

Stone Circle News

Volume 9, Issue 3

July 2010

Mailing Address: 3956 Town Center Blvd., Suite 550
Orlando, FL 32837
Web Site: <http://www.stonecircleonline.org>

Spirituality: An Ongoing Journey

by Janet Herrick

Spirituality is a lifelong journey, and just like any journey it has its twist and turns, hills and valleys, beautifully smooth stretches, and oh yes...bumps in the road. All this gives the ongoing excursion all the earmarks of a true adventure.

All adventures require preparation. My spiritual journey had its early preparation in the religious upbringing presented by my family. I learned that I was a child of God and thus had a human body and a spiritual soul. I also was schooled in the rules for living a good life and learned respect for others. I was fortunate to have good teachers and role models at home and in school, who instilled in me a curiosity about the unknown, teaching me that learning too...was a lifelong endeavor.

In my childhood and in my young adulthood my notions about spirituality were united to my Catholic religious beliefs. I took what I was told and what I was taught to be my truth, never questioning or second guessing the authority: religious, temporal or even parental. But, as my world stretched to college I was blessed to have the benefit of a progressive Jesuit-like educational system that forced me to question my beliefs and make them my own. I came out changed on the other side with diploma in hand thinking I was on solid ground. Surprise...life happens while we are making other plans. This John Lennon quote has proved true more than once in my life.

My spiritual journey, like yours, continues to be molded and modeled by the challenges we face and the lessons we learn along the way. I have never stopped seeking for truth, or questing to learning more, as life seems to provide a never-ending source of material. I know that I have changed along the way, and my notions about spirituality are no longer specifically aligned with

religion. I now see spirituality and religion as very distinct and different. One can be religious and not spiritual, or very spiritual and have no religion at all.

Each person has a spirituality even if it lies dormant and goes undiscovered. Our deep questions about life force us to embrace our spiritual selves, honor our inner knowledge, wisdom and truth. A very wise teacher once said that we must seek wise and learned teachers, but never simply believe what they say. Instead we must take what they teach (*Journey* cont. on pg. 2)

*Women have gathered in circles
since the dawn of history
for birthing,
to share story,
at cisterns for washing,
at fires for warmth,
at wells to draw water,
in embraces of profound joy,
in prayer,
in rings of sorrow and mourning.*

*With hands grasped, we gather our
collective wisdom,
energies and strengths
binding us and
guiding us into the future.
Each woman brings her gifts,
placing herself
as a stone in the unbroken circle.*

© Janet Herrick

(*Journey* cont. from pg. 1)

and find out for ourselves if what they say is true. This is the truth upon which we can base our deepest beliefs.

With this in the forefront of my mind I continue along the spiritual journey, sometimes moving fluidly and occasionally stubbing my toes, but always moving forward. I have been forced to look at myself and my beliefs with blatant honesty, guarding some things and gently letting other things go. Most importantly, I have come to terms with embracing all of the journey without judgment or labels of good and bad. I now hold the notion that we are spiritual beings having a human experience. The spiritual journey lies within, so fellow adventurers... everything we learn along the way contributes to who we are becoming.

All is in Divine Order...

By Margie Gray

My son was recently diagnosed with a neurological disorder. The diagnosis brought some peace as there was an explanation for his behavior. However, the more I looked at him in the context of his new label, the more he lived up to the diagnosis. In other words, things got worse. I realized that it didn't work to label him. Instead, I now simply work to be the best mom for him that I can be.

I am still working with all of this new information and experience. It has been a journey in learning a different system for identifying good and bad, healthy and dysfunctional. The word "disorder" has all kinds of negative connotations that I've been working with. His brain works differently than mine. But when I look at the prevalence of ADD, ADHD, Autism and Aspergers diagnoses, an amazing number of kids have brains that work differently. So is it really a disorder or is he part of a trend and if so, why is this trend occurring?

THIS is my spiritual journey right now. This is the hands-on work that challenges my ability to be with what is and have peace with it. My spiritual journey feels so much more important now than it ever has because my capacity to hold a larger context has a direct impact on my six year old. My capacity to love in the midst of a meltdown, my capacity to see him as perfect, my capacity to support him when he is confused, frustrated and anxious because he doesn't understand why others respond to him in ways that are unexpected to him...all of this challenges me to engage in my practice of prayer and meditation, to be present in the moment and to remember that *all is in divine order*.

AFFIRMATION CORNER

By Margie Gray

Peeling Onions...

My spiritual journey has been a bit like peeling back layers of an onion. I found peace as a single person, then began the process of peeling back the layer of finding peace as a married person...and then as a mother, and then as a step-mother, and so on. Lately, it seems that there is not much of a break from learning lessons...getting to enjoy the peace...before the next bit of onion peeling begins. It has been a challenging lesson to learn that the peeling is more important than the peace. It is easy to embrace the peace. The lessons are just plain work.

I offer these affirmations to support us all as we continue to peel away the layers and learn the lessons of our spiritual journey.

~ I claim all of the blessings that my life experience brings, NOW.

~ I see the hidden blessings in my life, NOW.

~ I am committed to working through the layers of my spiritual journey, NOW.

~ I am committed to finding peace in the midst of the lessons life offers, NOW.

I long for the day when I can sit at the end of my spiritual journey, on the figurative mountaintop of enlightenment in absolute peace and serenity with all that is. But until then, I am committed to finding peace in peeling my onion.

Spirituality

By Joan Macias

Spirituality for myself is somewhat of a circle. Not sure when it started and hope it never ends. I do believe it starts as a child and develops through the years. People, places, circumstances and the divine are intertwined for our individual spirituality. My personal on-going journey of spirituality has been fueled by "Stone Circle" and "For Women Only." I thank all you ladies for contributing to my journey.



Please let us know the names of those you would like to have included in our prayer circle.

Calendar of Events

The women of Stone Circle meet for regularly scheduled and special events each month. Listed below are the events for the months ahead.

July 2010

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 2 | Centering Prayer-Conf. Room | 7:30 PM |
| | Newcomers Orientation | 7:00 PM |
| 17 | Gathering of Women | |
| | Church Library | 9:30 AM |
| | <i>Mary of Magdala</i> | |
| 31 | Annual Day Retreat | 9AM until 4PM |

August 2010

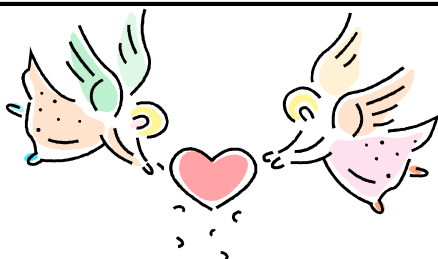
- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|---------|
| 6 | Centering Prayer-Conf. Room | 7:30PM |
| | Newcomers Orientation | 7:00PM |
| 21 | Gathering of Women | |
| | Church Library | 9:30 AM |

September 2010

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|---------|
| 3 | Centering Prayer-Conf. Room | 7:30 PM |
| | Newcomers Orientation | 7:00 PM |
| 18 | Gathering of Women | |
| | Church Library | 9:30 AM |
| | <i>Traditions/Cultures</i> | |

October 2010

- | | | |
|-------|------------------------------------|---------|
| 1 | Centering Prayer-Conf. Room | 7:30 PM |
| | Newcomers Orientation | 7:00 PM |
| 15-18 | Stone Circle Cruise/Retreat | |
| 16 | Gathering of Women | |
| | Church Library | 9:30 AM |



My Path to Spirituality

By Virginia Strait

Having been a very controlling person, I literally burned myself out trying to use worldly ways to attain what I wanted. When I finally fell on the floor emotionally, physically and financially broken ~ there was a soft, clear, sweet voice that declared "Trust in me. You are valuable to me. I will never leave you"...

I knew in my heart, that moment marked a very different path that I wanted/needed to follow.

I have learned to be comfortable with being still. During these times I am learning to trust others, myself, and a Supreme Being. And while monetary accumulation is the focus of our society, I have come to appreciate the time and attention with family and friends are way more enriching.

Developing a new perspective is including many books, lectures, and sharing's from everyone, all made available by divine guidance, interruption and protection. I now know there is an energy that is leading me to a more peaceful and joyful way of living. Everyday has the potential of a miracle. Thankfully for me, the days and miracles keep happening for my spiritual on-going journey.

Spirituality: An On-Going and Going Journey

By Sherri D. Finnegan

I just finished the book *Many Lives, Many Masters* by Brian L. Weiss, M.D. Dr. Weiss, a prominent psychiatrist, tells the story of putting a patient into a hypnotic state as therapy to alleviate some of the woman's phobias. The patient then describes "past-life memories" – 87 past lives in all ! Now that's an on-going spiritual journey!!!

And then, Master Spirits began to talk through her (the patient), to Dr. Weiss, describing the on-going journey to spirituality – in and out of human form. The Spirit Masters essentially state that our spirits keep being re-born to the Earthly plane, to right some wrong in our past lives. I am just tired thinking about it !

Dr. Weiss contends a positive spin on this, that we have control of our own spirituality and our growth and re-birth, if you will, of our spiritual maturity. 87 lives, Whew!!! I am shooting to retire after 57 lives! Say AMEN to that!!

Spirituality is....

By Salome Harasty

Looking at a newborn, we can see that the child has beauty and potential. We can also see his or her spirituality, connectedness with God.

Some time in our growing or searching years, some of us think we do not have spirituality or the "right" one. We look at various friends or religions, saying "now, that's a good spirituality." Let's see. Let's get a cupful of Buddhist spirituality. mix with 2 cups of Christianity and add a couple table-spoons of Jewish to see if that spirituality is what we want.

We forget that whether or not we recognize or act on it, since God loves us, we are connected to God and have spirituality.

Our responsibility is only to remember God's love for us. Spirituality just is. Our only choice comes in how or maybe why we want to develop that spirituality.

Basking in God's love, meditating on how we respond, and then acting is all we have to do,

I Love to Be Alone With God

I love to be alone with God and thank Him for each gift.
The time I spend in daily prayer gives my soul a lift.
I never take for granted the blessings of the day,
For sorrows come to Christians, too, and things all pass away.
Earthly trials and temptations are but a part of life...
For even Christ was tempted, but overcame His strife.
Our faith at times is tested or it would never grow,
For faith can see the roses beneath a bed of snow.
I love to be alone with God and know that He is near,
For He's the coat of armor that shields me from my fear.
How wonderful to know Him, to feel that He is there –
I love to be alone with God when I come to Him in prayer.

By Clay Harrison

Submitted by Lena Moriarty

Spirituality: An On-Going Journey

By Jody Donovan

I'm not sure when my **awareness** of my spiritual on-going journey came into my conscious thinking. Maybe 15-20 years ago or so? Since I am in my seventies that would mean I spent more than 50 years being **unaware** of my spiritual journey? Wow! That does not say much for my intellectual prowess?

Some would say it has nothing to do with intellectual prowess, but for me, my mind drives my thoughts which drive my life including its spiritual aspect. Of course, to begin with, my mind (in trying to grasp the concept of spirituality), begs the question, what is spirituality? connected to faith? religion? one's way-of-life? Can we be "spiritual" without having faith...a faith...

any faith? Or being religious? Or practicing a religion? By definition, spirituality is a noun meaning "spiritual quality." Do my spiritual qualities and their development determine where I am in my on-going journey? Is holiness connected to spirituality? Where does mysticism come into the picture? Or does it? See? I still have more questions than answers...maybe that is why I stayed in my 50 year fog for so long, it was comfortable and safe.

Now, I don't feel so "comfortable and safe" (that now seems to have been complacent), but I do feel more "spiritual" on some level, somewhere much further along on my journey...a soul connected to greater unseen powers, being able to see and feel the bigger picture, eager to continue to learn and connect in mind and spirit. I have always professed to have "a strong faith" (there's that word again!) in the Holy Spirit (originally Catholic connected, but I now believe the Spirit is available to all). I believe that this is the Spirit that has accompanied me on this journey... kindly, non-judgmentally, and acceptingly.



In the Company of Trees

Twelve ladies gathered in the shade of the magnificent 500 year old tree on the property of the Mennello Museum off Princeton in Orlando to celebrate Spring, Arbor Day, Earth Day, and all that trees symbolize or mean to us.

After we placed our folding chairs in a circle, we had discussions and sharing. We listened to some readings and poems all pertaining to nature. We had a chance to walk by ourselves around beautiful Lockhaven Park, overlooking a big lake. After our walk we went back to our circle and had lunch. I think we all felt so calm and peaceful that we could have stayed all day.

How can anyone say there is no God after you have taken the time to experience the serenity of nature?

OLD LIVING OAK TREE

By Mary Lospinoso

How many people have touched you,
or should I say,

How many people have you touched?

Outstretched branches, bruises, bumps,
bark rough and blemished,
yet incredible to be near.

Leaves and moss above and below,
the living and the dead still nurturing,
without awareness.

Light shining on you
showing your age,
beauty abounds you.

Thank you.



From left to rt.-Top row: Jody Donovan, Virginia Strait. Middle row: Harriet Ryan, Dorie Croissant, Jean Gold, Joyce Mansheim. Bottom row: Ann Wlosek, Mary Lospinoso, Jan Herrick, Gladys Kelly, Lucy Reda & Lena Moriarty.

An Unexpected Path

By Dorie Croissant

Spirituality, as we all know, looks different to each one of us. The view we have of spirituality one day might change the very next day because of an event or an experience or something we can't even name. When I was growing up I learned about God, religion, commandments, prayer and love. But I don't ever remember being taught about spirituality. I learned about the Holy Spirit but, again, I did not equate that with spirituality. Was I sleeping all through my early years? I think not. It turns out, for me anyway, that years of experience bring flashes of wisdom and a chance to journey with the gift of spirituality. I've had the privilege of sending out, via email since late 2007, the weekly Stone Circle Insights & Energizers. These weekly quotes continue to directly reach over 125 women who access their Stone Circle incoming emails. This service has been a journey for me – a journey that has increased my awareness of spirituality.

I have no idea how many of you might forward these quotes to other women or save them on your desktop or use them for bookmarks. But I do know that we've received many replies saying thanks and it continues to amaze me how often the quote is so appropriate for what is currently happening in an individual's life. We hope you continue to enjoy and be inspired by the quotes. Please feel free to let us know if you have a favorite verse you would like to share with others. If you are not on email and would like to see some of the quotes we've sent out over the past few years, please call or drop us a line and we can send them to you. A quote by Confucius was sent out in October 2007 and it reads "Cultivate the root. The leaves and branches will take care of themselves." The weekly Insights & Energizers have certainly cultivated roots for me and given my spirituality an unexpected path of growth. I wish the same for you.

"We need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature - trees, flowers, grass- grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence... We need silence to be able to touch souls."

Mother Teresa

The 2010 Stone Circle Cruise Retreat

The 2010 three-day Stone Circle Cruise/retreat on the Royal Caribbean *Monarch of the Seas* is scheduled for the October 15-18 weekend. A variety of cabin categories are being offered in hope that the cruise will be affordable for everyone who wishes to come. Inside cabins begin at \$269.34 per person and an ocean view at \$291.34 per person. All rooms can accommodate 2, 3 or 4 persons (if booking 3 or 4 persons per cabin the cost will be lower per person).

Please call Allison at 407-855-4252 to reserve your space. Final payment due in August.

Stone Circle's 11th Anniversary

By Jan Herrick

We couldn't miss another opportunity to celebrate Stone Circle and our 11 years of service as a resource for women's spirituality. It seemed like an appropriate time to gather together, share friendships, delicious food, some laughter and a little gratitude for one another's support and example. In the scheme of things 11 years can be a moment in time, but for many of us these years have provided an enormous forum for stretching our minds and spirits to grown in ways we never thought possible. Supporting one another is often under-rated, because with it we can overcome obstacles, fulfill our dreams and reach our potential as women. This can happen just because someone else believed we could, often before we believed it. I thank the women of Stone Circle for providing this environment for me, and I am sure it has done this for others. I know it has! I have seen it!

Our Anniversary dinner provided a first time opportunity to single out some of the role models we have among us...those women who have wowed us with their grace and wisdom, and who have embraced their acquired years. The WOW, or Woman of Wisdom Award was presented to Gladys Kelly, Harriet Ryan and Lena Moriarty. These wonderful women not only embrace the wisdom that engaging with life has provided them, but they model for us true saging not merely aging.

The Sun Also Rises



By Dorie Croissant

The Summer Solstice, the beginning of summer, officially started at 7:28 a.m. EDT on Monday, June 21, 2010. However, a group of women got up very early on Saturday, June 19th, so we could be at Cocoa Beach when the sun came up.

This year there were eleven of us who willingly gathered at 5:00 a.m. for the drive to Cocoa Beach so we could stand at the waters' edge and celebrate the sunrise. There are days, depending on the events of the day, that seem very long and tiresome. So, you might wonder why anyone would want to celebrate what is considered the longest day of the year. This is the day the sun seems to stand still. This is the day that is celebrated all over the world with rituals and readings, prayers and promises.

We arrived at Cocoa Beach at approximately 6:15 in the morning. Some of us spread out blankets and beach towels. Others opened their beach chairs. All of us had a perfect view of the ocean and the sky. We waited. We walked. We laughed, we sang, we told stories, we celebrated. We shared a few short narratives of the history of the Summer Solstice. We lined up with our feet in the water and squishy in the sand while a couple of snapshots were collected. I remember saying "Look, there is it." It being the sun. I heard someone else say "Wow, I'm so glad I came to see this. How cool it is."

This journey to the beach is an opportunity to watch the sun spread its glory and know that the Solstice is being universally celebrated. I'm glad, too, when we have women who join us for the first time at the beach. I hope their first beach Summer Solstice was as memorable as mine was a few years ago. The sun also rises but so do the women of Stone Circle.

Spirituality in My Imperfections

By Geri Helms

As a young teen, I swam competitively. I was pretty good too! Rarely did I come in first; there were two girls in my swimming league who were much better than me, so often I finished second or third. “You could have beaten her, if you only tried harder.” The words of my father echoed in my head.

Loser

Good for nothing

Second doesn't count

“I also heard, “You're nothing but a jack of all trades, but a master at none; you'll never amount to anything.” It was partially true – I was pretty good at a lot of things but not the best at any one thing, but that took me pretty far in my life. My ability to multi-task and delegate aided me in my career as a community association manager – perhaps not the best, but my ‘graffiti’ knowledge took me far!

In my forties, I met Maureen Traynor, A mental health counselor in Winter Park, FL. She told me that no one is perfect. There was certain freedom in that for me! I tried many new things as a result – scuba diving, water colors, and changing careers at age 57!

In the *Spirituality of Imperfection*, by Ernest Kurtz and Katherine Ketcham, I learned that it is in my imperfections that people can relate to me. Actually, this has become a cornerstone of my spiritual coaching practice; to help clients to see that stumbling is all part of climbing the mountain it's still important to put a good effort into the job, but today I seek to achieve excellence, rather than perfection!

Here are some things I've done to move away from perfectionism and toward striving for excellence!

- Let go of expectations – they're premeditated resentments anyway! When I expect a certain result, especially if it is unattainable, it's a set up for disappointment.
- Create an action plan to achieve goals. If the plan doesn't work – revise it! There is always more than one way to accomplish things.
- Celebrate the ‘wins’. Along the way to the big prize, there is a plethora of victories. Savor each one!
- Learn from the challenges – note I did not say failures. Each stumbling block along my way has helped me to discover the spirituality in my imperfections.



Stone Circle
3956 Town Center Blvd., Suite 550
Orlando, FL 32837

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Stone Circle operates as a nonprofit entity whose presence seeks to enhance the feminine milieu for women of the 21st century. We truly rely on the generosity of friends and those who participate in programs.



STONE CIRCLE SUMMER 2010 RETREAT

“WE ARE THE LOTUS: BLOOMING WHERE WE ARE”

**THE LOTUS BLOSSOM IS A SYMBOL
OF THE PURITY WITHIN EACH OF US.**

**EACH OF US IS ON A JOURNEY TO REDISCOVER
THE PERFECTION OF WHO WE WERE CREATED TO BE AND
TO BE OUR CONTRIBUTION IN THE WORLD.**

**DURING THIS DAY LONG RETREAT WE WILL PAUSE
TO TAKE IN WHERE WE ARE ON OUR JOURNEY
AND TO HONOR THE LIFE EXPERIENCE THAT HAS MADE
EACH OF US A BLESSING TO THOSE AROUND US.**

**TAKE THIS MOMENT TO TAP INTO YOUR OWN UNIQUE GIFTS
AND CIRCUMSTANCES AS NOURISHMENT TO THRIVE AND BLOOM
IN THE MIDST OF WHATEVER LIFE HAS TO OFFER RIGHT NOW.**

SATURDAY, JULY 31 , 2010

9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

COST: \$45 (LUNCH & SNACKS INCLUDED)

**LOCATION: JW MARRIOTT-GRANDE LAKES
CENTRAL FLORIDA & JOHN YOUNG PARKWAYS**

CALL JAN TO RSVP 407-247-5391

An Invitation

From Jody Donovan

At one point in my life I was a volunteer for the Adult Literacy Council in Frederick County, Maryland. My first “student” was a 38 year old man who wanted to learn to read so he could read to his granddaughter. (a wonderful story in itself, but not the reason I’m writing this article).

The Council used what was called The Laubach Method of Teaching Reading to Adults. Part of the premise of the method was ...”Each one teach one.” That simply meant that one adult reader taught one adult non-reader. It was very effective and many of the adults who were the original students went on to be teachers themselves. But I digress again!

At our Stone Circle Vision Committee Meetings we often discuss how to go about increasing the number of women who participate in this unique organization. I remembered this ..”each one teach one” premise and wondered about changing a word and offering it to our membership as a process to try for a year or so...and see if he broadens our base.

Each one **bring** one is the thought. Pretty simple. If each one of us who now participates in **ANY** way were to invite (**bring**) one other woman to our circle...our membership would expand exponentially. Among those people you might consider inviting: a friend, a neighbor, a relative, a person you see every day: at mass (Kathy), at work (Michelle), or someone you meet on a plane (Virginia), or someone you know who does not even live here in FL Louise (MA), Sr. Michele (MS), Joanne (MD)), or someone who belongs to another group you belong to (Sue, Joan)...they’re everywhere...

There are many ways that a member can participate:

1. Being on our database and receiving the weekly Insights and Energizers email.
2. Replying with a comment or thought on that email.
3. Reading the Newsletter(4/year) – on the web or receiving it by snail mail.
4. Responding with a comment, an observation about that Newsletter’s content.
5. Writing something for the Newsletter: a short article, submitting a comment, voicing your thoughts .
6. Participating in the gatherings of the Circle. Thirty-five (35) on the calendar for this year. Some monthly, some bi-annually, some annually. Some traditional gatherings, some brand new.
7. Sitting in on or becoming an active member of the Stone Circle Vision Committee.

All of these ways are how the original premise of the Stone Circle is fulfilled, that is...to join in prayer in rings of joy or sorrow, gathering wisdom, energy and strength to guide us into the future. Keep it in mind. Invite someone. Even make a small donation (\$5./\$10.) in their name? If each one of us BRINGS one...to the Stone Circle, the experience will enrich their lives, it will enrich our lives.