



SETTING BOUNDARIES

by Jim Gordon,
President of ILM

When I share with people about setting boundaries I sometimes find they look at me rather blankly, because they are not sure what I mean by boundaries. Instead of presenting a teaching or philosophy about this, I think I can better help people understand by using an example in my own life. So in reviewing my life I came across a memory that seemed to be one of the instances where I began to set boundaries.

It was Thanksgiving Day 1958. I was nine years old. I can remember *not* looking forward to our Thanksgiving Day dinner and wondering what to do. Why? Well, my mother was a great cook and I enjoyed all the foods she prepared—except for one thing. Oysters. I did not like oysters (still don't!). Now what in the world do oysters have to do with Thanksgiving? Well, I will tell you. My dad *loved* oysters. Stewed, in chowder, raw, fried, smoked ... and in stuffing. That's right, in our Thanksgiving Day stuffing! So every Thanksgiving when we came to the table I saw all the food prepared and set on the table looking like a Norman Rockwell painting of the holiday. The one problem for me was that it all smelled like oysters. I found myself, every Thanksgiving, having a hard time eating because all I could smell was the oysters in the stuffing. I found that everything—from the stuffing, to the turkey, to the potatoes, to the beans—all tasted strange to me because of the oyster smell. This was perhaps the one meal of the whole year that I did not enjoy!

So, when I was nine I decided that this was the year that I would make it clear to my mom that I did not like oysters, and did not want to have them in my Thanksgiving Day food. I decided that this Thanksgiving I was going to take care of myself. So, early that morning I went into the kitchen while Mom was preparing the food, and I told her that I

wanted her to fix me some stuffing, "Without the oysters." I told her that I also was not going to be eating the turkey because it tasted strange to me with the oyster stuffing being cooked in the turkey. She seemed surprised by this, and she said she understood and would do something for me. I left the kitchen feeling good for having taken care of myself. Later in the day as we sat down for our Thanksgiving Day meal I felt I had something to be grateful for knowing that I would have some food that I liked! I could still smell the oysters like at every other Thanksgiving dinner, but this time it was different because I knew that Mom knew my difficulty and was helping me to handle it.

As we all sat down I looked around, and only saw the oyster stuffing in the turkey. I asked Mom about my dressing. She looked at me in surprise and said she had forgotten with everything else going on during the day. She apologized and said she would make sure that next year she would fix me some stuffing that I would like.

Meanwhile, my dad and my brother looked at me with questioning eyes, so I told them about my not liking the oysters or their smell, and how because of this I did not like this meal. My brother laughed and my dad said that he could not believe that someone in the Gordon family did not like oysters. With that, everyone began to eat.

I felt that I needed to do something to take care of myself! So, I got up from the table while Dad was carving the turkey and went into the kitchen. And I made myself a peanut butter and jelly sandwich! Then I went back out to the dining table and got my glass of milk. I asked to be excused from the table and said I was going to eat in my room so that I did not have to smell the oysters. Everyone looked so surprised! And much to my further surprise no one said a word as I walked down the hall.



MESSAGE FROM SPIRIT

by Laura Kesten-Beaver,
ILM Minister

In September of 1997, I wrote an ILM newsletter article about my daughter, Cally, and her first pony, Flash. Prior to finding Flash in 1996, Cally, who was then ten years old, had had a

dream about the “white pony” she would be getting.

Two weeks after her dream, she emphatically informed me that her pony’s name would be, “Flash.” A few weeks after that, a white pony named Flash found his way to us. For Cally, she had simply been open to Spirit and all its possibility. For me, Cally’s unfaltering faith as she held steadfast to the information Spirit had given her, even when I thought the odds of finding “A white pony named Flash” were too high, had come to be my lesson. I had learned about becoming innocent with faith, to pay attention to Spirit’s message and the method by which Spirit would give the information, and to trust.

Cally rode Flash for three years before retiring him in 2000, at the age of ‘72 in horse years’, to a leisurely life in the pasture. But this past October 1st 2003, everything changed. At the evening feeding, we noticed swelling on Flash’s underbelly. He appeared to be okay—he was affectionate as usual and ate normally, but I decided to call the vet anyway. After completing his exam, the vet concluded that the swelling was probably due to an allergic reaction resulting from an insect bite. He gave Flash medication to help reduce swelling, and told us to call him the next day.

That night, I had a ‘vivid dream’. I dreamt I was among several people in my living room all clustered together as a means of protecting ourselves from a dark image appearing in the doorway. At first, I joined in the mob and felt their fear as my own. And then, I heard a whisper in my ear telling me to look over my shoulder in the direction of the dark image. I did so, and then the whisper told me to feel no fear. I felt my body relax and straighten. I moved away from the mob and their fear, and faced the image. I asked it who it was and what it wanted. Its response was clear. It was the Angel of Death and it would return in three days to take one of our animals. And then it was gone.

I instantly woke. I wondered whom the Angel of Death might be talking about. The picture that came into my mind was of Flash. I glanced at the clock—it was 1:30 a.m. I tried going back to sleep but kept feeling pushed to

go out to the barn. I got out of bed, donned my robe and tennis shoes, and walked out into the night. As I walked towards the barn, I scanned the pasture to see if I could see Flash. I noticed him lying down with his head up; his white body looked almost glowing—from, I supposed, the moon’s light. But when I got up to the barn, Flash was standing there, and not in the pasture, munching on hay.

As I offered him a carrot and stroked the side of his neck, I noticed that the swelling hadn’t gone down any. I reviewed the dream in my mind and the glowing vision of him in the pasture. I felt an enormous amount of peace surround and fill me. I figured Flash felt it too as he nuzzled my shoulder. Jim Gordon’s voice whispered inside my head as I heard him Call in the Light: “We ask that the pure white light surround, fill, guide and protect each one of us...” I decided to step under Spirit’s protection and trust that we’d be guided throughout the next three days. I kissed Flash’s nose and went back to bed.

Mid- afternoon following the night of my dream, Flash’s condition quickly worsened. He became lame and was having difficulty standing. During our vet’s second visit, an insect bite was ruled out and he recommended we immediately take Flash to a veterinary hospital where they could observe him more closely. The hospital kept Flash overnight, and the morning of the second day they took an x-ray of his back hip as it was thought he might have broken it. The results were negative. An equine specialist outside San Antonio, more than two hours away, was then recommended. We left immediately, and arrived in the early evening. Flash had not eaten in two days, had become dehydrated, and was no longer able to stand. In order to survive, horses must stand so they can properly digest their food. And unlike dogs and cats, horses cannot hop around on three legs to stand and move about. After examination and several ultrasound pictures, the vet concluded that Flash must have had a bad fall in which his right hip near his spine had taken the majority of the impact, because there was irreparable nerve damage. The diagnosis for Flash’s recovery was unfavorable—he would never get up and stand again.

That night, the vet made Flash more comfortable by hydrating him and giving him medication to reduce the swelling/edema and ease the pain. On our return in the morning, my husband, daughter and I knew we were returning to say our good-byes. I silently prayed, asking for Spirit to continue guiding us, letting us know when it was time.

MESSAGE continues on page 6 ▶

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES

CALENDAR CLASSES & PROGRAMS: DEC 2003 – MARCH 2004

PRESENTED BY JIM GORDON:

For additional information, call 512-306-1056

WEEKLY CLASSES: Jim's weekly Austin class is held **Tuesdays 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm**, ILM Center, Franklin Sq. Bldg., 3724 Jefferson, Ste. 100, Austin, TX.

Each class includes spiritual teaching, practical exercises, group discussion, and meditation. Jim helps participants to become more deeply in touch with the Spirit within.

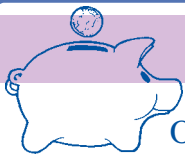
PRESENTED BY BRIAN YEAKEY:

SPIRITUAL COUNSELINGS: Brian is available for spiritual counselings.
Call 512: 306-1056 to schedule an appointment.

These counseling sessions are offered as a service for assisting people in awakening to the Spirit of who they truly are, in living the day-to-day reality of Spirit in their lives, in bringing their lives into greater alignment with walking the spiritual Path of Sound and Light, and in experiencing all the Loving that Spirit has to offer.

Please allow 60 minutes for your session and come prepared with specific questions. Sessions can be done in person or over the phone. They are tape-recorded and the cassette is given to you at the end of the session. There is no charge for this service; however, donations are welcome.

Coins For Kids



Our COINS FOR KIDS Christmas service project is coming up real soon ... so if you've been saving your coins or wondering what you might like to do

as an expression of service this year, consider participating with us as we once again go on a joyful gift shopping spree for children in need.

This year's shopping day will be **December 6th** and it will take place in Austin, Texas.

For more information call 512-306-1056.



CHRISTMAS POTLUCK PARTY

Join us for ILM's Christmas celebration at 203 Buckeye Trail in Austin, TX.

Everyone is welcome!

It's a potluck so bring a dish to share.

DEC. 14, 2003 from 1:00 pm to ?

Call 512-306-1056 for more information.



ILM EVENTS *in* HAWAII

with ILM Ministers,
Jim Gordon *and* Brian Yeakey

WORKING WITH SPIRIT IN RELATIONSHIPS

WHEN: Sunday, January 11, 2004

TIME: 9:30 am - 7 pm

WHERE: Ohana East Hotel, Waikiki, HI

1. Meeting Room off of Lobby located on the 2nd floor

For Ohana Hotel reservations: Call Barbara Campbell at 808-921-6679 barbara.campbell@outrigger.com.

Park in the Ohana East garage located at 2375 Kuhio Avenue (All day parking with validation is \$3.00).

DONATION

This workshop will focus on working with Spirit in creating greater intimacy in all of our relationships, including those with ourselves and with God. We will explore how to effectively communicate with ourselves, others and God so that we can more fully experience the Peace, Loving, and Joy of Spirit.

AN ILM SEMINAR

with

JIM and BRIAN

WHEN: Tuesday, January 13

TIME: 7 pm - 9 pm

WHERE: Ohana East Hotel, Waikiki, HI
Suite for Seminar will be announced at workshop, or ask at front desk for Suite information. Parking in the Ohana East garage located at 2375 Kuhio Avenue.

DONATION

INITIATIONS *and* SPIRITUAL COUNSELINGS

Jim and Brian will be available for initiations for those who have been approved.

Brian will be available for spiritual counseling sessions:

WHEN: Monday, Jan. 12 – Fri, Jan. 16

To schedule counseling appointment with Brian Yeakey or to talk with Jim Gordon concerning initiation or the *Path of Sound and Light* please call 512-306-1056 and speak with Laura Doggett.

A POTLUCK DINNER *and* Q&A

with JIM and BRIAN

WHEN: Saturday, Jan. 17 **TIME:** 5 - 9 pm

WHERE: Joe and Nadine Ferraro's, 2703 Terrace Drive, Honolulu, HI
Call Nadine at 808-988-7509 with questions about Potluck.

4. **ILM REGISTRATION FORM:** Please check the event(s) you will attend, and if you wish to make a donation send a check (payable to ILM) along with this registration form to: ILM, P.O. Box 164332, Austin, Texas 78716-4332.

HAWAII EVENTS: WORKING WITH SPIRIT IN RELATIONSHIPS POTLUCK DINNER *and* Q&A
(Please print.) AN ILM SEMINAR

NAME(S): _____ **EMAIL:** _____

ADDRESS & ZIP CODE: _____

DAYTIME PHONE: _____ **EVENING PHONE:** _____

Call Sally Geis in Honolulu at 808-741-2934 for information concerning Workshop and Tuesday Seminar.

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES CALENDAR

PRESENTED BY LAURA KESTEN:

For additional information, call Laura Kesten at 512-894-0992.

STORIES UNTOLD, KALAMAZOO, MI: *Have you heard your "calling" to write? Have you answered it yet?* In this program, we attend to our own personal callings to write—to write from the heart about our life experiences—our tragedies, our triumphs, our insights, our wisdom, our awakenings, and our opening hearts. We do this through the healing words of our own *untold stories* as we write them down on paper, and then share them (optional) with a loving, safe and supportive group. (No experience is necessary!)

2004 dates: FEB 6-8, Gilchrist, Three Rivers; APR 2-4, Kellogg, Richland;
JUNE 13-19 (Intensive) Martha's Cottage, Saugatuck; AUG 6-8, Location TBA;
OCT 1-3, Pretty Lake, Mattawan; and DEC 3-5, Location TBA — Cost: \$125 per weekend

STORIES UNTOLD—Texas: The Hill Country Lighthouse, Dripping Springs, TX \$100
2004 dates: JAN 9-11, MAR 24-30 (Intensive, Cost-TBA), MAY 14-16, JULY 9-11,
SEPT 10-12, and NOV 12-14

STORIES UNTOLD—Toronto, Canada: This group is presently forming. Please call if you are interested.

365 DAYS OF LIVING CONSCIOUSLY: What if you had one year to live? How would you want to live it? Would you want to make more money? Want a new car? Want more time partying, socializing? How 'bout finding a partner who would meet your desires? Or might you want your yearlong journey to be about living each day mindfully, with integrity, living it authentically? And might you want the year to include forgiveness, acceptance, and loving? Perhaps, you'd even want each day to begin with sitting in the heart of God through meditation *What if you could live each day this year consciously and deliberately?* Throughout 2004, our **Living Consciously** group will meet once a month. The first meeting is introductory—future dates and times will be scheduled at this meeting.

JAN 4 Sunday, 12 noon–3 pm ILM Center, Austin, TX \$15

CAF...HOP WRITING DAY: We'll meet at a café in Austin, order coffee, tea, soda, or water, maybe a scone or bagel, and write. Then, we'll hop to another café and do it all over again. And, if time permits, we'll hop to a third. Writing prompts are given to get the pen in motion. Have fun filling empty pages with story. Sharing is optional.

JAN 25 Sunday, 1 pm–5 pm TBA Austin, TX NC

ART DAY: Experience 3 hours of artfully doing whatever you'd like, using paint, chalk, markers, or whatever the medium you choose, with other art junkies. It's BYOS: Bring your own supplies (however, call ahead if you need supplies).

FEB 1 Sunday, 9 am–12 noon ILM Center, Austin, TX NC

MINI-DAMPER: Open to everyone, this feel-good Saturday morning will pamper your stress away! 15 minute pampering stations include Neck/Shoulder/Back Massages, Reiki, Reflexology, footbaths, a far-out Chi-Machine experience, Heated-Rocks, Facials, and more! You pick! Come anytime between 9 AM and 12 noon. All donations go directly to "Coins for Kids", an annual ILM holiday service project serving the Austin area kids-in-need. If you are interested in rendering your services as a donation for 1-3 hours, please contact us.

MARCH 6 Sunday, 9 am–12 noon ILM Center, Austin, TX Donation

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES CALENDAR

PRESENTED BY LAURA KESTEN: (cont'd) For additional information, call Laura Kesten at 512-894-0992.

RUMINATIVE RETREAT: Experience this weekend in silence, and contemplate Spirit. Take time to notice your breathing and breathe deeply, eat your food slowly and taste your food, notice the spring flowers hidden beneath the winter rye, stare at the night sky's stars for as long as you'd like. Meditate, journal, read, paint, take photos, sleep, stretch your body, walk, eat well, sit by a night fire, relax. Give yourself this gift!

APRIL 23-25 The Hill Country Lighthouse Dripping Springs, TX \$75

A CIRCLE OF WOMEN: 7 PM-9 PM ILM Center, Austin, TX NC

JAN 23: ABUNDANCE IN BEADS What do you want more of in your life? What do you want less of? With hundreds of beads to choose from, you'll create two necklaces- the first will include beads representing that which you are willing to let go of or want less of in your life, and the second will include beads representing that which you want to awaken to or want more of in your life. Create 2004's resolutions consciously and creatively.

MARCH 12: STRETCH THAT BODY! Oxygenate your blood by gently moving your body. We'll learn simple Yoga stretches. We'll also heighten our experience of "freedom" in our bodies and minds with Ecstatic Dance.

MOVIE NITE – 2000 YEARS OF CHRISTIANITY: Episode I: From Jesus to Christ, Episode II: Shackles of Power, and Episode III: Separate Ways. We'll make the popcorn! You bring your own non-alcoholic closed-bottle beverage.

FEB 27 Friday, 7 pm-9:30 pm ILM Center, Austin, TX NC

by Jim Gordon

Boundaries (continued from page 1)

Later my mom came in and said this had made a big impression on her as to how important this was to me, and she promised she would be sure to do something different the next year. True to her word, the next Thanksgiving she cooked the turkey stuffed with 'my dressing', and she cooked the oyster dressing separate from the rest of the meal so the food would not taste of the oysters. She did this every year that followed as well.

I began to understand from this that it is important to share oneself with others in an open and honest way. Letting people know your thoughts, your feelings, and your needs is important to setting 'your boundaries'. It is also important to respect other people's boundaries as they define them with you. I found that setting boundaries is a way of taking care of myself and respecting others in a loving manner. ▲

by Laura Kesten-Beaver

Message (continued from page 2)

Flash was incredible with his good-byes. He rested his head for a bit in each of our laps. It was at this point I shared my dream with our daughter. I saw her counting the days since all this began. Three days. She put her arms around Flash and cried. I went to the bathroom, gathered some tissues and stuffed them in the pocket of my jacket. I felt something already in my pocket and pulled out a movie ticket stub. The movie printed on the ticket was Sea Biscuit. I didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. It felt like Spirit had arranged this coincidence, gently reminding us of its ever-loving presence.

The three of us gathered around Flash, placed our hands on him, and sent him light and love through his transition. He passed quietly.

The movement of Spirit is ever awakening us to its blessings. I am so grateful for the gifts my family and I have received through Flash's life and death. He is dearly loved and will be dearly missed. ▲

Forgiveness Workshop

with ILM Ministers, Jim Gordon & Brian Yeakey

DATE: Saturday, February 28, 2004

TIME: 10:00 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.

WHERE: Colorado Springs, Colorado

LOCATION: The Broadmoor Hotel, 1 Lake Avenue

DONATION



In this workshop we will look at how we can use forgiveness in our lives to assist us in letting go of attachments, judgments, resentments, hurts, pains, and upsets. In understanding forgiveness we will see how forgiving can bring us back into the loving essence of who we truly are.

“One of the things that has helped me move into a greater place of allowing God into my life is a process of forgiveness. Because through forgiveness it allows me to move back ‘into the moment’ right now and to be in my patience, and to be in my loving, and to be in my acceptance of what is, right now, and make it all right. Doing forgiveness is a way to move back into that alignment and back into that oneness again.”

– Jim Gordon

For further information please call: Inner Light Ministries at 512-306-1056.

ILM REGISTRATION FORM: Please fill out the form below to register, and if you wish to make a donation send a check (payable to ILM) along with this registration form to: ILM, P.O. Box 164332, Austin, Texas 78716-4332.

Forgiveness Workshop – Colorado Springs, Colorado

(Please print.)

NAME(S):

EMAIL:

ADDRESS & ZIP CODE:

DAYTIME PHONE:

EVENING PHONE:

ILM Events in Ft. Wayne, IN

WORKING WITH SPIRIT IN RELATIONSHIPS

with ILM Ministers:
Jim Gordon and Brian Yeakey

DATE: Saturday, March 20th, 2004

TIME: 9:30 AM - 7:00 PM

**PLACE: "Brigade of Light" meeting room at the YMCA Villa
2000 N. Wells St., Fort Wayne**

Donation

This workshop will focus on working with Spirit in creating greater intimacy in all of our relationships, including those with ourselves and with God. We will explore how to effectively communicate with ourselves, others and God so that we can more fully experience the Peace, Loving, and Joy of Spirit.

And a ...

Q&A Session



with Jim and Brian

*an informal sharing, discussion,
and question & answer session*

DATE: Sunday, March 21st

TIME: 2:00 PM -5:00 PM

PLACE: "Brigade of Light" (see info above)

Followed by a ...

Dinner



TIME: MARCH 21 AT 6:30 PM

PLACE: "Parlor" banquet room at

Don Hall's Guesthouse Restaurant

To attend, you must register in advance with Steven McAfee at 260-485-2167. Each person will order off a special menu with a number of options, including vegetarian, and will receive separate checks. Limited to the first 24 people who register.

For further information on any of these events call Steven McAfee at 260: 485-2167.

ILM REGISTRATION FORM: Please check the event(s) you will attend, and if you wish to make a donation send a check (payable to ILM) along with this registration form to: Steven McAfee, P.O. Box 5139, Fort Wayne, IN 46895.

FT. WAYNE EVENTS: WORKING W/ SPIRIT IN RELATIONSHIPS DINNER
 Q&A SESSION

(Please print.)

NAME(S): _____

EMAIL: _____

ADDRESS & ZIP CODE: _____

DAYTIME PHONE: _____

EVENING PHONE: _____

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES CALENDAR

PRESENTED BY STEVEN R. MCAFEE, MIDWEST COORDINATOR:

For additional information, call Steven at 260-485-2167

SUNDAY SERVICES: Steven periodically serves as a guest speaker for various churches and spiritual groups in the Ft. Wayne area. If you would like him to speak to your group, please call to make arrangements. The following are presently scheduled:

JAN 11, FEB. 22, MAR. 21 11:00 am Brigade of Light Ft. Wayne

SEEKERS OF INNER LIGHT: (Kalamazoo area monthly study circle) This group is intended to serve spiritual seekers who desire a community of kindred spirits with whom to study and share their journey. Each session includes time for group meditation and discussion. Monthly meetings are held in local homes of participants. If you are interested, please call Carolyn Dailey at 269-327-6851 for current meeting schedule and locations. Donation.

UNDERSTANDING MEDITATION: (Four week class series) This series will be an introduction to the practice of meditation. Basic concentration and meditation techniques will be taught and practiced together. Call Steven at 260-485-2167 to register.

JAN 6, 13, 20, 27 7:00-8:30 pm Unity Christ Church—Ft. Wayne Donation

TUESDAY CLASS SERIES: Our Ft. Wayne group holds 4 or 5-week long classes series periodically (such as the "Understanding Meditation" one listed above), on Tuesday nights from 7:00-8:30 pm at Unity Christ Church. The topic for each series is announced only a week or two ahead, so that we have the freedom to explore whatever Spirit (sometimes in response to the group interest) brings forward next. After the completion of one series, we take a couple of weeks off before beginning a new one, so that everyone has time to assimilate what we have shared. Please call Steven for up-to-date information.

"KNOCK" PROGRAM: The following workshops and retreats are open only to those already enrolled in the yearlong "KNOCK" Program, in which participants focus on deepening their spiritual life through daily meditation, prayer, study, and devotional practices. Meeting locations and costs will be announced to KNOCK Program members in advance.

WORKSHOPS (on the fourth Sundays of the month from 2:00-5:00 pm):

JAN 25, FEB 22, APR 25, MAY 23, JUNE 27, AUG 22, and SEPT 22

RETREATS:

MAR 26-28, Fri. 7:00pm-Sun. 3:00pm and JULY 23-25, Fri. 7:00 pm-Sun. 3:00 pm

NEW YEAR-NEW POSSIBILITIES: (A four day retreat) The beginning of a new year is a propitious time to leave behind old attitudes and habitual behaviors that are no longer helpful, and to adopt new ones that will enable us to live more fully and joyfully. This retreat will consist of three segments. In the first, from Friday night through Saturday night, we will explore the choices and priorities we wish to embrace for the coming year. The second portion will consist of entering into contemplative silence together from Saturday night until Monday morning. This portion will contain periods of group chanting, guided and silent meditations, a yoga class, journal writing, and individual solitude time. The third segment of the program will begin Monday morning when we will break the silence and share our hearts together. The remainder of the day will be spent in fellowship and relaxation before re-entering the world of our everyday lives.

JAN 16-19 Fri. 7:30 pm- Mon. 3:00 pm Gilchrist, Three Rivers, MI \$175

MAKING A DIFFERENCE



by Steven McAfee,
ILM Minister

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My wife Anita was a dedicated, creative, and enthusiastic 6th grade Social Studies teacher at the same school for over twelve years.

This past January, due to environmental health complications, she found it necessary to stop teaching there. It was a heart-breaking decision for her. Long ago, she had told me why she had decided to go into teaching in the first place—she had wanted to “make a difference.” Over the years, I often visited her classroom—helping out with projects, field trips, and presentations. I watched, year after year, as her students developed an ongoing rapport with her, several continuing their relationship into their high school and even college years. Before school, at lunch, and after school, I would find former students sitting in her classroom, talking with her about their lives. This year, some of Anita’s former students invited her to an awards program for graduating seniors. Of course, she wouldn’t have missed it for the world, and neither would I. Near the end of the program, in front of the entire assembly, two of her former students went to the podium to read letters they had independently written with their recommendations for the area “Teacher of the Year” award. I will never forget the look on Anita’s face as the realization slowly dawned on her—*she* was the “Teacher of the Year!” As she was called up to the stage to receive her award, the two girls ran to embrace her as the whole assembly rose to its feet. I know how much it meant to Anita, but I was surprised to see how much it meant to the girls. They really wanted her to *know* how important she was to them.

I realized that, in my heart, I wanted to have that kind of impact too. I wanted to give hope to the discouraged, to inspire and assist others in fulfilling their highest potentials. I wanted the world to be a better place because I had lived. So I began wondering ... what had Anita done? Why do these students feel this way about her?

First of all, she was in love with what she did and consistently put her heart into it. Imagine how our

world would be different if everyone felt that way about the things they did! How would our *spiritual* life be different if we approached our meditation and spiritual practices that way, with consistent and devoted enthusiasm?

She was also inventive, creating games, activities, field trips, and projects that made her subject come alive. Which raises the question: cannot we also make our lives more fun and adventurous so that they really ‘come alive’ for us?

At the beginning of each school year, Anita would talk to the incoming students: “This is a new year and a new opportunity for you. It doesn’t matter to me what you’ve done before or what other teachers think of you. You have a clean slate with me. You can be whatever you want. What kind of year you will have and what you will accomplish this year is up to you; it’s not in my hands or anyone else’s.” Then she would have them write down something they wanted to achieve this year that they thought might be difficult. When they finished, she would collect their papers. Throughout the school year, she would help them toward their goals. When the year ended, she would return their goal sheet to them. Most were amazed at what they had been able to accomplish—academically *and* personally.

What would it be like if someone told us that we were free—we could start right now and be whatever we wanted to be? What if someone told you, “I will hold what you want to become; I will remind you of it; I will support you toward it; and I will never give up on you until you make it”? That is what God does for each of us, and that is what the God within us can help us do for those we love—to love them enough not to bind them to what they were, or to what we want them to be, but to let them be who they choose to be. To show up everyday with enthusiasm and dedication. To let them know that we will never give up on them because we believe in their potential. The world may never know of our actions, and we certainly aren’t likely to receive any awards for it, but our hearts can rest in the knowledge that, in some real way, we *have* ‘made a difference’. ▲

“HOME” WORK



by Brian Yeakey,
ILM Minister

As we walk the spiritual path one of the things which unfolds is a natural process of our hearts beginning to open more and more. We find ourselves very naturally wanting to share ourselves with others in more and more loving ways. This expression, in fact, is our true nature—to share our loving with one another and God. And our life is the ‘school’ in which we get to learn how to do this.

As life presents the opportunities for us to learn how to do this, it is up to us whether we choose to do the ‘homework’ or not. Just like in school, we get homework! In school we learn how to read, write, do arithmetic, etc. And our homework is learning how to do these things in order to be able to perform things in this world. If we want to learn how to be able to ‘do things’ in the spiritual worlds then we need to do our spiritual homework.

This is where a spiritual teacher comes in. In school we all know that there are teachers who show us what to learn and how to learn it ... and who support us in learning it. It is the same with Spirit—there are spiritual teachers who show us what to learn, how to learn it, and who support us in our learning it. It’s the same process, just a different ‘subject’, namely spirituality. And, also like in school, there is ‘spiritual path homework’! Namely, prayer/meditation, doing service, and learning about the spiritual principles of life. Just like in school, if we don’t do the homework and learn the lessons we don’t move forward. And when we do learn the lessons, we can move forward into the next ‘grade-level’ to have new experiences of learning.

A good example of ‘doing the homework’ for me was around the everyday work world. Most of my life I avoided getting a full time job and being able to support myself financially. It was when I finally did it and met the challenges that came with it, that my life began opening up for me in a whole new way that it never had before. Spirit began to open up for me new

opportunities for growth and expansion into higher levels of awareness and loving. In my doing the ‘homework’, namely learning the spiritual principle of being responsible to and handling what was mine to handle, I moved on up the ladder of learning into higher levels of loving, awareness and experience.

As life presents our lessons all we need to do is look to see what it is that we are learning about. If we’re not sure, then we can ask the teacher and the teacher can begin to share with us what the lesson is about and how we may be able to go about handling it so we learn its lesson. We can ask for clarification and further explanation if we don’t understand, and then it’s up to us to go do the homework. It is by ‘doing the homework’ that we have our own experience of the lesson, and in our experience of doing it, we learn what it is for ourselves and how to best go about learning it. The teacher is there to help give clarity, direction and understanding, but it is our own doing the homework, and thereby having our own experience of the ‘course content’, that actually teaches us what the lesson is. The teacher doesn’t do it for us, we do it for ourselves! So we’re the ones who get the learning and results/benefits of that. Once we’ve ‘done it’, we know what that lesson is and how to do it—and we can then handle it ourselves without necessarily the need for assistance. Then it’s a process of maintenance, of just ‘doing’ in order to handle whatever it is we need to handle.

If we can really understand ‘spiritual homework’ and be willing to do our part, then learning becomes much easier because we are in alignment with how the process actually works. Then all that’s left to do is work the process. Then life actually becomes a joyful experience of learning and *living* rather than a burden and stress. All we need to do is give ourselves a chance by making an effort, and in that process we learn and continue moving forwards and upwards!

From this point on it’s simply a matter of staying in the flow of doing and learning, doing and learning. And all the work that we do, eventually, will get us HOME. So for us it really *is* “Home” Work. We learn what our true home really is and how to get there. And in doing the work, we get there ... to our *true home* that is God. ▲

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES NEWSLETTER

ABOUT ILM

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES (ILM) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the development and balancing of the fourfold nature of the individual. Towards this goal, it provides education and services concerned with the integration of the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical aspects of the self, and also provides publications and materials that aid in this process.

Among ILM's fundamental tenets is that we truly are "temples of the Holy Spirit." As we seek and express this presence within, we find the peace, love, joy, and wisdom we all so earnestly desire. The many services of ILM are geared towards this path of individual unfoldment—such as meditation, study, and service to humanity on an individual and group basis.

ILM also offers initiation into the meditation practice of "The Path of Sound and Light," an inner path of spiritual awakening.

Please write or phone for more information about ILM.

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A Simple Way – The Path of ILM

An Excerpt

"And why I call it Inner Light Ministries is because the teachers that have come to me are the teachers of Inner Light. They have always guided me towards the Inner Light, that Light that dwells here at the Seat of the Soul, the Divine Spark. They've always directed me to go here first to connect to this place where the true being of who we each are is located. 'I am here. This is who I am. I am that I am.' That is God. This is where God dwells in me and I dwell in God. 'I am not this body, I am that I am.' And that is true for each and everyone of us. And it's that Inner Light that Inner Light Ministries is about."

—Jim Gordon

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