But that thick heating oil did a great deal more damage, particularly to the artwork. Large numbers of international teams of art restoration experts rushed into Florence to take over the massive cleanup job. The English worked on the restoration of paintings. The Americans sent in teams to deal with the cleanup of old books. But no one came to work on the marble because there were no experts in this field of restoration. A small, ragged group of English and Americans banded together on their own and took on the challenge. Washing mud off the marble was the easy part. The oil was the main problem.

Marble is porous and, although it has a smooth surface or patina, it acts very much like skin. When the oil hit the surface, it was absorbed through the pores, into the marble, leaving a dark, brown stain on the surface. This small group of people, armed with a few implements (dental tools, de-ionized water and toothpaste), set to work, but no amount of scrubbing affected the oil problem. Eventually, a scientist from England brought in a chemical solvent to draw the oil out without damaging the patina or breaking down the marble. A thin layer of solvent mixed with talcum powder was hand-packed on the marble. The solvent drew out the oil, which then absorbed in the talc. The talc dried, was brushed off, and the whole process was repeated. This procedure was done over and over until the surface of the marble was once again white.

The whole city of Florence is a museum. There is marble art everywhere: statues, plaques, tombs, fountains, cathedral walls. And this group of about fifteen people was trying to hand-pack everything before the oil left a permanent stain on the marble. This is the situation I walked into. I appreciated their efforts; they were in need of help; and I volunteered because I became fascinated with the technical challenge of how to get oil out of marble. I did not have a deep love for marble art — at least not before I began cleaning it. It was just the thing to do.

We worked long hours six days a week. The Italian government paid us \$100 a month. For me that wasn't bad. It paid for all my living expenses while I stayed in Florence. A few more people joined the group. We were making progress and began to feel we could get this job done. We ignored the fact that the solvent left chemical burns on our hands. (We couldn't protect ourselves with rubber gloves because the solvent ate through the gloves too.) We packed the hell out of that city. Then, around mid-June, the intense summer heat rolled in. All the marble we had cleaned began to show new brown stains on the surface. The heat was drawing out the remaining oil from the very center of the marble that had not been drawn out with the solvent. All of Florence had to be repacked. That's when I looked at my hands that were becoming more raw by the day, and handed over my tools to a new volunteer.

I left Florence at the end of June and continued my travels. With each month, I became more comfortable with tackling new countries, new customs, new languages. My self-confidence steadily rose. I became a seasoned and intelligent traveler. I became less an American and more a European. Traveling alone gave me a lot of time by myself, and I became quiet and more at peace. I was healing from my tumultuous childhood.

I returned to the States with a very different feeling about myself and how I wanted to live. That's when I made the decision not to rejoin *The Post* and, instead, look for a completely different kind of job. The National Gallery of Art was not advertising for help when I showed up. I decided that I wanted to continue with what I had learned in Europe about art, and so I simply presented myself at their personnel office. I walked out with a job in the publications department.

I then decided I wanted to live in an area of town that had a neighborhood feeling rather than renting another apartment in a high-rise. Not far from the National Gallery of Art is an area called Capitol Hill. I found an English basement apartment in a house owned by a couple with two small children. It was perfect. I was now living only thirteen blocks from work, so I bought a gold Robin Hood bicycle, which became my main mode of transportation.

Now, that bicycle became quite the source of adventure for me. I rode it for several years, and in all those years I rarely passed another cyclist. It took a few more years before cycling came into vogue in Washington, D.C. I was determined not to get run over by a car and wore bright clothing so folks would see me. I had great rain gear; I bought a piece of oil cloth (white with black polka dots), a shiny black, broad-brimmed hat that tied under my chin, and shiny black plastic boots. I looked like a whacky witch from the west as I rode through town with my oilcloth poncho flapping in the breeze. It drew a lot of attention—which was the point. No one ran over me.

I, on the other hand, ran over—or into—someone. Each day I cut through the grounds of the U.S. Capitol Building on the way to and from work. All the Capitol guards knew me, and I'd wave as I rode by. One summer evening, there was an amazingly beautiful

sunset going on just behind the rotunda. I was pedaling slowly, watching the sunset along with just about everyone else — except Robert Kennedy. He was coming down the east steps of the Capitol Building with his head down—I assume he was thinking. As he stepped off the curb, I ran right into him. Actually, my front wheel lodged between his legs. (He had been mid-stride when we collided.) Our heads were about a foot apart. He didn't say anything, but he sure had tears of pain in his eyes. I didn't know what to do, so I said, "Tough day, huh." He said something like, "It's an appropriate end to the day." Thank god the guards knew me and didn't come flying over to wrestle me to the ground. Senator Kennedy and I "disconnected." I asked if he was okay, hoping he wouldn't go into any kind of detail. He said, in a strained voice, that he'd be fine. I apologized (a lot), then said, "Bye," and pedaled on.

I didn't always attack people with this bike. (Although there were many times when I wanted to turn it into a Sherman tank so that I could rumble down the street taking off every car door that swung open in my face.) Once Golda Meir crossed the street right in front of me—apparently she hadn't heard how dangerous I was. I dutifully stopped and said "Hi" to her. (What else do you do when someone of her stature is looking right at you? You can't just stare. Well, I guess I proved you could run into them, but just saying "hi" seems a lot easier.) She graciously said "Hello," and continued on. I went on my way, thinking she really looked like a short grandmother and not like the prime minister of Israel.

One time I rode my bicycle through the hallways of the National Gallery of Art, but I felt I had good reason. The Gallery was closed, and I was getting ready to go home. I was allowed to park my bike in the Gallery garage. When I arrived in the garage one evening, I realized I had left my wool gloves in the publications room, which was a good block away from the garage. It was the dead of winter and downright cold outside, and I was tired. So I hopped on the bike and pedaled down the hallway to publications. Unfortunately, John Walker, the dignified director of the National Gallery at the time, picked that very moment to come down the hallway. You know how it is when someone sees something they can't believe, so they refuse to believe

they're seeing it? That's how John Walker looked. I have the feeling that the last thing he expected to see was someone riding a bicycle through the hallowed halls of the Gallery. He was walking with two other equally dignified-looking men, and it was clear they didn't know what to say. I decided to take advantage of the confusion, so I pedaled right passed them, said "Good night," and kept right on going to publications as if it were the most natural thing in the world. After I passed, I heard Mr. Walker saying to the others, "Did you just see that?" I assume he never got it straight in his head because I didn't see any memos about prohibiting bike-riding in the Gallery.

I was probably an asset to the Gallery, as the head of publications predicted I might be, but I was also a challenge to them. I was just too different for them. I had never considered myself a "free spirit" because back then this was synonymous with "hippie." I certainly was not a hippie—at heart or lifestyle. I wanted a "normal" life. I wanted a real "home"—a place where I belonged. I had already had enough freedom, challenge and adventure, thank you. But I *thought* differently—and I especially thought differently than most people who worked at the Gallery. They took themselves very seriously, and they got upset about the smallest things. An accidental food stain on a silk tie could wreck a man's day there. They didn't like to think about practical things. They were the "gentrified folks" who were meticulously dressed, and I always looked like I just rolled in on a bicycle. Sure, I wore dresses, but they were ones that I had sewn and not bought from Bloomingdale's. And I didn't have a single piece of gold (real gold) jewelry to sport around.

Actually, what I had to offer the Gallery was common sense. We *really* thought differently. When I began working in publications, no one knew which reproductions were in stock, which ones were out of stock, or which were on order from the printer. People would ask for maybe twenty reproductions, and at least half of them would be out of stock—and we never knew when they'd be available again. Some prints had been out of stock for years. After a while, I offered to do an inventory for these people. This involved crawling around storage areas, identifying stacks of stuff and counting. You wouldn't believe the junk I found. Trudy would have been ecstatic. I set up the first,

organized inventory/restocking/reprinting process for all publications at the Gallery. They were impressed.

The people that I understood were the tourists. They drove me nuts, but I understood where they were coming from. They didn't get what the big deal was either. But the National Gallery of Art was on the list of things to see in Washington, so in they trooped. A lot of people came through the doors in the summertime just for the air conditioning and the chance to walk around on the cool marble floors in bare feet. Many people never bothered looking at the real paintings—they'd just come into the publications room and look at the postcards and 11-x-14-inch reproductions of the paintings. It saved time.

Lots of people bought those reproductions, and this is when it got interesting. When I worked at the Gallery, the publications area was not self-service, as it is today. Now you just walk around and pick up the postcards, 11-x-14 prints or poster-size reproductions you want, and then go pay for them. You don't have to identify the pictures to the clerk. Back when I worked there, only the postcards were self-service. Everything else was displayed with stock numbers. You brought your list of stock numbers to a staff person, and we got your stack of "artwork." Consequently, I'm one of the generation of publications staff who knows most of the Gallery paintings not by artist and name, but by stock number. Renoir's *Girl with a Watering Can* was forever known by us as "good ole 1870."

You could tell that people really didn't get the overall concept of what the Gallery was about based on what they said to us in publications. A fair number of people thought that this was where John Kennedy was buried. (He had lain in state in the Capitol Building under the rotunda, and since the Gallery had a big rotunda, visitors got confused.) Another person came to the Gallery for a special show and asked afterwards what the building was normally used for once "this show left." One woman asked for an 11-x-14 print of Picasso's *The Tragedy*. This is a rather somber picture of a man, woman and child from his blue period. Hence, the entire picture is in shades of blue. I pulled the print out, but the woman looked at it a few seconds and said, "Oh, do you have this in green? It'll go better with my

bathroom if it's in green." Another fellow, who had clearly been sent to the Gallery on a mission by his wife, asked if we had any pictures by "Genre." (This is like asking if there are any poems by "Anonymous.")

By far, the biggest seller was the 11-x-14 reproduction of Salvador Dali's *Last Supper*, which sold for a quarter. The traditional depiction of the Last Supper often features the torso of God with outstretched arms just above Jesus and the disciples. Dali did not include the head of God. In his depiction of the Last Supper, the painting stops at His neck. A number of people, when seeing the inexpensive reproductions of the painting, would ask if we had a more expensive copy that included God's head. I guess they figured the cheap reproductions didn't necessarily include the entire painting. One fellow argued that Dali could not have possibly painted that picture because there were no bent watches anywhere in it. (Ahhh . . . you're not getting this one. Let me help. Dali painted a bunch of pictures that included watches with bent faces. They looked as if they were liquid rather than solid.) Another time, a woman proudly presented herself at the desk and asked for a copy of Dolly Madison's "Last Dinner."

I may not have had a master's degree in art history like other staffpersons, but, compared to many of the people who visited the Gallery, I was an expert. But I can't say I ever got comfortable at the Gallery. It just wasn't my world.

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