

photo

Referencing into Joy

A message from Jim

It is said that God is love, and certainly this is true. But God can also be described by any of a number of His many attributes, such as grace, wisdom, peace, mercy, compassion, kindness, or forgiveness. Another one of these key attributes is joy, and truly the joy of God constantly emanates from His Spirit within us, although we, at this level, do not always feel it and therefore do not always share in it. In our paths of learning and experience, we have often become separated from the awareness of His joyful presence within us, and yet at any time we can “choose back” into it and rekindle the joy that is His in us.

So how do we find this joy if we’re not experiencing it now? Well, we need to learn how to “listen” for it, and there really are many ways. One is to “reference back” into a time when we experienced joy, and then choose into it whenever we need to.

As an example of referencing into joy, I like to remember the time I got a puppy as a child. When I was growing up, I often used to just sit in prayer and talk with some of the teachers on “the other side” who would come to me in my inner silence. Later, when I was about 17, I was having trouble understanding what joy really was and how to find it inside. I prayed for assistance, and then one of the teachers came to me in response.

He said, “Let’s just go back in time to when you first recognized joy and called it by that name, and then you’ll know what joy is. You’ll have a reference point.”

So together we went back in my memory, and we came to an experience I’d had when I was

in third grade. A friend’s cocker spaniel had had puppies, and my parents agreed to let me get one.

I remembered the night they were born. It was a very stormy night, and my friend’s parents had called me around midnight to come over and see the puppies as they were being born. They lived just down the street, and even though it was really late, my parents let me go see them. There were five or six pups altogether, and it was really exciting to watch them be born.

A few days later, I went back to decide which one I would take after they were weaned. I looked and I looked, but I just couldn’t decide. Finally, I saw this one puppy, and I just knew that this was the one. I ended up naming him “Blackie,” and he became my pet for the next eighteen years.

So here we were in 1966, and I was looking at those puppies in my memory of 1957. I was just looking at their faces again, and when I saw Blackie’s face looking up at me, all of a sudden I had an instant recognition of, “Now I remember what joy is!”

Ever since then, I have always had this reference point. I can just look inside myself and see the face of that puppy, and immediately I go into a place of joy within me. And so, that memory still serves me today.

We can all remember some time in our lives when we felt filled with joy. Maybe it was when we brought home a glowing report card, or when we got a special Christmas present. It doesn’t really matter what or when the incident might have been. We just have to search through our memories for whatever it might be that helps us reconnect our awareness to what joy is all about. Once we know its character, we can always choose into it wherever we are, because the joy is of the Spirit within us, not of the memory by itself, and this living quality of joy is always there for the asking. ■

ILM EVENTS IN THE MIDWEST

ILM minister, Steven McAfee, offers a variety of activities in Fort Wayne, Indiana, as well as regularly scheduled retreats in Grand Rapids, MI, Urbana, OH, and Chicago, IL:

Spiritual Study Classes: Thursday evenings, 7:30-9 PM, in Fort Wayne, focusing on a wide range of teachings and their application in daily living – combines lecture, meditation, and group singing.

Sunday Morning Presentations in the Fort Wayne area: Steven is a frequent guest speaker at a variety of area churches and study groups. Please check with him for details.

Your Personal Spiritual Quest: 3rd Sunday of each month, 10 AM-4 PM, in Fort Wayne. This is a personal and spiritual self-development program, with group sharing and support to help us apply our understanding to the realization of our dreams.

Monthly Weekend Retreats rotating between Grand Rapids, Chicago, Urbana, and Fort Wayne. Often in conjunction with Faithful Heart Learning Center of Sparta, Michigan, these special weekends are an opportunity for more in-depth sharing in a loving and supportive environment, with lecture, structured exercises, meditation, singing, fellowship, and vegetarian meals.

For details on any of the above events, please call Steven: (219) 485-2167

Or in Grand Rapids: Marilyn Schuiling (616) 887-7841

Chicago: Loretta Lassandro (708) 481-7751

Urbana: Susan Zion (513) 484-3090

MORE FAVORITE DITTIES*

Say nothing of my religion. It is known to my God and myself alone. Its evidence before the world is to be sought in my life; if that has been honest and dutiful to society, the religion which has regulated it cannot be a bad one.

Thomas Jefferson

O Powerful Goodness! Bountiful Father! Merciful Guide! Increase in me that wisdom which discovers my truest interest. Strengthen my resolutions to perform what that wisdom dictates. Accept my kind offices to Thy other children as the only return in my power for Thy continual favors to me.

Benjamin Franklin

It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.

Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Children are the living messages we send to a time that we will not see.

author unknown

We can acquire everything in solitude except character.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

**Editor's note: many of us have found brief quotations such as those above to be interesting, inspiring, and sometimes very helpful. In this newsletter, we have chosen some favorites of ILM's Midwest Coordinator, Steven McAfee.*



photo

The Search for Intimacy

by Steven McAfee

Intimacy seems to be a subject of great importance to all of us, although we may never think of it by that name. And it is interesting that so many of us don't really know how to go about being intimate. In fact, for many of us the very word arouses a certain anxiety. But it seems apparent, in watching the lives of myself and the other people around me, that what nearly everyone is searching for is a place where they feel safe, where they feel that they belong, and where they feel free to just be themselves.

The need for intimacy is something that we feel very strongly as young children. In fact, studies have shown that, even if all the essential life elements are provided (food, water, shelter), a lack of physical human contact and nurturing often leads to illness and even death. The need for contact and intimacy is that great. I believe that we never really outgrow this need. Instead, we socialize ourselves into "acceptable" ways of only *seeming* intimacy – ways which, in fact, lead to more and more *restrictions* in the depth of relationship we have with others. Instead of really responding to the need for intimacy, we respond to the desire for approval from others and the fear of rejection from others, and our behaviors become more and more fear based, rather than reality based.

I looked up *intimacy* in the dictionary and found that it derives from the Latin word *intimus*, meaning "innermost." A closely related Latin word *intimare* means "to announce" (as in "to intimate"), and it seems that in these two lies the whole key to intimacy: to announce our innermost self to another. Isn't this what we are really after in our search for intimacy? We want to feel that we are accepted for who we are, and that we are safe to bring into expression (to announce) who we are in our innermost selves.

The search for intimacy often leads us into a variety of dissatisfying, disillusioning, and even dangerous experiences as we try to answer the universal inner call for a place to both express

ourselves and to be accepted. We may become involved in numerous sexual encounters, often unfulfilling and, especially today, often fraught with hazards. We may move into drug abuse or drinking circles, where we find a certain sense of belonging, again with a host of dangers. Though unhealthy and unproductive, these and similar avenues nevertheless may provide us an opportunity to share something important about ourselves – and to feel, at least in some ways, safe to do so.

In this age of deadlines and schedules, and fast-paced lives full of transience and change, perhaps the greatest answer to our universal striving for intimacy is to be found in true friendship. It is through the medium of friendship that we can find that there *is* another person who can see and accept us as we are, and allow us to bring forth what comes genuinely from within, whether genuine anxiety, genuine sadness, or our deep-seated joys and aspirations. Let us bring these out, and honor what we bring forth, and at the same time allow others to feel confidence in us, so that they may begin to open up their hearts to us and also share who they are inside. This is not an intellectual sharing or a matter of talking in words. In fact, some of the deepest moments of our intimate sharing are *nonverbal*. Yet, whether verbal or not, they are always feeling-oriented. They come from something even deeper than our emotions, almost as if the soul itself is having such a profound experience that it needs to bring it forth and share it with another.

This haven of intimacy is something we can provide for one another through the medium of friendship, in those moments when we find someone who will take enough time to get to know us and will have enough trust to let us know them. It is in the simplest moments of a kind word, a gentle smile, or a loving touch that we find the reality of God's grace in a moment of loving on earth.

The word *friend* comes from the old English *freon*, and it means "to love freely." It is when we find a true friend that we discover the freedom which enables us to safely announce who we are inside and to know that it will be received with open arms. This gift is an ability that all of us, rich or poor, well or ill, always have to offer to one another. ■

ABOUT ILM

Inner Light Ministries (ILM) is a nonprofit outreach organization founded in the fundamental principles of ancient and esoteric Christianity. It is dedicated to the development and balancing of the fourfold nature of the individual. Towards this end, it provides education and services concerned with the integration of the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical aspects of the self, and with the development of publications and materials that aid in this process.

Among its fundamental tenets is that we really are “temples of the Holy Spirit.” As we seek and express this presence within, we find the peace, love, power, and wisdom we all so earnestly desire.

The many services of ILM are geared towards this path of individual unfoldment – through meditation, study, and prayer on an individual and group basis.

Service to humanity and the planet is its second major emphasis, and ILM encourages individual service, in any of a wide variety of possible forms, as a vital aspect of our daily experience.

Please write or phone for
more information.

THE ILM LOGO

The ILM logo was designed by Jim Gordon. Its two interlocking hearts symbolize the merging of human and divine love. Like the ancient star of David with its two interlocking triangles, the ILM logo also represents the worldly and the divine in all mankind – our dual nature that is yet of a greater oneness and wholeness. It offers a representation of our common purpose and ultimate destiny: to let the loving light, power, and wisdom of God be expressed in and through us:

*Everyone who loves
has been born of God
and knows God.*

1 Jn 4:7

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES

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Creativity: Expressing Your True Potential

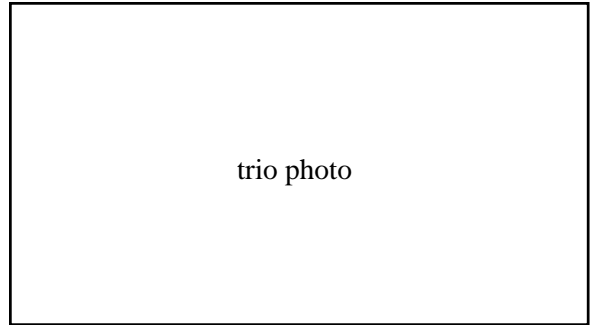
an ILM weekend retreat: October 8-10 at Camp Mack, Milford, Indiana

All creativity is a God-given power to create – in any area of endeavor. And reaching our true potential involves coming into the greater realization and expression of this spiritual gift that is an inherent part of who we already are.

This very special ILM weekend retreat will be experientially and practically oriented. In the beautiful fall setting of Camp Mack, northwest of Fort Wayne, we will explore a variety of approaches to self-discovery, which will then offer us new directions from which to create a richer life when we return to our homes, work, and families.

To maximize personal interaction and individual attention, this retreat will be limited to the first 50 registrations. Accommodations will be provided (dormitory style), and the camp's buffet style meals cater to a variety of dietary preferences. The all-inclusive registration fee of \$140 covers meals, lodging, and workshop supplies.

Reservations will be accepted for the first 50 registrants with a nonrefundable deposit of \$50. A map and further details will be sent upon receipt. To hold your registration, payment in full *must* be received on or before October 1st (this balance is refundable up to October 4th). Registrations received after the first 50 will be placed on a waiting list in the order received (all funds received will be refunded in full in the event that space does not permit attendance).



with ILM Ministers Jim Gordon, Steven McAfee, and Nick Martin, and special guest, Arthur Douët

Jamaican-born artist, Arthur Douët, of Georgetown, Texas, has worked in association with ILM for many years, including the development of his magnificent *Angel Lights along the Nile* lithographs. He is a skilled workshop leader,

whose special gift is to gently guide us towards the healing realization of our true identity through the medium of art. His unique "soul portraits" have inspired many to see themselves as the beings of Light that they truly are. Arthur will be available for individual portraits during and after the retreat.

OCTOBER 8-10, 1993 ILM RETREAT REGISTRATION FORM

Name(s): _____

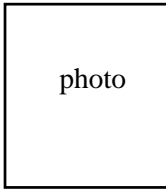
Address: _____

Home Phone:_(_____)_____ Work Phone:_(_____)_____

Amount Enclosed:_____ Checks may be made payable to *Inner Light Ministries*.

The retreat will begin at 7 PM Friday and close about 3 PM Sunday. Participants may check in any time after 4 PM Friday, and the option of Friday dinner (5-6 PM) will be available at \$5.50 per person. For further information or to register, please contact:

Steven McAfee (219) 485-2167
5233 Woodway Drive, Fort Wayne, IN 46835



Keeping Our Feelers Out

by

Laura Kesten-Beaver

Six years ago, I thought I was going to write a book about my childhood trauma. Now, six years later, after talking with hundreds of other people, both women and men, through group therapies, personal growth workshops, and other organizations, I have come to a surprising realization: that my story is like so many others, and that there are not many who come through their childhoods unscathed. There are not many who break free of the chains of their hurtful childhoods. Too afraid to go forward and too afraid to look back, we often remain locked in the fears that once controlled us, and took away our freedom, our power, and our love.

In my own healing process, I came one day to a very crucial discovery that has greatly assisted my recovery. Inside of us, we have two distinct aspects: the Talker and the Feeler. The Talker is the little voice inside that is very much like a parent. It helps us to rationalize, to justify, and to categorize our experiences. It also tends to blame us for the childhood hurts that we experienced. This voice may tell us things like, “You’re only feeling sorry for yourself,” or “You really shouldn’t feel that way.”

In contrast, the Feeler is the little child inside of us that doesn’t know anything about justifying, and doesn’t care to rationalize or categorize. Its response is emotional – it feels real pain when we scrape our knees or when someone calls us names. It feels compassion and sorrow for a baby bird that falls from its nest. It cries in its sleep. It longs to be held and assured that everything will be okay. It also knows the heights of great joy, and love, and freedom.

Often, as children, we learn to repress this Feeler within us. We become too afraid to cry out in the dark, too afraid to share our fears and sorrows. We become so afraid that we’ll be punished, hurt, or shamed that we begin to hold it in. And then, because we learned to hold in these feelings as children, we often remain stuck

in this place as adults – a place in which we’re too afraid to feel, even when the feelings are good! This repression influences our lives dramatically, and it keeps the joy and love within us from being felt and shared as well.

And so, when a person enters the healing process and begins once again to feel, we must *let* that little child feel. We must let the child remember the past, and allow him or her to feel for as long as it takes. And we must encourage the Talker to be silent and just observe.

When we let the little child feel, the Feeler is given full permission to have his temper tantrum. He/she gets to be bossy, gets to say, “This is mine!” and gets to be a know-it-all. The child gets to throw sand and climb trees. We allow the child to take back his power, to express without interference, and so to reclaim his freedom.

And when we’ve screamed and yelled and stomped our feet, and said, “It just wasn’t fair!” – when we’ve allowed the Feeler to say all it needs to say – we can *then* let the Talker in and have its help to categorize, rationalize, interpret, and justify. We can now work with and through the Talker to help the Feeler begin to resolve and forgive the pains of our childhoods – to forgive ourselves and all others involved.

We can only know both joy and sorrow if we allow ourselves to feel. We can only reclaim our power and freedom when we allow ourselves to feel. It is only through feeling that healing is possible. And our feelings can only come forth when the Talker is silent. It is that feeling part of us that can now be touched and loved and nurtured, instead of repressed and self-rejected. After all, these feelings and experiences are part of us.

The healing process takes however long it takes. It’s not likely that it will be finished in just a few weeks. More realistically, healing is a lifelong process. And when the Feeler is given permission to feel, without the interference of the Talker, forgiveness within oneself will follow, and this is true healing. ■

Laura is an ILM staff member who resides with her husband, Tom, and daughter, Cally, in Honolulu. A licensed teacher, Laura has a special interest in women’s and children’s issues. She is also the coordinator of “Insight Hawaii.”