

NEW MEXICO MEN'S WELLNESS

MAN ALIVE!



SUMMER EDITION 2018

WELCOME!

A few, short months ago, we resurrected Man, Alive! Based upon your contributions, feedback and support, we're continuing with this next quarterly. Sincere thanks to all the contributors, readers, responders and, hopefully, future participants!

Our theme is "Compassion". It seems to me, especially in these times, that our planet could use an abundance of compassion and love. The Hindu on the Indonesian island of Bali believe that all religions rely upon labels, where the fundamental practice of a spiritual journey does not. "Smiles and compassion are ...free," and are a central element of Balinese living.

We offer, in the following pages, thoughts, images and experiences from compassionate individuals. Hopefully, this might provide connection, impetus and support for all of us to practice a more compassionate existence that we may share daily. Thank you all again for reading and contributing.

Blessings and love,

Hank





OFFERINGS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Invitation by Hank Blackwell.....	4
Report from the Edge of the Wood by Rand B.Lee.....	6
Faith Active in Love by James Mischke.....	7
Kind Heart by Hank Blackwell.....	12
There for One Another by Victor La Cerva.....	14
A Question for You by Larry Glover.....	15
Mr. Rogers by Randy Crutcher.....	17
Skeet Ball by Michael Shepard.....	19
Forgiveness by Will Hoffman.....	20
Compassion in Action by Juan Velasco.....	23
Straight Up You Told Me by Raymond Johnson.....	24
Web Insights	25
Barnraising	26
Proposal for a Department of Wisdom By David Kuenzli.....	27
Photo/Illustration Credits Joseph Woods.....	3,14

Invitation
Hank Blackwell

My heart wants for peace.
Inside that sacred space resides
a yearning for love to be my will.

My orbits about our sun
are more abbreviated;
time is of the essence
and the days
that make themselves available
for risk and wonder
are now most noticeably fewer.

This old heart,
scarred by life's betrayals,
refuses to capitulate;
wounded, it is wiser
and I, more trusting
of it - a gentle,
loyal companion...

I have learned the beauty
of sitting with pain
and now anticipate the solace
of this candle-lit meeting place.

The miles have worn me,
my limitations now
a meeting place for the accumulation
of past adventures.

I have learned so many means
by which to partner
this soul in the choreography
of life's moments...

Older, I have found respite
in the honesty of observation
and now know

I do not have precious time
to disappoint myself.
I have lived many dark nights,

my sorrow and pain
leading me to wake
and finally be grateful
for sunrise, birdsong
and the embrace of
family and friend.
All of my failures
lead me here,
and through the decades
they have illustrated, at least,
the lack of malice
in my shortcomings.
The days of despair and grief
have not once separated
me from the heroism
of my children.
It has been their strength
that has brought me
to the center of the fire
and held me solid
in its furnace
where I found that
wisdom is but my many miles,
and the poetry and practice
of my very own company
in the empty moments....



Report from the Edge of the Wood

Rand B. Lee

Leonard Weisgard was one of Dad's friends in Roxbury, Connecticut, the little rural village we called home. Dad was short and very stout, and Mr. Weisgard was tall, lean, and lanky. Both were highly educated, secular Jews who made their livings in creative professions: Mister Weisgard as a children's book illustrator, my dad (in collaboration with our cousin Danny) as a mystery novelist. I was a shy, quiet, plump dreamer in love with *Peter Pan* and the Oz books.

One day, when I was around ten, I asked my dad if I could write Mr. Weisgard to request one of his children's book paintings as my very own. Dad, looking both tickled and dubious, assented. So I wrote Mr. Weisgard and expressed my request as humbly and politely as I could. Dad mailed the letter the next day.

I had no idea what Mr. Weisgard's response would be. I was delighted when he wrote me back agreeing to my request. So several days later, Dad drove me over to the Weisgard house, which was some miles from South Street, where our house was located. When we got to the painter's house, Mr. Weisgard came to the door.

He invited us to come sit down in his living room. A dozen framed, glass-covered paintings of various sizes, colors, and children's book subjects were arranged on the carpet before us. "Go ahead, Randy," he said. "Choose the one you like the most." I looked, and my eye fell onto a patch of blues depicting a little boy at night, standing alone at the edge of a wood, gazing through the shadowed trees into a moonlit clearing. The woods reminded me of the woods on our Roxbury property, and there was something in the boy's stance and isolation that awoke in me a yearning wonder.

I wanted to stand next to him, so that we could walk into the woods together, and find together the mystery I sensed in me but could not yet put a name to. "May I have that one?" I said. The two men looked at one another, then at me. There was a special softness in Mr. Weisgard's face as he said, "Yes, Randy, you may." It was a softness I saw magnified five or six years later when, alone with him one summer afternoon, I haltingly confessed to his compassionate, kind face something I had not felt safe discussing with my parents: that, deepest down, I knew that I was different from all the other people around me, and I did not understand why.

He gave me no feedback or advice. He simply listened to me with all his heart, the first adult male ever to do so. And every time I take out his painting, the memory of Leonard Weisgard's compassion wells up in me again. It's all I have to feed on, some nights.

**FAITH ACTIVE IN LOVE:
THE HERO'S RESPONSE TO THE DEMANDS OF A CONSCIOUS AND
COMPASSIONATE LIFE**

James Mischke

Yahweh observed: "Were it not for me, Abraham, you would not be here." "Yes, My Lord", Abraham responded, "And were it not for me, no one would know that you exist."...Ancient Jewish Folktale

9-11 has rocked the world. It has redirected history. It has awakened consciousness. It has clarified the essence of the forces that move through humanity at this time. One fact has been made clear for those who seek essences. The planet is now the stage set for the encounter of two opposing forces that are locked in a struggle to the death. To employ the concepts of Benjamin Barber, Global Consumer Capitalism no longer struggles to deliver food or shelter or clothing to its constituents. That has since been accomplished. Once humanity had been delivered its necessities, it waxed reluctant to pull the plug on the machine. Today, corporations tweak those more abstract appetites of the consumer for power, privilege, and prestige; the gross national product is held strong through the marketing of ego orgasms.

Though resources are depleted, the lives of factory workers in Malaysia are given "meaning", and the hungry Morelocks of the third and fourth worlds, held in subterranean bondage in the name of the Great Lord Nike and the attending members of his court, The Earl of Adidas and the Duke of Rebock, labor on, to the end that humanity might walk with the warrior hero: the Archangel Michael who flies. Are these the true heroes of our species or are others to be found who are more able to liberate us from our current conditions of human bondage?

Archetypally speaking, Abraham represents "the father", the first human who really conversed with God while fulfilling the role of monotheist. It was as a result of this mythic personage, representing, in a sense, the "new father" that the patriarchy itself, that pivotal principle of Western Civilization, was born. Before the advent of "Abraham the patriarch", fathers participated, across western Asia, in the sacrifice of their children to "The Father", as a function of a collective psychological phenomenon-one which today might be seen as ego state, sub personality, or complex. Children were destroyed as victims of human sacrifice, for "the sins" of the parents. Of this horrifically cruel practice of child sacrifice, one remaining intact in some areas east of the Mediterranean centuries after Abraham, The prophet Micah had this to say: "Must I give my first-born for what I have done wrong, the fruit of my body for my own sin?" (Mic. 6, 7) This primitive state of development of masculine consciousness appears to be the root condition for the metaphorical way the term

“Moloch” is used even today. Children in the Semitic world of Western Asia were sacrificed in special ceremonies, often in which idols mechanically destroyed their lives in the most brutal manner, as does capitalism today. Our ceremonies of idolatry to our Molochs sometimes transpire throughout entire childhoods.

Abraham got up into the face of El Shaddai. When the nameless one, blessed be he, proposed to generalize, to practice non-discrimination between the virtuous and the malefactors dwelling within Sodom and Gomorrah, to blow them all away as a package deal, it was Abraham who challenged him:

Abraham remained standing before Yahweh. Approaching him, he said, ‘Are you really going to destroy the just man with the sinner? Perhaps there are fifty just men in the town. Will you really overwhelm them, will you not spare the place for the fifty just men in it? Do not think of doing such a thing: to kill the just man with the sinner, treating just and sinner alike! Do not think of it! Will the judge of the whole earth not administer justice? Yahweh replied, ‘If at Sodom I find fifty just men in the town, I will spare the whole place because of them... (Abraham) said, ‘I trust my Lord will not be angry if I speak once more: perhaps there will only be ten. ‘I will not destroy it’ he replied ‘for the sake of the ten.’ (Gen. 18, 22-32)

So it was that through the developing human heart, and its evolution into compassion, there came into being a formulation of the notion of justice which, for the first time in the history of the universe, differentiated between the guilty and the innocent, even in the case of one’s enemies. And all of this was anchored in the being of the human. Abraham defined compassion through social justice as a sine qua non of true humanity:

“Oh, let not The Lord be angry, but for the sake of the righteous few, would not the Lord spare the malefactor and the righteous, both? Oh, let not the lord of all the Universe be indiscriminate, and thus unjust!”

Yahweh grew in consciousness that day and capitulated, and a new form of compassionate justice was born. Abraham lent Yahweh his eyes even as the almighty lent Abraham his ear. If God existed as an unconscious dimension of the human psyche, or if the ego existed as a pseudopod of the great universal unconscious mind, then Abraham rendered consciousness to that primal force of unconsciousness. The unconscious perceived; ego’s flash of living fire bore light. The creative force within Mind began to awaken. Yahweh responded;

“For the sake of any just heart, I will not destroy at all!” Creation had been vindicated, justified through consciousness. Compassion was born as cultural value.

Similarly, when Abraham, at the seemingly clear command of The Almighty, attempted to follow through and manifest that impulse to sacrifice his only legally begotten son upon the mountain, a radically new voice arose from the psyche:

...the angel of Yahweh called to him from heaven. ‘Abraham, Abraham’ he said. ‘I am here’ he replied. ‘Do not raise your hand against the boy’ the angel said. ‘Do not harm him, for now I know you fear God. You have not refused me your son, your only son.’ (Gen. 22, 11-13)

What the words of scripture mean here, psychologically, mythologically, at least, is this: for the first time in human experience, a man was able to delay that homicidal, that progenicidal impulse to destroy his own seed, his own offspring, his own future—an instinctual impulse seen so commonly within some of the animal kingdoms. Abraham became the father of a newly evolved identity of our species, of a new species itself. Instinct had been superceded by culture, had facilitated a quantum leap into culture.

How this ability to delay impulse in favor of consciousness is received by the collective unconscious is expressed metaphorically through the language of myth, yet expressed nonetheless clearly and resplendently.

In response to Abraham’s uncommon humanity, the voice of “the angel” peals from heaven one last time:

I swear by my own self-it is Yahweh who speaks-because you have done this, because you have not refused me your son, your only son, I will shower blessings on you, I will make your descendants as many as the stars of heaven and the grains of sand on the seashore. Your descendants shall gain possession of the gates of their enemies. All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants as a reward for your obedience. (Gen. 22, 15-18)

For the first time, the impulse of the spiritually evolutionary impeding complex had been blocked by a higher consciousness, by a stronger ego state, and Ego had transcended; the patriarchy was born as a new paradigm of progenitive resource. A totally new paradigm of role had been assigned by and to the human male. This phenomenon of quantum leap proved to

manifest a psychological force which could align with and complement the maternal instinct. Thus came into being a civilization to be wrought under the supervision of this newly defined form of paternity: the love of the father for his children- a love in the sense of the importance of identity, covenant, cultural heritage, and even the notion of immortality through genetic material persisting through time. In a sense, a form of immortality had been attained. A new understanding of time and immortality- one favorable to subsistence, persistence, insistence- had been born, and indeed, as the angel had promised, the institution of fatherhood was granted to its originator and to all-or at least the select of Abraham's cultural legacy-of human progeny.

When we cast about for an illustrative model for advancing a step in the drama of the magnanimity of the human race through the evolution of compassionate love for children, and thus all of humanity, what justifies our identification of Abraham? Abraham's story speaks of triumph through the genesis of a new form of culture, a new way of living, a new paradigm of understanding the human experience and existence in the world. Yet, this all arose out of the ability of the human to grow, psycho-spiritually, through a dynamic act of faith, to have the courage to open the heart to a greater love for all of humanity. Humanity enjoys this legacy of fatherly love to this day.

To honor Freud, one might observe that Abraham must have experienced terrible castration anxiety as he faced the inner world of that father complex which so powerfully validated the mammoth might of the Father God who could annihilate entire cities at whim, and who yet demanded that ego sacrifice its only begotten son, so long awaited by elderly and childless parents. Consciousness had superseded complex, however, and the human had crossed a threshold into a new reality. Freedom from whimsical, tyrannical, and blood thirsty gods had been won, and the realms of both heaven and earth had been caught in redefinition.

This is what is needed right here, right now. Did Abraham reveal a more evolved God? Yes, he did. He also revealed a more advanced form of self and species in this process of expansion of the human heart and its ability to love. What was invented was "the father" who no longer demanded, through ritual expiation, the blood of his progeny in the name of a monstrous, mythic grandfather. Abraham both revealed and embodied, through personal suffering of fear and anxiety, an assurance of immortality in being offered the opportunity to live on through one's seed, one's sons, one's progeny, one's genetic code, one's DNA. Immortality through transgenerational breath of the psyche! The bond between parent and child had been affirmed through redefinition, and a new form of civilization, having been laid, could thus do its work; in Abraham's boldness of heart, our species had attained a new definition of what it means to be human.

In our contemporary world, it is clear that we are called to become human still further. Today, we still sacrifice our children to cruel and lethal gods. We are merely less overt, we are more abstract than Father Abraham was regarding child sacrifice. Sexual, physical, and emotional abuse of many kinds still run rampant in societies which claim to be civilized. Such is still accomplished in order to appease the cruel ancestor deities, descended now from sky to psyche, yet which still move from one generation to the next. We send our sons for sacrifice now to a mountain called “war” to be burned on the altar of the god of gross national product. Repetition compulsion of “the sins of the fathers”, “the sins of the body, the sins of the soul” still take their toll on the ability of us all to be fully human. Recall: our society is a mere one hundred fifty years out of both slavery and the violent abuse of the mentally ill, both of which had arisen out of human inability to worship the compassionate God of Abraham.

We are still in the stone age of our collective development. Our evolution, however, will not emerge from our craning backwards in attempt to forge cues and clues from what we have seen in the cultural rear view mirror of literal interpretation of scripture. Tradition will not heal and fundamentalism will be absolutely lethal. Even Abraham’s exploits, as cosmos shaking as they have proven to have stood in their time-so vital to our survival and growth-will not stand the test of the present and pressingly necessary revelation of our subsequent worlds of “exfoldment” of identity, society, psychospiritual compassion. We must again reinvent ourselves; we must reinvent culture, we must reinvent the essence of our relationship to the spiritual world. We are not, however, devoid of the guidance of some type of precedent. “Father Abraham” has shown us the way to a deeper compassion through faith, should we prove capable of thinking in terms of metaphor. What must we do? Old Testament tradition indeed implores that we continue to confront our animalistic and thanatotic impulses with consciousness, with faith, with courage, and with compassionate love.



Joseph Campbell speaks of:

*the path of a prodigious transfer of the focal point of human wonder. Not the animal world, not the plant world, not the miracle of the spheres, but man himself is now the crucial mystery. Man is the alien presence with whom the forces of egoism must come to terms, through whom the ego is to be crucified, resurrected, and in whose image society is to be reformed. Man, understood however not as "I": but as "Thou" (p. 391, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*).*

To repair the fabric of society is to repair the psycho-spiritual fabric of humanity! The sole source and locus of this repair lies in the hearts of those of us who are truly heroes, those manifesting a strength in facing the silence of their personal despair with an uncommon courage, of the sort capable of wresting still more fire of consciousness from the grip of the gods, thus rendering god and human, alike, still less instinctual and thus more compassionate through acts of conscious volition. In so doing, we awaken to the truth that we are the gods. And the gods thus awaken with us. We are the eyes of God, the heart of God.

The tale of Abraham stands as a prefiguration, I would say, to the pivotal Christian myth: upon sacrifice to the irate Father God, the hero, himself, becomes the god and the former deity is transmuted into "The Loving Father." Are we capable of seeing the past in the future, the future through the past? Are we ready for sacrifice? Are we prepared for history to burn away the dross of fear in the service of refinement of our potentialities to love still more compassionately?





**Kind Heart
Hank Blackwell**

**Your kind heart
beckons
as spring lilacs
call to waking bees;
sweet perfume.
Your gentle soul
meanders
like a stream
washing over
rounded stones;
hard places kept secret...
Soft winds wash through
long-needle pines,
strumming a thousand chords
in a melody, calming fears;
they are the sign of your
moving close by.
Warm, loamy soil
holds deep roots
and budding wildflower
as gently as the soles
of timid feet-
constant, safe,
reassuring;
the steadiness
you offer
without suspect.**



There for One Another
From *Worldwords*
Victor La Cerva

There is pain and struggle in being human. Because we have loved, grief walks by our side. Relationships, physical breakdowns, and deep disappointments all lead to pain. We even create agony by doing what is expected, rather than following inner guidance. To the extent that our inner and outer lives are incongruent, we may experience hopeless, helpless futility, and loss of the authentic self. Life sometimes seems a tragedy in endless acts. Pain, however, is stuck energy and once shared, can begin to dissipate. When we utter *uffda* to people, we simultaneously acknowledge their pain, and express empathy, joining them in their suffering, if only for a moment. Grieving has its own rhythms, and often demands sharing. It is an occasion for healthy dependency, for not "going it alone." In fact, the "I want to get it over with" mindset is ultimately self-defeating. When we are there for another, despite the confusion and devastation, we become more of who we are.

In being present with another's pain, I expand my capacity for compassion.



A Question for You

Larry Glover

I... I am a man,
or so they tell me.

But what, pray tell, is a man?
In truth, I mean.

If a man be woven of story
if he knows who he is
by the God he names
by the family he is born into
by the country he calls home
by the color of his skin
or the size of his waist or hands
or the dollars in his bank
or the letters of achievement
following his name
or by the worth of horses
roaming his pasture

or by his liquor or drug of habit
or by his gender affinities
or by his politics or music of choice...

Is this the best we can do?

But what if a man be woven of story
And he knows himself
author and sovereign teller of his story?

And if this man be woven of threads
threads weaving a dream
back through cosmic time
as old as the first inspiration
of pregnancy's inherent emergent impulse
exhaling the birth of a virgin star...

And if he be woven from community
if he be woven from branches and roots
of the Tree of Life reaching deep
into the living soil of ancestry
an ancestral lineage naming
fire and earth and water and air and Spirit
East and West and North and South and Up and Down
In and Out as above so as below...

If this man dreams of branches
touching stars day and night
If this man's roots are anchored in the nourishment of mystery
in wonder and awe and curiosity
and a love of truth and beauty and of what-is
a love even of questions themselves
and an honoring of the unknown as bedrock of his being

Tell me, and tell me true, please,
What is a man?



Mr. Rogers
Randy Crutcher

Won't you Be
My neighbor
Over picket fence
sidewalk
And streaming traffic's
boulevard
Over the wall
Through the hedge
Around the stockade
Between the barbed wire
On the other side of the
concrete barricade
Or any imaginary boundary
Across the demilitarized zone
Around this flag or that
Underneath the uniform

Behind the stolid stony face
Of authority
Beneath the inbred hatred
In the calm eye of
prejudice storm
Won't you Be
My neighbor
We will take off
Our sweaters together
And gently hold them out
Between us to admire
Then hang up on
A shared hook
Like a Llama
Whose only religion
Is Kindness
We will pledge allegiance
To the Goodness
That inspires the
Outward Bang of
A Benign Universe
As it endlessly unfolds
And then we will sit down
Smile, laugh,
have fun
make interesting
Things together,
tell all our stories
up and down our
Neighborhoods
because
we
know
we
can
can't we?
I think
We Can



SKEET BALL

By Michael Shepard

Let's go to the island to ride the wooden roller coaster
We can take my father's boat if you juice your sister's Horizon
Bulb strings reflect on the water like two parks, one for us and one
for the kid who chased his dog onto the ice last November
Smoke rises from the boardwalk cracks
Lie on your belly and inhale it
Have you seen Candi? I want to ride beside her
Close your eyes and open wide. Davy says it's blotter
Seventy summers rubbed rails to glass.
Dry rot timbers shake. White wash floats like snow on the lake
Candi, unchain me. My hands won't work. I'm wet.
Did I fall in the water?
The devil's in your eyes. Let's play Skeet Ball



Forgiveness

Will Hoffman

Abraham Lincoln in his Gettysburg Address wondered how a nation so deeply divided could ever come together again. He suggested that those who gave the greatest sacrifice, the last full measure of devotion, could show the way to healing that leads to reconciliation in a nation that proclaimed, “In God We Trust.” Perhaps this begins with learning to trust in one’s self by learning to love one’s self in order to find how to love one’s neighbor, community and nation.

We have survived a century of war and the threat of war only to live in a time and culture of confrontation and conflict, fear and hate, fed by mass-media focused on violence, crime, and terror, with distrust of the communal institutions of governance, education, spirituality and business. It is a time of skepticism and cynicism shown in political contests full of charges and counter-charges – all seeming to benefit only those who seek to profit from greater audiences through negative advertising campaigns.

Why is it so hard to forgive, so much easier to nurture hurtful words and perceived insults, while living in fear? To forgive one’s self first is to be human, to have limitations, pain, and

disappointment.

Self-forgiveness allows others who err to know that we are all too human, too often. By listening to our own pain can we understand the pain and behavior of others. Especially as we age and confront health issues, struggle with relationships, and try to overcome disappointment, a “regular dose of forgiveness each day can be a soothing balm that sets us free,” says counselor Dr. Vittorio La Cerva in “From Thanatopia: Daily Meditations for Conscious Aging and A Good Death.” Finally, “at the end of the day I can look into my own eyes in the mirror with love and forgiveness,” he says.

Sometimes, our priorities and the way we observe them gets confused:

Too often we worship our work, work at our play, and play at our worship. First, introspection is needed: to listen, reflect, contemplate, pray, and find one’s worth and purpose. Then, to engage in this seemingly confusing, troubled world and sort through our own confusion and troubles, to try to be IN the world but not OF the world. To pursue our calling is to find forgiveness and involvement. It begins with the humble practice of gratitude (“Thank you”) and remorse (“I’m sorry”).

For us in spirituality, the laity or priesthood of believers involves the dignity of belonging, being true to one’s self, one’s company, and one’s fellowship through the forgiveness of sins, says Einar Billing in “Our Calling: A Statement of the Relationship of Christian Faith and Christian Living.” Listen to songs like “Simple Gifts,” simply “free, to come round where we ought to be”; of “Amazing Grace,” to be found and free; and Pete Seeger’s “Turn, Turn, Turn,” the words of Ecclesiastes, “A time to every purpose under heaven,”

http://www.lyricsfreak.com/b/byrds/turn+turn+turn_20026419.html.

When it seems difficult to live the Golden Rule, perhaps a corollary is in order: What we do to others we do to ourselves. If we show others respect and civility, we show ourselves the same, always reaping what we sow.

Lutherans cherish the concept of justification through faith by grace alone, seeking what theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer called “costly grace” rather than “cheap grace.” Martin Marty addresses “The Ethos of Christian Forgiveness” and the risks of forgiveness, emphasizing the dynamic and dimension of Trinitarian forgiveness. First is God the Father and creator who forgets iniquity and broken covenants, forging new covenants with the earthly law of the Ten Commandments and the spiritual law of the Great Commandment, loving God, one’s self, and one’s neighbors, remembering the past truthfully, repairing brokenness, healing divisions, and renewing relationships. This is a big and necessary order! The Son of God -- and the Son of Man -- as a re-creator offers the power and balm of forgiveness through his baptism to his disciples, to stop judging others and simply to forgive. In the end, Jesus Christ forgave those who killed him. God’s Holy Spirit gives the power of forgiveness through community with “the

keys of the kingdom” through confession, penance, and absolution.

The Lord’s Prayer asks for sustenance while seeking forgiveness. The Sermon on the Mount speaks of blessings on the poor and humble – the “peacemakers” in the widest and deepest sense of the word. Implicit is forgiveness and its companion, reconciliation (restoration and renewal) through penance or turning round and ultimately, healing. The Gospel is the book of Good News, not Bad News, of love and hope, not hate and fear. That spirit of reconciliation is alive in the observance of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Much has happened since Vatican II in the 1960s: the acceptance of Justification and the Word, Mass in the vernacular of the peoples, corporate confession, weekly communion, healing and a common Lord’s Prayer. Still, every day one should ask the same questions. Why did I choose this congregation? Why do I continue in this place? What gifts do I bring? How do I trust, forgive, heal, and reconcile in all that is?



Compassion in Action
Juan Velasco

Well, getting older, turned third base and many us getting ready to slide
 "home".

A long journey with less regrets as we do what we love to do and are good at.
 As for me, made a summary of what I am really good at - other than being
 alone...

Know my people, their language, good at business and know the land that
 feeds us.

No need to continue to work, I have enough. If you do, you are either in need
 or in greed.

We finished 20 years of a program to help educate the poor and mostly
 women way down south - giving back;
 the last orphan receiver her college degree and joined many more - the
 daughters I never had.

My brother's to the south are being mistreated by us and all I do is lend a
 hand.

Six weekends of business courses and teaching them how to write a plan and
 run a business,
 trips across the border twice a month, lending experience and some pesos -
 great success and they are feeding their families.

No need for me to march, make call and write petitions - just a quiet
 "Revolucion".

We threw them out and they could starve us to death - 75% of Hatch chile is
 grown in Mexico.

On this side of the border I am helping small farmers - lending more peso,
 experience and just incredible results;
 the closer your food comes from, the better and it is for you and your family.

Straight Up You Told Me

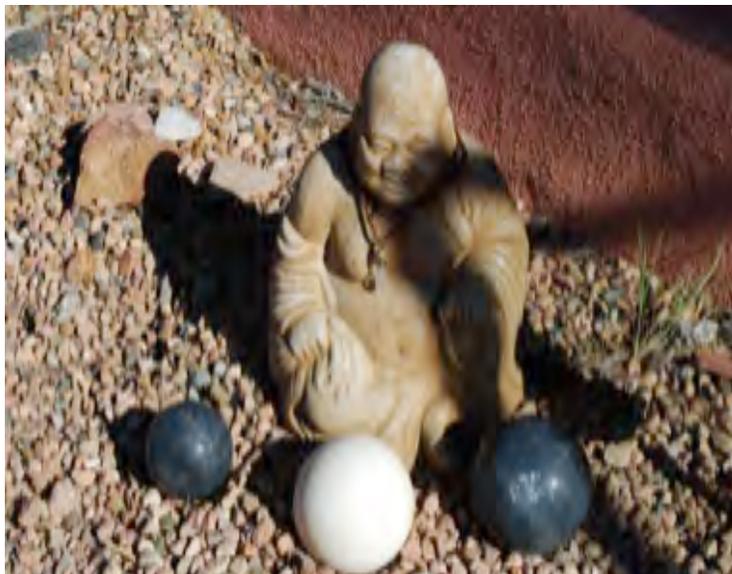
Raymond Johnson

Palestine's a camp encircled by chains,
hounded by occupiers and still
the people there are so good and some
so very hopeful. You brought your heart
to the right spot at
the right time (by now a habit)
and invested justice at a common level.

Now you go public defender,
representative of the unrepresented
and ready yourself
to set house and legs
on familiar ground. Your brother waits
with little league team
and coach's position standing.
You offer good energy aplenty
and know well that small
sincere gestures are remarkably effective
and humor buffers
blind angry actions of ignorant misguiders.
You won't allow false calculations
uncontested. That's what I love about you!
Ain't no way to get around
simple satisfying truth.

Tell me Israeli sand
has scratched your eye
and now you heal with ancient salve
just yesterday applied.
You, man of justice,
of youthful vision,
indignant, mad
yet prophetically placed in the mix
while others wait for you
on this next level of compassion.

WEB INSIGHTS--DO NOT MISS!



Amazing documentary about hospice work:

<https://www.nfb.ca/film/griefwalker/>

Sadhguru on love and compassion:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5TF7TRJy4Dg>

Building a Birchbark Canoe:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPvbKgxN1c4>

BARNRAISING

This section is intended to hold a place for announcements of relevant events and happenings, as well as invitations for participation, support, in the fashion of pulling your neighbors and loved ones together for an old-fashioned barn-raising. Here are a few such items to prime the pump for the next edition:

Healthcare Portraits: Drawings and stories from healthcare

Every person has a healthcare story, whether as a patient, family member or healthcare profession. The stories are sometimes tragic, sometimes miraculous, often deeply personal. Please come to listen to Robert Bern speak about his new drawings of peoples healthcare stories. August 5th at 4PM at the CCA Cinematheque. For more information contact Robert at RobertBern678@gmail.com or visit his website RobertBern.com

NMMW is planning a Men's Group Council on August 18th. at Bachechi Open Space north of Albuquerque, from 9:30 to 3:30.

(<https://www.bernco.gov/community-services/bachechi.aspx>)

The intent of this gathering is to have interactive discussions and explorations about how to keep a men's group alive and vital. We are inviting NMMW groups, spiritual groups, informal groups and Mankind Project groups to participate and share their wisdom. You can come with your group, by yourself, or even if you are not in a group at the moment.

For more info, contact Vittorio:

heartsongvittorio@gmail.com; 505-983-4233 (landline no texts)

The Brotherhood Community is an organization dedicated to the development of Integrated Male Leaders – men who embody their power and sensitivity, who are fully thriving in every area of their lives, and who collaborate with people of all genders in service of a more beautiful, equitable, and sustainable world. If you're a man with a beating heart and a burning desire to make the world a better place, you will be fully met here. Sign up for daily M.A.N notes from the Maniverse—thought provoking gems about masculinity each day. Learn more at www.brotherhoodcommunity.com

PROPOSAL FOR A DEPARTMENT OF WISDOM

David Kuenzli

Wes “Scoop” Nisker-- Buddhist teacher, humorist and author of **“Crazy Wisdom Saves the World Again! A Handbook for a Spiritual Revolution--** makes the brilliant observation that our government needs to create a Department of Wisdom (not to be confused with the Central ‘Intelligence’ Agency). Sadly, we see no indication that our government shows the slightest interest in or ability to grasp the nature of wisdom, let alone be inclined to create such a department.

However, I have great confidence that the many wise men of **NMMW** would immediately grasp the significance and value of creating our own Department of Wisdom!

Here are my thoughts on what that might look like.

A few years back I read a book (unfortunately too far back to remember its name) that suggested in one exercise that the reader in one sitting write down 100 guidelines he tries to follow in order to create a healthy, vibrant and meaningful life. It took a bit of persistence, but I was pleasantly surprised to discover that I was able to come up with 100 guidelines I liked. Here are a few examples: #7. “Life is a wonderful gift. Make the most of that gift each day.” #29. Often ask yourself, “Why am I here? What talents and gifts do I want to offer the world?” Finally, #72. “I am perfect...perfectly human. My ‘perfect humanness’ gives me plenty of material for my stand-up comedy routine!”

In reflecting on the writing experience, I learned that I **had** tried to apply many of these guidelines in my everyday life. Of course, I failed on a regular basis. But ‘crazy wisdom’ leaves us plenty of room to learn from our mistakes, failures and setbacks and to forgive ourselves for being human. “Another f...ing growth experience” we used to call it in the eighties!

While the NMMW Board of Directors, of course, is filled with dedicated ‘wise guys,’ I am not wanting to suggest here that we just change the Board’s name. Instead, I would like **MAN ALIVE!** to have a regular Department of Wisdom column that includes **ONE WISDOM GUIDELINE** submitted by a reader, followed by a brief paragraph or so in which he shares how this guideline has positively enriched his life. This might be followed up in the next edition with other readers’ ‘letters to the editor.’

What wisdom **have** we gained from our thirty-some years of conferences, retreats and workshops? And how have we applied this wisdom in our everyday lives?

If we like the idea, you could use this Guideline of mine to start the column: **“Every life experience---no matter how good, bad, painful or unjust---creates an opportunity for me to grow and to deepen my sense of meaning and purpose in my life.”**

Comment: When something painful, tragic or unjust happens to me or to someone else, in no way do I want to sugarcoat the initial impact of that experience. When my wife, Donna, died of breast cancer in 2007 I knew how essential it was for me to fully grieve her loss before I was ready to harvest deeper wisdom that might come to me down the road. Nor do I mean to imply personal fault or some 'karmic debt' that must be paid back. I have simply learned for myself that I become wiser when I ask, "What is the most valuable way for me to see and respond to this event in order to deepen its meaning for me moving forward?"