



*San's Sacred Circle ~  
Reflections, Music & Events*

Volume 3, Issue 10  
APRIL 7, 2014

**2014 Sacred Circles  
Spiritual Retreats for  
Women**  
**First Sunday Potlucks**  
**2:30—5:30 p.m.**

**March 2**

Introduction to  
The Art of Stress Relief

**April 6**

Yoga for You! Creating  
Optimum Health at Any  
Age

**May 4**

Ahhhh... Aromatherapy!

**June 1**

Writing Wrongs

**July 6**

Reiki for Relaxation and  
Healing

**August 3**

Creative Crafts to Release  
Stress

**September 7**

STRESS! Let It Go So You  
Can Flow

**LOCATION:**

26210 Emery Road, #103  
Warrensville Hts., OH  
44128

*Inside this issue:*

The Many Faces of Prayer	2
Sacred Music	2
SIT-UP ~ Stay Tuned	2
Water the Seeds Not the Weeds	3
Listen for the Word	3-4
Water the Seeds (cont'd)	5-6

*~ Creating a Beautiful World ~  
One Sacred Soul at a Time*

*12 Steps to Minimize Stress:  
Let Go of the Mess that  
Sabotages Your Rest*

*Soothe Your Soul*

“Each person deserves a day away in which no problems are confronted, no solutions searched for.” — Maya Angelou

*Seek Out the Still Small Voice Within*

“Still, small heavenly voices penetrate the heart with their gentle, convincing declarations...

Most often, hope, encouragement, and direction come from a soft, piercing voice. Small voices are heard only by those who are willing to listen.”

~ Marvin J. Ashton

*Sow Seeds of Gratitude*

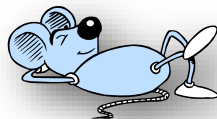
Focusing on love and gratitude expands our awareness and allows us to see beyond surface aggravations and opens us up to the power of greater good in our lives. Keep a gratitude journal.

*Seek Out a Spiritual Path*

“Living a spiritual life may not be easy. It demands total authenticity. It brings you to dance to a unique song that only you can hear fully, and sometimes you dance alone because no others can hear the music.”

— Debra Moffitt, Garden of Bliss: Cultivating the Inner Landscape for Self-Discovery

*Slow Your Roll and Relax*



*Smooth Out the Rough Edges*

“The truth is, unless you let go, unless you forgive yourself, unless you forgive the situation, unless you realize that the situation is over, you cannot move forward.”

— Steve Maraboli, Unapologetically You: Reflections on Life and the Human Experience

*Stay Sexually Energized*

They're sexy.  
Because they're confident.  
'Sexy' is all about  
attitude.

(continued on page 2)

*Yoga for You! Creating  
Optimum Health at Any Age!*  
*Sara Almitra Hakeem  
(Shantibindu)*



“Your health is your most precious asset. Investing in maintaining a strong balance and a healthy you is always the right choice at any age. You will learn practical, accessible ways to increase physical and mental well-being. As a certified Satyananda Yoga level one teacher, I will work with foundation movements that are safe and comfortable for your body. I am able to work with you and ensure your safety and comfort for whatever your current goals for change may be—less stress and anxiety, weight loss, grief, illness, arthritis, or even chronic conditions. As you learn to ease into a yoga practice that steadies your body, steadies the breath, and quiets the mind, this allows you access to your own personal peace, calm, freedom, and bliss.”

*Join Us in the Circle ...*

**Yoga Presentation and Sacred Circle  
April 6, 2014 • 2:30 p.m.**

Dress comfortably. You will have the option to sit in a chair or work on the floor with a mat, so bring a mat if you have one.

After this month, the Circle will only be open to those who have committed to the full six months until we start new sessions next year.

*Questions? Contact Shirley Nelson  
sancircle@gmail.com or 216-978-2626*



*The Many Faces of Prayer ~ A Healing Balm in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century ~ Shirley A. Nelson ~*

## The Many Faces of Prayer

### Stay in the Light

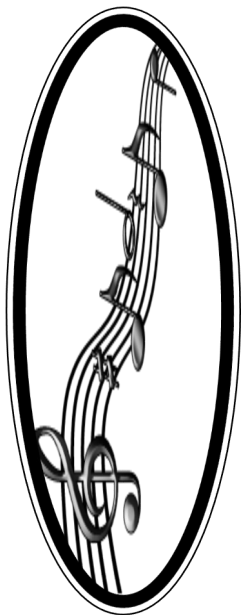
Many years ago, while living in Los Angeles, I was touched by an angel. It was a very turbulent time in my life and trying to *stay* in the light was the least of my problems. I couldn't even find the light switch. My father had just passed, I had been laid off from a "good" job, and I had just ended a relationship that hurt me to the core—there was no light.

One day after church, while mindlessly moving through a line of people and blindly shaking hands, I recall a woman extending

her hand to me and instead of mechanically shaking it and moving on as I'd done with all the others, I looked up and met a pair of eyes that were radiant and bright and ever so full of light. I was mesmerized.

For a moment, I was out of my misery. She gave me her blessings and invited me to attend one of her Sister Circles. Not knowing what it was about, I went, because our brief encounter gave me hope and cast a glimmer of light in my world of darkness. I started attending her meetings and I learned a lot and I began to heal and feel peace again.

She talked about matters of the heart, self-esteem, setting boundaries and learning how to trust. She brought in speakers, among them Della Reese, and poets, and dancers, and artists, and preachers. We sat in those circles and laughed and cried and prayed—sometimes for a few hours and sometimes for a few days. Her parting words each time were *"stay in the light"*. I had no idea it would become one of my most powerful prayers. That angel is my friend, Jewel Diamond Taylor. Check out her good works at: [www.donotgiveup.net](http://www.donotgiveup.net).



## Sacred Music Pick of the Month - Happy

### "Happy"

Pharrell Williams

The first time I heard "Happy" by Pharrell Williams was at Angela Newman's Positive-U (<http://positive-u.com/>) workshop, where she had invited me to speak on happiness. She played the video while people entered the room and while I watched and listened, I felt myself being lifted up in my spirit. It sure helped to put

a fire up under me while I prepared to speak. I've since come to learn that it's been a number one seller for weeks. If you have not heard it, check out one of the YouTube videos to the right and give it a couple of times around and you will be hooked along with millions of others. His voice is great, the words are catchy and there is something contagious about the beat and the melody that touches you in your heart and soul. *san*

### YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6QbBOsHsgRM>



### Stretch Yourself and Move Your Body



My grandmother started walking five miles a day when she was sixty. She's ninety-seven now, and we don't know where the heck she is." — [Ellen DeGeneres](#)

## SIT-UP ~ Stay Tuned Spiritually In Tune for Universal Peace



### 12 Steps to Minimize Stress . . . (cont'd)

#### Save Something for Tomorrow



### Share Your Love and Lift Others Up



"It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving. — [Mother Teresa](#)

### Set-up Boundaries

You teach people how to treat you by what you allow, what you stop, and what you reinforce. — Tony Gaskins

### Sing a New Song

"Words make you think. Music makes you feel. A song makes you feel a thought." — [Yip Harburg](#)



*San*

# Water the Seeds Not the Weeds

## Just a Thought



### *Healing Our Lives, Overcoming our Fears: An Interview with Dr. Marc Schoen by Diane Dreher*

*Excerpt from Science of Mind  
Magazine ~ March 2014*

Dr. Marc Schoen's personal mission is to help end the epidemic of fear that casts a shadow across too many lives. Dr. Ernest Holmes once said that overcoming our fear "is the greatest adventure in the mind of man." Pursuing this adventure as a psychologist and faculty member at UCLA's Geffen School of Medicine, Schoen has helped thousands of people overcome their fears to lead happier, healthier lives.

In a recent interview with *Science of Mind*, Schoen discussed his new book, *Your Survival Instinct Is Killing You*. "My book is all about fear," he said. "Most peo-

ple say, 'I'm not frightened, I'm not scared—I'm just stressed,'" unaware that "the stress response really emanates from a fear response," and that chronic stress can bring on panic attacks, anxiety disorders, depression, headaches, insomnia, obesity, chronic fatigue, allergies, gastrointestinal problems, skin disorders, dementia, and a long list of addictive behaviors.

Chronic fear has permeated our society, Schoen maintains. When he began his career as a child psychologist at Cedars Sinai Hospital three decades ago, very few children came in with phobias, migraine headaches, or sleep disorders. But now, he says, "They're coming in with phobias galore, migraine headaches, and massive problems related to sleep." The epidemic of fear has "migrated all the way down to our kids."

"The paradox of it all," he says, is that technically "we live in a world that's a ton

safer than it was many generations before, yet the fear response is on overdrive."

Why? The answer lies deep within us—in the structure of our brains. "We have basically two brains," he explains: the logical, rational cerebral cortex, which helps us solve problems, and the older limbic brain, "the visceral part of us—our gut responses from pain, safety, anger, hunger, sleep, and pleasure." These two different parts have different goals. The cerebral cortex analyzes our experiences, solves problems, and makes sense of our world, while the limbic brain has a single goal—"to keep us out of danger." Within the limbic brain, whenever the amygdala—our internal alarm system—senses a threat to our safety, it initiates the fight-or-flight response.

### **Sensing Discomfort as Danger**

If we're walking in the woods and an animal jumps

(continued on page 5)



### **Rashid Reaves,**

*Retired fire fighter and paramedic... Planting sacred seeds to enrich your heart and soul. . .*

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## Listen for the Word

Hazel was a force to be reckoned with! She was the actual head of her family, even though her son-in-law believed he was. She was a part of the motion picture industry from its earliest days. One of her best friends was Gloria Swanson whom she spoke with by telephone every week up until Ms. Swanson's passing. She had an impish side that was a vital part of who she was, a side I got to see all the time. You see, Hazel was my maternal grandmother, and she lived with us.

My memories of her include spending time with her at the film studio where she worked for most of her professional life, and where she introduced me to one of my childhood T.V. heroes, Sky King (the late Kirby Grant) who was a producer and actor for the studio. Then there were the poker parties at our house that were populated with her friends from the studio as well as a streetcar conductor, a bond trader, and assorted relatives. Hazel was the type of woman who seemed unstoppable.

Her usual day included full-time work at the studio (she continued working freelance after her formal retirement from the studio) followed by helping at home. My mother was trying to raise four of us while struggling with health problems. So Hazel would come home from work and dive into cooking, including canning various things from jams and jellies to various homemade sauces. She was a cleaning fury. Dust, dirt, and germs feared her, as did most of the men in our extended family. (See pg. 4)



### **William E. (Will) Seifert-Kessell**

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## San's Sacred Circle

There is nothing  
permanent except  
change.  
~ Heraclitus

Be the Peace that you  
want to see . . .

San's Sacred Circle was established in 1998 as a lay ministry, grass roots, spiritual support group to nurture and develop sustainable practices for emotional healing and spiritual growth and to cultivate an overall sense of well-being within participants.

Inner wisdom is the compass that bridges your humanity and divinity and everyone has access to this amazing tool that lovingly guides and directs us. Access to the "still, small voice within" occurs through music, meditation, quietness, prayer, dance, and creative art inspired activities. In an environment that is sacred as well as playful, workshop participants connect body, mind, and spirit using their inner compass to transform their lives.

*Peace & Blessings ~*  
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*Certified Life Skills Coach*  
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## Listen for the Word (cont'd)



Hazel suffered a number of TIA's (mini-strokes as the doctors explained). This powerhouse of a woman was slowing down, and preparing, if you will, for her transition. You can imagine how difficult it was for us to accept that fact during the last year of her life. But we couldn't accept it. At the time that this was transpiring, I was already out on my own, a young mental health professional with a specialty in thanatology (the study of death, dying and suicide). I was the in-house specialist in this field at a local private hospital. Finally, I convinced her to come with me to the hospital where I worked to be examined by a doctor (she saw a doctor only three times in her life). They checked her into the hospital. Problem is, all the signs were there for me to see, but I

didn't want to admit they were there – I didn't want to see them. She was dying.

A week later after my overnight shift at the hospital, I stopped down to her room to visit before heading back to my house. She told me to call my parents and tell them to stay home, since it was rainy and damp. She said she felt better than she had for ages. When I got home, I did as she requested, and then went to bed. A while later I was awakened by my mother who had a key to my place. She said simply, "Grandma's gone." Knowing how stubborn Hazel was, I assumed she had checked herself out AMA (Against Medical Advice). Again, I didn't want to acknowledge what I should have seen right in front of me. My beloved grandmother had passed

quietly shortly after I had visited with her. One of the major forces in my life was gone.

It is said that we are spiritual beings having a human experience. Part of that human experience is the reality of many unpleasant things, such as loved ones passing. Our liking such things, or not, is essentially irrelevant. Reality in this human experience is what it is, and when we can make peace with the "realities" of our lives, we can learn so much more and deal with things in a more peace filled way than when we deny what's there in front of us. My denial cost me a full year's pain before I could finally grieve over the loss of my beloved Grandma Hazel. Listen for the word in your lives and the word this month is "reality".



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## Water the Seeds Not the Weeds (cont'd from page 3)

out at us, our amygdala signals danger—we react instantly without taking time to think. In earlier times, when we faced immediate threats from our environment, the limbic system helped us survive. But today, Schoen says, our survival instinct often works against us when we sense discomfort as danger. “Recent technological advances have made us a lot more comfortable,” he points out, “so we are less tolerant of being uncomfortable. We feel uncomfortable when we’re waiting in line or stuck in traffic. Then the limbic brain doesn’t just say, ‘Oh, you’re just stuck in traffic. It’s no big deal.’ It experiences discomfort when it gets to a certain level as danger,” and the internal alarm goes off, throwing us into fight-or-flight.

### The Rising Tide of Agitation

“We have a discomfort threshold,” Schoen explains, “and when we exceed it, the survival instinct goes off.” We reach this threshold a lot more often now because our lives are filled with an underlying uneasiness he calls *agitation*, “a chronic state of misalignment.” Feeling “flustered, on edge, unstrung, unnerved, tense, tired,” we find ourselves unable to relax after a hectic day, so we seek out even more stimulation—checking our e-mail, eating sugary foods, watching late-night television, or surfing the Internet.

Our noisy, busy culture has produced what Schoen calls “agitation junkies.” “People need more sensory stimulation than ever before,” he says. “We can’t just sit and eat our dinner. We want to watch television while we’re eating. We may want to read the newspaper while we’re watching television. We may want to text

message at the same time. In other words, we need so much more sensory stimulation.” He recalls watching the Lakers in the playoffs a couple of years ago, “Looking around and seeing thousands of people playing with their phones—watching this amazingly intense game wasn’t enough stimulation.” Yet, increasing our sensory stimulation only creates more agitation. And we crave instant gratification. “People need things right away,” he says. “I grew up before there were microwaves and fast food so I had to sit with being uncomfortable. I remember saying ‘Mom, when’s dinner?’—‘Marc, it will be an hour. Just deal with it.’ But now,” he says, “we don’t deal with things like that, do we?” Computers, he believes, have made us even more demanding. “In the virtual world,” he explains, “there are no grays. It’s either black or white.” And as we project this virtual reality onto our daily lives, he says, “We demand perfection so we’re far less patient with people. We have high expectations of our partners, and when they don’t meet them, we’re angry, and we don’t want to stay around.”

According to Schoen, the proof of this agitation/survival reaction is easy to spot. “It’s in our growing reliance on pharmaceuticals such as antidepressants, painkillers, sleep aids, and ADHD and anti-anxiety drugs; our rising emotional discord that results in behavioral and emotional overreactions, from overeating to road rage; and a general sense that we’re all living on the verge of a temper tantrum.” As our agitation rises, we become more and more uncomfortable until we reach threshold, which triggers the survival instinct.

Schoen has found that meditation and self-care can lower our agitation levels. He recommends a number of self-care strategies in his book including consciously slowing down, doing one thing at a time, limiting plugged-in time during the day, not overcrowding our lives with impossible “to-do” lists, and turning off electronic devices an hour before bedtime.

### Maladaptive Habits

But Schoen says that most people deal with their fears by developing “maladaptive habits, a very primitive means of managing and distracting us from the fears stirred up by our internal instinct. Some habits are good,” he explains, like “brushing our teeth, looking both ways when we cross the street, but maladaptive habits are merely a short-term solution for dealing with our overactive survival instinct.” Five maladaptive habits described in his book are *addictions* to food, alcohol, drugs, caffeine, over exercising, and sex; *insomnia* and sleep disorders; *compulsive habits*: excessive checking, cleaning, and grooming; *sick habits*: frequent colds, flu, headaches, and stomach aches; and *avoidance habits*: fear of flying, elevators, and crowds.

These habits, he says, only mask the underlying fear, which “continues to smolder. The more we engage in a maladaptive habit, the greater that fear continues to be. So it gets bigger over time.”

### Changing Our Brains with the Power of Love

As long as we’re reacting from fear and clinging to maladaptive habits, he has found that we’re stuck in a negative cycle, unable to think creatively to discover

(continued on page 6)

*Healing Our Lives,  
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by Diane Dreher  
Excerpt from  
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## Water the Seeds Not the Weeds (cont'd from page 5)

new possibilities for our lives. So how, I ask, can we transcend this fear cycle?

"I know I'm saying something very provocative," Schoen replies, "but positive thinking alone is not enough. As long as this limbic brain is still shooting out flares of fear, positive thinking alone is like trying to whitewash something that's burning on the inside. The honest truth is that it is not enough—as long as you have one part of the brain that's positive thinking but another part of the brain that's alarmed and frightened and scared." He admits that affirmations and cognitive retraining may work for some people, but says that "for a huge subset of people we need something more, because with this plethora of material—churches, lecturers, the positive psychology movement—[the incidence of] mental illness is higher than ever before."

To quiet the fear reaction, he offers a beautiful solution: connecting with our positive emotions of gratitude and love. We have a whole spectrum of emotions—"like a rainbow," he says with a smile, but when we're stuck in fear, "this rainbow is entirely comprised of red. That's all we see—red. But let's say we start bringing in other colors"—orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. "Now that red in the rainbow represents a much smaller slice of it. We want to do the same thing with the fear response." His strategy is to recruit different emotions, different feelings, activating not just the amygdala but different parts of the brain.

"Positive thought is the cognitive part of it," he says, but working "in the change business" as a

psychologist, he's learned that "feelings and sensations are far bigger and stronger than thoughts." So he promotes positive change by combining positive thoughts with positive feelings. When his clients feel anxious about giving an oral presentation or dealing with conflict, he shows them how to connect with "the part of the brain that feels gratitude or the part that feels love."

By drawing upon love and gratitude, Schoen's approach makes a powerful connection with Science of Mind principles. Gratitude is an essential part of spiritual mind treatment, and, as Ernest Holmes explains, "As love enters, fear vanishes... *Perfect love casteth out all fear.*" Schoen tells people to "think about what they feel great love for in their lives. For me," he says, "I think of my kids. I love my kids; I have unconditional love. And I pair that with getting up and giving a speech. I'm pairing it to other parts of my life where I feel gratitude." For example, "I feel great gratitude for being physically healthy or I have a wonderful partner" or even "I love my dog." The point is that focusing on love and gratitude expands our awareness. Seeing beyond the surface of agitation, we open ourselves up to the power of greater Good in our lives.

"The goal," he says, "is *not* to banish discomfort. Discomfort is part of our lives. Our goal is to better manage discomfort and remember that too much discomfort leads to the fear reaction." Schoen's innovative approach is supported by recent brain research. For as we bring more of these positive emotions into our lives, we develop new neural connections,

new synaptic pathways in our brains that counterbalance the old fear patterns. "In this way," he explains, "we can then use positive or corrective belief patterns in a much more powerful way. I call it building up the discomfort muscle." He says, "When we start bringing in positive parts of the brain, building up this muscle, building up these new synaptic pathways, it is so much more possible to create substantive change," to overcome these over reactive primitive fears. "We now have the tools to do it and it doesn't take long. It really is something that people can do independently." He adds that people who've read his book or taken his workshops "write me all the time saying it's really made a difference in their lives."

### A Path to Spiritual Growth

Schoen sees managing discomfort as not only a major challenge for our time but a path to greater spiritual growth. "At one time," he says, "the path of comfort had survival value. Avoiding situations where we would be harmed allowed us to survive as a species. But now the path of managing discomfort provides much more survival value. And as we learn to manage discomfort better, not to shut down, not to fear it, not to run away," then, he believes, we can realize our full potential. "We have the ability to be so much more spiritual, so much more genuine, so much more real, so much more fulfilled," he says. "But as long as we're governed by the survival instinct that shuts us down, that contracts us, we can never get to that place because we're not free. We're living in a contracted state," cut off from our connection to the divine.

Ultimately, he believes, "When we can manage our discomfort, we are in a more expansive state where we can more fully connect, become one with God." For Marc Schoen, healing means expanding our awareness, drawing upon positive emotions to help us overcome fear and reveal our highest potential, to realize the power of Good in our lives. Certainly, as Ernest Holmes recognized, this is life's greatest adventure."

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*Peace ~ Rashid*

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