

Reflections, Music, & Events

Volume 3, Issue 3

SEPTEMBER 7, 2013

2013

First Sunday

Potlucks

2:30—5:30 p.m.

Relaxation Retreats for
Stress Release
“How Do You Heal?”
March thru October

Third Sunday

Workshops

2:00—5:00 p.m.

“Life Makeovers”
March thru October

Join Us!

The Nature Center at
Shaker Lakes
2600 South Park Blvd.
Cleveland, OH 44120

Questions . . .

Shirley A. Nelson
216-978-2626
sanscircle@gmail.com

Inside this issue:

The Many Faces of Prayer	2
Sacred Music	2
SIT-UP ~ Stay Tuned	2
Water the Seeds Not the Weeds	3
What About the Monkey Mind?	3
Sacred Spaces for Rest, Restoration	4
Retreat Schedule	5



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



Just Write!

Shirley A. Nelson (San)

“Running from practice to practice or guru to guru, keeps us from ever having to take off our shoes and stand on holy ground.”

Writing as a spiritual practice will reveal some of your greatest fears, but don't let that stop you, because it can also reveal your deepest passions. Writing is a solitary spiritual discipline and, like meditation and prayer, no one can do it for you. Writing is a form of therapy and it can be cathartic and liberating. It is healing. Research has shown that when a person describes the details of a traumatic experience, the simple act of putting words down on paper often brings considerable relief. In fact, it's so effective that many enlightened practitioners, such as Carl Jung, were known to treat the private journal with a great deal of respect.

The idea is to keep writing no matter what comes up. Some things will surprise you and some things will simply amaze you and, yes, some things will frighten you. But don't stop. Keep writing until you find something in your writing—something that reveals more about you to your self—something that

might help you to make a significant contribution to the world or cause you to be kinder, compassionate and more authentic.

Write until you're totally naked and raw and bleeding because you have gotten down to the bare bones of your soul. Write until you have crucified old habits and you no longer recognize the person in the mirror because he/she has been transformed. Write for goodness sake. Write until you know that God is everything—God is the turd and the totality. When you get to that point, you will be free. However, don't *try* to go there or else you will miss something crucial—something juicy and mysterious that may surprise you. Don't *try* to go anywhere. Just write!

Write until you are standing barefoot before God—full of the agony and the ecstasy of writing as a spiritual practice. Don't stop at the pretty words that comfort and inspire and give you a false sense of security or, as some would say, a big head because you're so full of yourself. No! Go for the deep—the troublesome, irksome, pesky things that reveal those nuggets that have been buried under years of self-degradation and contempt. Write it out of your system.

Spiritual practices don't always feel good. Often emotions arise that we would rather not deal with—unfulfilled dreams, a sense of failure, loss, sadness, shame, etc. But that's the whole idea. The practices help bring those things up and, once you're aware of them, you learn how to deal with them appropriately.

Where to start? For those who know me, you know that I highly recommend writer Julia Cameron's process, the *Morning Pages*. That typically results in three pages of *stream of consciousness* writing first thing in the morning before coffee, and all the other things you do to start your day. And although you may have heard this before, the instructions bear repeating. To be effective, your journal needs to follow three simple rules. It must remain strictly personal; don't read it to anyone, except perhaps your therapist. It must be honest, don't waste any time lying to yourself. And it must be updated on a regular basis. Do your writing at times and at lengths that suit you—say, 20 minutes three times a week—and stick to your timetable with discipline and dedication. You'll soon find that the journal itself takes over.



Write on!



The Many Faces of Prayer ~ A Healing Balm in the 21st Century

Shirley A. Nelson
Author

Click here to read an
↓ excerpt ↓

<http://tiny.cc/53f07>

The Many Faces of Prayer

Prayer for Letting Go

Today, just for today, all things fall away that are vexations to my spirit inwardly and outwardly.

Today, just for today, transform fear to love and create in me a love so deep that there is no room for fear.

Today, just for today, may the God in me touch the God in you so that we may dwell in harmony.

Today, just for today, I lay my

burdens down and lift my head up high while saying "Still I rise".



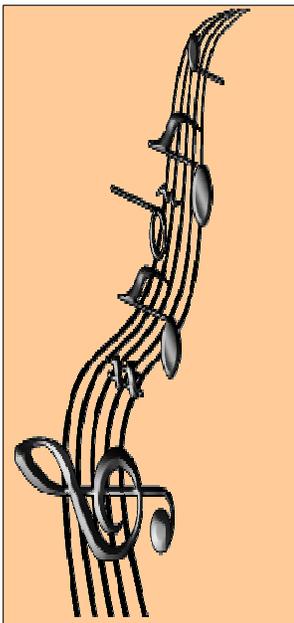
Today, just for today, I let go and let God and remember that it's not my battle.

Today, just for today, I am the light, the marvelous light, and I shine so that others will know the way.

Today, just for today, I move with grace and ease and feel the joy of the Lord throughout my entire being.

And tomorrow is another day and my sacred cry from yesterday is in my heart and in my soul and joy is the balm that eases my Soul.

~ Anonymous ~



Sacred Music Pick of the Month

Song Versation By India Arie

She's soulful, sensual, mindful and beautiful and some of the songs she sings on her newest CD "Song Versation" will take you to some sacred places.

Released just a few months ago, Song Versation captures your heart and soul. Some of the lyrics are autobiographical and provide insight into Arie's life. For example, "Soulbird

Rise" reveals strength and wisdom: "What did not demolish me simply polished me/Now the clearer I can see".

It's a smooth blend of R&B, spiritual, jazz, and classic rock. "I Am Light" takes you right up to the heavens and "6th Avenue" brings you right on down home to the places you love to roam and where you find times of sweet relaxation.

In "Brother's Keeper",

India reminds us that we are our brother's keeper which is followed by "One"—an overview of the many different faiths that all melt into one.

If you buy the CD with bonus tracks, you will find a remake of Billie Holiday's haunting anti-racism song, "Strange Fruit" and, of course, India Arie does it justice. This is an eclectic mix that is stirring, thought provoking and mind expanding. You will love it!



The really efficient laborer will be found not to crowd his day with work, but will saunter to his task surrounded by a wide halo of ease and leisure.

~ Henry David Thoreau ~

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

Give Yourself a Break . . .

The next time you need a break, consider these options before leaving town:

Surrender a problem. The Sabbath reminds us that forces larger than ourselves are at work healing the world. Imagine that these forces already know how to

solve your problem. Turn it over to their care.

Seek companionship. One of the most precious gifts you can offer is to be a place of refuge, a Sabbath for one another. Ask for companionship when you lose your way. Give quiet time and attention to others.

Reset your inner compass. Make a list of the values and

principles that guide your life--both those you follow and those you would like to follow. Speak them aloud, alone or with *loved ones*.

Turn off the technology. Turn off the telephone, the computer, the TV, the washer and dryer. Create a period of time when you will not be disturbed or seduced by what technology demands of us.



Water the Seeds Not the Weeds



Just a Thought...
Most of us wonder why our lives are not better. We tend to focus on our failures and not our successes. We wonder if we are ever going to be more than we are now. Next, we break out the proverbial stick that we all carry and begin to beat ourselves up. We are here to grow and improve, but how is that done? What if I said you are already a magnificent, perfect child of God and that this distinction is covered up by emotional baggage that we all carry?

For the most part, we have discovered what does not work for us. But know this, finding out who you are not is just as important as finding out who you are. They both contribute to eliminating the emotional baggage that causes us to forget how wonderful we really are. What if improving our lives is not about getting more or getting better? It's not always about acquiring more knowledge. Sometimes it's about eliminating what you already know because it's no longer valid. Instead of periodically beating yourself up, try this. Schedule some quiet time. Sit and have a talk with yourself about the things you want to change in your

life. Begin to watch yourself without judgment and become the observer of your life. Remember, as soon as you have an opinion about what you are watching you are no longer the observer. This is all you need to do to change your behavior. Do not be afraid to look at how you really are. This will allow you to shine love on areas of your life that need changing. Remember, no beating yourself up about the way you are. Just observe without judgment. Let the love that you are uplift your life so that you more consistently show up as the perfect child of God. After all, that is who you really are.

Peace ~ Rashid



Rashid Reaves,
Retired fire fighter and paramedic... Planting sacred seeds to enrich your heart and soul. . .

*Email
rashid223@gmail.com*

Spiritual Practice

View From the Top

A view from the top allows you to see what's right with the world and focus on the things that add value while at the same time maintaining an awareness of challenges that you're faced with and a willingness to resolve them. It is responding with ability, not reacting in futility. Following are seven suggestions to help you cultivate a view from the top.

- Soften your gaze:* Regardless of how well you think you know someone see them with new eyes every day.
- Engage your heart:* Combine the view from your heart with the knowledge of your mind to create a well-rounded (panoramic) point of view.
- Be curious:* Have a healthy curiosity about others and forget about yourself completely.
- Lighten up:* Don't take things so personally.

- Be enthusiastic:* Like a child, allow the world to enchant you from time to time.
- Say YES! to life:* When you find yourself resisting make sure you're not on automatic pilot. Pause before responding and try to look at things differently.
- Relax:* Find a way to quiet your mind. Prayer, meditation, or simply being still are several ways to do so.

San



What About the Monkey Mind?

How to Practice Deep Breathing...

The key to deep breathing is to breathe deeply from the abdomen, getting as much fresh air as possible in your lungs. When you take deep breaths from the abdomen, rather than shallow breaths from your upper chest, you inhale more

- oxygen. The more oxygen you get, the less tense, short of breath, and anxious you feel. So the next time you feel stressed, take a minute to slow down and breathe deeply:
- ◇ Sit comfortably with your back straight. Put one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach.
- ◇ Breathe in through your nose. The hand on your stomach

- should rise. The hand on your chest should move very little.
- ◇ Exhale through your mouth, pushing out as much air as you can while contracting your abdominal muscles. The hand on your stomach should move in as you exhale, but your other hand should move very little.
- ◇ Continue to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to inhale enough so that your lower abdomen rises and falls.



Mary Grigolia
Spiritual Educator for 32 years, Unitarian Universalist minister, songwriter

Meditate with Mary
mary@marygrigolia.com

SAN's Sacred Circle

*Look for the good and
praise it, because
whatever you praise
will magnify and
grow.
~ H. Fred Vogt ~*

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 ~
Shirley A. Nelson
Workshop Facilitator
Certified Life Skills Coach
Phone: 216-978-2626
sanscircle@gmail.com*



If you would like to be added to the mailing list to receive this newsletter each month by email, just let me know.



*If you believe in
the Mind of God
as a ceaseless
source of creative
ideas, then you
cannot indulge in
the pessimistic
attitude of the
world.*

*~ Raymond Charles
Barker ~*

Sacred Spaces for Rest and Restoration

The Edge . . .

When looking for a place to rest, you need go no further than yourself. Too often, we travel hundreds and thousands of miles looking for some peaceful place to lay our weary heads so that we can rest.

We seek the help of therapists, practitioners, and friends to get relief from the thoughts that bombard us and, in the long run, find the most appropriate answers within ourselves regardless of what others advise. Even when guided by professionals who may prescribe a pill or a course of action, they will inform that ultimately it's up to you to change your world.

Beautiful places and spaces will give you temporary relief, but why not go for some-

thing that's going to give you a steady flow that cannot be stolen when life gets messy or you feel you're in need of a break? Don't set yourself up for a break down, set yourself up for a break through.

Where is such a place? It is within you. When you step beyond your comfort zone to realize your full potential as an expression of peace, love, and joy, you're on the edge. You have reached the edge of your perceived limitations and, like a newborn bird leaving its nest, you take a leap of faith and realize that you can fly.

In this state of being, fear and lack are left behind and love and gratitude fill in the gap. Along with it comes peace and joy that travel with you wherever you are. Fear is a disconnect and its

powerful grip can take over our lives like nobody's business. More than anything, fear blinds, and only by stepping unhesitatingly into the unknown, can we release its grip on us. When we dare to listen to the wind singing in our veins, we'll experience all of the melodies of life that gift us with the desires of our heart within the space that we inhabit physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Open up to life and to Divine Harmony. See yourself as relaxed and tranquil as you express love and joy. See yourself as an expression of Divine Peace and accept only thoughts that bring joy to your world and peace to your soul. Go to the edge of your perceptions and find there a brave new world. You can do it!

San

San's Sacred Circle

2013 Retreats

There are two ongoing retreats in 2013. All sessions will be held at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes on the first Sunday and the third Sunday at 2:30—5:30 p.m. starting in March and ending in October on the following dates (4th Sunday):*

How Do You Heal?

March 3	July 7
April 7	August 4
May 5	September 1
June 2	October 6

Life Makeovers

March 17	July 21
April 21	August 18
May 19	September 15
June 23 *	October 20

How Do You Heal?

First Sunday's

Session 7 • September 1st

Writing as a Healing Balm ~ The Way it Works

Rituals create moments where living becomes art. Poets, writers, painters and musicians aspire to heightened moments of awareness, times when they feel they have something unique and inspiring to give the world. . . . We all have this instinct to create beauty, distinction, and meaning in our lives. . . .

~ Alexandra Stoddard ♥ "Living A Beautiful Life" ~

\$15 per session ♥ Journal \$21

The Art of Healing: A Journal for Creating Joy in Your Life



Life Makeovers

Third Sunday's

We have fulfilled the maximum number of attendees for this session. If you are interested in when the next one will start, please contact Jacqueline or me.

Shirley Nelson at 216-978-2626 or sanscircle@gmail.com

Jacqueline Owen at 216-692-3388 or email jacquietango@aol.com