Nightmare in the Napa Valley: Incarceration, Insanity, and Inhumanity

Paul Baber

Non-Fiction

Abstract: A memoir of despair, degradation, and darkness in a state mental health prison in California. Plunged into a seemingly hopeless situation, I found that I was mentally disabled, yet not unconscious. Experiencing feelings of being completely lost and forsaken, I embraced the slivers of light and hope that lurked in the shadows. Through perseverance and introspection, I embarked on an arduous journey to awakening—arriving at the realization that "Enlightenment" is a process of unlearning, i.e. of the conditioning of "doing" so prevalent in our society. I transcended the pain and confusion to embrace an attitude of living with a heart ready for anything.

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Preface

"The Universe is made of Stories, not atoms" --Muriel Rukeyser

"Into this house we are born, into this world we are thrown...a dog without a bone" --- "Riders on the Storm" by the Doors

Shechen Gylaltep, Buddhist Teacher, said: “Amidst the fleeting clouds of illusion, dances the lightning flash of life. Can you say that tomorrow you will not be dead?”

It's said that life is a journey....that peace is the path. I can say now that I had taken a road to paradise, yet ended up on the highway to hell. I found myself being a hostage in my home country and a refugee in the republic in which I was born. I became incarcerated in a “Helter-Skelter” shelter with only the hope of rising from the ashes as the phoenix bird did1.

Amidst the confusion, betrayal, and wounds, I vowed to take refuge in love, which I have heard is the gateway to all healing and freedom. I also vowed to take refuge in truth and awareness.

In the words of John Mack, Harvard psychiatrist, our adventure of life has as its primary goal to find meaning in the Cosmos. In the Buddhist tradition, it’s said that we are all seeking happiness. It's also said that all humans are hard-wired for narrative immersion as witnessed by films and books. Telling one's stories is a crucial means of catharsis or change.

Krisnamurti, great 20th century spiritual teacher, said: “Bow down to nobody; don't succumb to false teachings...one has to find out for ones self---not through anybody else. We have had the authority of teachers, saviors, and masters...yet if you really want to find out what meditation or awareness is, you have to set aside all authority completely.”

1 The Phoenix is the symbol of the Resurrection from the Dead.
Introduction

I have come to the profound realization that the more I think I know, the more I am aware that I know nothing at all. ---Wisdom Teaching

The following is my story of struggle in this adventure called “Life” or as I like to refer to it, “Lessons in Finite Existence.” The amount of time devoted to this project has been considerable. In fact, the length of time surpasses twice that of Hitler’s incarceration for treason. This endeavor has resulted from my having been taken to the breaking point, to a point of extreme despair, or the “worst circumstances” --- as Jack Kornfield, Buddhist meditation teacher has expressed it --- a place which we all will eventually face in our lives. In a real sense, I had embarked on a “highway to hell.” Truly I had taken a journey into insanity. In the words of Fritz Pearls, “I had lost my mind in order to come to my senses.”

Susanna Kaysen has provided a poignant insight: “Lunatics are similar to designated hitters. Often an entire family is crazy, yet since an entire family can’t go into the mental hospital; one person is designated as crazy and goes inside.”

Lindsay Buckingham of Fleetwood Mac has a revealing song called “Go Insane.” The lyrics are: “There are two types of people in this world: winners and losers. I lost my power in this world, so I went insane. I call your name --- she is a lot like you. There are two kinds of trouble in this world: living and dying. I lost my power in this world and the rumors are flying....”

Upon reflection in those rare moments of quiet over the last few years, I have become aware that “Compassion for everything that lives is the basis of the path through this life and to our death” [The Tibetan Book of the Dead].

I have become aware of the following: 1) that the Buddha described himself as the “awakened one;” 2) that Padmasambhava, Buddhist Teacher, was reportedly the Buddha reincarnated; and 3) that many persons believe we are all reincarnations of previous persons.

The “life after death” theme is certainly not new, as it has been with mankind for thousands of years. The core of most religions is indeed a belief
in the hereafter, whether it be “heaven” or whatever else.¹

Let me relate what one mental health client professed to me recently, namely the following “Cosmic Truth”: “We have all been here before, yet few in Western cultures are aware of that fact. Most of us are ---by design--- protected from the intrusion of the past by a veil of forgetfulness. It is all most of us can do to cope with the trials and tribulations of the here and now---without having to contend with the compounded vagaries of past lives. It would be the exceptional person (an 'Adam'?) that would not become completely bewildered or confused.” This contention is in accord with the mystical teaching that rather than a human on a spiritual path, we are spirit discovering itself through a human incarnation.

I recall the advice of one spiritual teacher who said one needs to be present without judging either one’s self or others. This is quite difficult to achieve as this teacher emphasized that we are conditioned in this society to be judgmental, particularly of ourselves. I have heard that for effective healing to occur, one needs to suspend ones judgments, notably self-judgments.

In recent years I have focused on a number of proactive measures, including enhanced spiritual development, largely through accessing spiritual-related resources from the Human Kindness Foundation and Sounds True., a wisdom based company in Colorado. My holistic approach has included the daily reading of spiritual material and practicing yoga on a regular basis. I have held the belief that the basic philosophy of yoga is true, i.e. being the achievement of union between the person and the universe. Patanjali, Buddhist teacher, who lived about one hundred years after the Buddha, said that union with God is “mind-wave quieting” and can be achieved through the practice of yoga.

In my daily meditative practice, I have adhered to the advice of a spiritual teacher who believes that one’s practice involves letting go of our preoccupation with this life and developing true love and compassion. I have recently availed myself of Ram Dass’ teachings on the acceptance of death as an integral part of life. I have realized that the place which may appear to be the end, may in fact also be the beginning. I have also realized that the cloak

¹ This concept of “heaven” brought to mind the lyrics of the Eagles’ song “The Last Resort” in which they say “they call it ‘paradise’ --- I don’t know why.”
of negativity weighs on the shoulders of the incarcerated just as death weighs on the shoulders of everybody.

In my search for meaning, I have adhered to the advice of Lama Yeshe, who advocates for developing one's powers of concentration so one can integrate one's mind into single-pointed concentration, whereby one will diminish the ego's emotional reactions until they disappear completely. At this point, Lama Yeshe contends that a person transcends one's ego and discovers an everlasting, blissful, state of mind called "nirvana." More profound than this is Lama Yeshe's contention that from the time we are born until now, we will find that we have not acted seriously for even one day because most of the time our mind has been completely occupied by uncontrolled thoughts and superstitions.

A key realization for me is the recognition that at the center of our pain is a common humanity. I have subsequently focused on writing with both insight and compassion and with the goal of developing a true spiritual connection with others and the universe.

I have come to the realization that a "breakdown" is not the end of the world. Though initially daunting or distracting, pain and illness can be a doorway or gateway to spiritual realization. Difficult experiences offer the potential for transformation. When we realize the impermanence of the material world, we turn within to seek a deeper truth and an unwavering inner peace.

I believe we all leave pieces of our spirit in traumatic places. I believe that it's important to discover ways to move on from the past regardless of what trauma it held...the past is over. I constantly remind myself to find peace of mind in the midst of strong emotions; to find profound insight in the midst of extreme confusion; to find the seeds of compassion in my darkest moments---even when I feel completely lost and alone.

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2I recall the words of Katherine Hepburn: "Life's tough for everyone and that's why most people become its victims."
Acknowledgments

I would like to express thanks to the many persons to whom I am indebted for their wisdom, compassion, and support. First of all, I wish to thank my childhood friend, M.S., who I fondly recall as being an unconditional friend. I do believe there's truth to the contention that one is lucky to have two friends in one's lifetime and more than lucky to have one good friend. Secondly, I wish to thank my mother, who was a caring person and a good listener. She was a nurse by occupation for her entire life. Nursing, I believe, is one of the few professions whose practitioners demonstrates true compassion for others. Mother Teresa of India is a notable example of a spiritual person who showed unconditional love for others, namely the less fortunate among us. Thirdly, I wish to thank my high school friend, J.G., who befriended me, was loyal, and showed considerable warmth and affection. I also wish to thank L.S. of my high school years for being a mentor, albeit an unobtrusive one. I would be negligent if I did not acknowledge another good friend in high school, namely S.L., who was caring, loyal, and always there for me. I also wish to thank my grandmother for her nurturing nature, perseverance, and fine cooking.

I also wish to acknowledge the following for their words of wisdom or insights into the nature of life: 1) Peter Breggin, author of Toxic Psychiatry and Medication Madness; 2) Robert Whitaker, author of Mad in America and Anatomy of An Epidemic; 3) Deepak Chopra and his Ten Keys to Happiness and The Chopra Center in Dream, N.Y.; 4) Joseph, Buddhist Chaplain, for his referral to numerous Buddhist books; 5) Jack Kornfield, author of numerous excellent and inspiring Buddhist books [It was Jack who expressed: “You are not your illness or trauma...you are untouchable spirit” and “Never give up on yourself.”]; 6) Spirit Rock Meditation Center for offering excellent and informative retreats over the years; 7) Robert Hall, psychiatrist and meditation teacher, and Shakuntala Modi, psychiatrist, who heal without resorting to the use of
drugs; 8) Lama Yeshe, author of *Becoming Your Own Therapist* who said: “Most of the time we (humans) are hallucinating, not seeing the true nature of things---not understanding the reality of even the sense world.” 9) Bo Lozoff of the Prison Ashram Project & Human Kindness Foundation, who extended hope and support to thousands of persons incarcerated in the U.S.; 10) Krishnamurti, great 20th century spiritual teacher, who said: “Bow down to nobody; don't succumb to false teachings...one has to find out for oneself---not through anybody else”; 11) Tara Brach, Buddhist Teacher and author of *Radical Self-Acceptance* and *Finding True Refuge*; 12) Edward Hamilton Bookseller of CT., who was a source for many books; and 13) Pema Chodron, Buddhist teacher and author of “When Pain is the Doorway: Awakening in the Most Difficult Circumstances” for showing me that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Finally, I would like to express gratitude to Lisa Wining, producer of the excellent documentary: *King's Park: Stories from an American Mental Institution* Let me end with the words of M.L.K, Jr.: “I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal”
DEDICATION

In terms of dedication, I would like to dedicate this book to the liberation of all communities from institutionalized greed, ill will, and delusion. [these being the “three poisons” in Buddhist philosophy]

I would also wish to dedicate and express gratitude to Mitch Snyder of the National Coalition for the Homeless, who fasted for close to 50 days in an effort to secure housing for homeless persons in the nation’s capital, this being over 30 years ago. I would also like to dedicate the book to Marc Singer, who produced the excellent documentary called Dark Days about homelessness, particularly in New York City. On any particular day, it’s said that there are 39,000 in the public shelters of New York City. It’s also said that there are 20,000 homeless children in New York City.

I also express great gratitude to Nelson Mandela, who was an inspiration to millions and faced tremendous challenges in his lifetime, including 27 years of incarceration.

I also dedicate this book to Dan Fisher, psychiatrist and mental health consumer, who was the director of the National Empowerment Center. Dan has brought inspiration and hope to thousands, if not millions, of Americans who have experienced mental health problems, which are in Dan’s opinion “problems in living.” In a similar vein, I would like to dedicate the book to David Oaks, Editor of Mind Freedom magazine, which was formerly called Dendron.

I would also like to dedicate this book to all spiritual avatars, including the Buddha, who brought forth a radical new way of looking at life. The Buddha, over 2,000 years ago, said that it’s rare in this world for persons to be free from mental illness even for one moment, except for ‘Arahants’ who are free from mental impurities. The essential message of the Buddha is that we are all deluded.
I would like to make a special dedication to Bo Lozoff, who recently left this earthly plane. Most certainly, whether we are on death row in San Quentin, in a supermax prison, in a regular prison, in a county jail, in a mental health prison, or in the community, we are all doing time.

Lastly, I would like to dedicate this book to all those courageous persons who have realized that trauma can bring forth truth; who have heard the truth, listened to the truth, and spoke the truth.
Chapter One

"It's an optical illusion (of consciousness) to see ourselves as separate." - Einstein

To reiterate Einstein's quote, I turn to Yasutani Roshi who said that the fundamental delusion of humanity is to suppose that I am here and you are out there. We, in essence, are surrounded by our own self in the form of all beings.

I recall the words of a renowned Yoga instructor: "As we enter into the Age of Aquarius we are entering into an age whereby we will claim or reclaim our true, divine nature and become a 'heart-centered world.' I personally believe it's incumbent for a person to probe deeply into the human psyche to find ways of living that are highly in tune with one's fundamental nature. This nature can be described as one's "divine nature." In a similar stance, one spiritual teacher has expressed that human beings are spiritual beings having a human experience, i.e. by living in a physical body.

Hindu sage Ramana Maharshi said: "When your heart has expanded so much that it embraces the whole of creation, you will certainly not feel like giving up this or that. You will simply drop off from secular life as a ripe fruit drops from the branch of a tree. You will feel that the whole world is your home."

Methods of accessing this primordial nature are varied, yet perhaps a few that have been shown to be inherently valuable or successful include the following: 1) meditation; 2) psychotherapy; and 3) spirituality. In regard to the latter, I believe the poignant statement by one mystic is quite relevant: "There are significant differences between the world's religions, yet few, if any, differences among the world's spiritual traditions." The deplorable fact is that mankind's history in riddled with religious wars that have resulted in hundreds of millions of lives destroyed in the "name of religion," whereby one set of believers maintains the belief that their "god" is the true one and those who believe otherwise, e.g. in another deity, are not worthy of life. As one religious historian has stated: "The real heresy is to maintain that one religion is in exclusive possession of the truth." Bear in mind that followers
of different religions believe that theirs is the 'sole way, truth and light.' As Alan Watts has remarked: "the strange and seemingly unholy conviction that "I am God" in Western culture is seen as the very clear indication of insanity---yet in the East, it's simply a matter of course that the deepest center of man (Atman) is the deepest center of the universe [Brahman] and why not?" G.D. Rinpoche said: "Enlightenment can only be achieved through understanding your own nature – the nature of universal truth that is within yourself." Buddhist philosophy holds that the preoccupation with "guilt" is based on erroneous understanding of human nature, and an erroneous conclusion about the best way to change human nature.

Robert Pirsig, author of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, said: "When one person suffers from a delusion, it's called 'insanity'; when many persons suffer from a delusion, it's called 'Religion.'"

Sam Harris in *The End of Faith* said: "We have names for persons who have many beliefs for which there is no rational justification. When their beliefs are extremely common, we call them 'religious' otherwise they are called 'mad,' 'psychotic,' or 'delusional'...it's considered normal in our society to believe the Creator of the universe can hear your thoughts while it's a sign of mental illness to believe he is talking to you by having the rain tap in Morse code on your bedroom window. And so, while religious persons are not generally mad, their core beliefs absolutely are." I recently read of a devout Christian who works in the "defense" industry and expressed that the whole Middle East situation is such a mess that the U.S. should simply nuke the whole place and then ask God for forgiveness.

I have become somewhat skeptical of those who proclaim the "truth" as told in their pamphlets or doctrines. One needs to keep in mind that churches are institutions, which by nature are self-serving. The whole religious issue is naturally highly controversial, yet perhaps it would be relevant to say that the Catholic Church is reportedly the world's largest landholder. Also, of noteworthy consequence is the widespread childhood abuse perpetrated by priests over the last half century; crimes that have gone largely un-prosecuted because of the "separation of church and state." As related in *The Elephant in the Room: Silence and Denial in Everyday Life*, author Eviatar Zerubavel relates: "Secrecy has made it possible for Church authorities to reassign serial predators to other parishes thereby allowing
them to continue molesting still more unsuspecting young victims. One of the most troubling aspects of the child sexual abuse scandal in the Roman Catholic Church is the enabling role played by the court system. In case after case, judges have signed off on secret settlements of child-molestation suits, freeing the offending priests to molest again." Furthermore, disturbing facts regarding the Catholic Church are the prohibition of women in positions of power in addition to the declaration of Galileo as a heretic in the 16th Century for his belief that the earth revolved around the sun.

The Christian Church promoted the belief that mind and body should be regarded as province of the Church with result that madness and physical illness were inevitably conceptualized in terms of good and evil. The belief developed that madness was caused by evil spirits and could be driven out by immersion in cold water and exorcism. Bertrand Russell said: "The immense majority of intellectually eminent persons disbelieve in Christian religion, but they conceal the fact in public because they are afraid of losing their incomes."

The Mormon Church is not without controversy in that its founder, Joseph Smith, had over one hundred wives. Today, thousands of Mormons have multiple wives. Let us not forget that it was a group of Mormons that surrounded [and protected] Howard Hughes in Las Vegas in his last years with the intention of getting as much as his estate as possible. Let us recall the visits of the "Messengers of truth", e.g. the Jehovah's Witnesses, who proclaim the "truth" as told in their Watchtower pamphlets.

Religious leaders are well aware of the vulnerability of the child brain and the importance of getting indoctrination in early on. The Jesuit boast is "Give me the child for the first seven years and I shall give you the man."

Ever since the 19th century, scholarly theologians have made an overwhelming case that the gospels are not reliable accounts of what happened in the history of the real world. Despite this, millions of persons still believe the Bible is God's literal truth. In fact, a recent Gallup poll found that 50% of the U.S. electorate believe the Bible literally.

A poignant question that Richard Dawkins asks in The God Delusion is

3 I do praise Pope Francis' excommunication of hundreds of priests who have been guilty of child molestation.
4 The mental stability of the Roman Catholic Church's Popes is another issue all together. The Crusades were initiated by Pope Urban II. Pope Julius II (1503) was described by Spanish Ambassador as follows: "In the hospital in Valencia there are a hundred people chained up who are less mad than his Holiness."
“What kind of ethical philosophy is it that condemns every child, even before it’s born, to inherit the sin of a remote ancestor?” Dawkins also points out that the Old Testament story of Noah was derived from Babylonian myth of Uta-Napisthim and was known from other mythologies of several cultures.”

Another controversial religious group is Hare Krishna, which is obtaining more devotees following endorsements by George Harrison, Allen Ginsberg, and Russell Brand. A 2001 class-action suit alleged more than 500 children were abused in Krishna schools and temples in the 1970s and 80s. ISKCON settled the case for $9.5 million.5

At perhaps the most critical time in the world’s history, at least in terms of whether our species will survive or annihilate itself, I believe it's incumbent that all sentient beings capable of self-consciousness explore the crucial subject of finding their true nature and interconnectedness to others.

If we have a broader view of life, everything affects everything else. Our western society’s high usage of oil has caused major wars in the world, and many persons—including friends and relatives—have been killed or maimed. Pollution has affected the weather, and we are all troubled by huge storms and 'crazy' weather patterns. How many have been killed by tidal waves, tornadoes, and floods?

Albert Schweitzer, Nobel Prize Winner, declared that “Until he extends his circle of compassion to all living things, man will not himself find peace.” Reflecting on the issue of “empathy,” Longfellow wrote: “If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we should find in each man’s life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility in the world.”

Steven Weinberg in Dreams of a Final Theory said: “Some people have views of God that are so broad and flexible that it’s inevitable that they will find God wherever they look for Him. One hears it said that ‘God is the ultimate’ or ‘God is our better nature’ or ‘God is the universe.’ Of course, like any word, the word ‘God’ can be given any meaning that we like. If you want to say ‘God is energy’ then you can find God in a lump of coal.”

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5 It's recommended for Hare Krishna adherents to chant 100,000 times a day.
Chapter Two

"Man must end wars or war will end man." – H.G. Wells

"Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when it comes from religious conviction." --- Blaise Pascal

It was Albert Einstein who said that the pioneers of a peaceful world are those who refuse military service. Dostoyevsky said: "The true battlefield is the heart of mankind." The sad facts are that there have never been more wars or blood shed than over the last 100 years. Thom Hartmann states in his compelling book Threshold that mankind is at a critical state in time. Hartmann states that the human population has gone from one billion since 1800 to over six billion in 2010. What has increased also is "Poverty", "Diseases", "Death of the Rain Forests", and "Pollution". In 2008, at least thirty countries faced food riots. While the world's oil companies racked up billions in profits, the World Bank in 2008 was begging the G8, the group of the eight richest nations, for $3.5 billion to feed the world's most destitute persons.\(^1\)

One might ponder the opinion expressed that it's insane to fight over the real estate of this fragile sphere called Earth. The question that might be pondered or asked is the following: "Is Homo Sapiens an Endangered Species?"\(^2\) Another pertinent question is: "Considering that man's history is a "nightmare," can mankind somehow convert it into a pleasant dream?"

Lynn McTaggart, in her recent book The Bond relates the following: "It's time to begin a new Age of Enlightenment, one that recognizes and honors wholeness and abhors the polarization of one people, one religion, or even one political party against another."

Of significant concern is the increasing disparity in income, not only in the U.S., yet throughout the world. As of 2000, a meager 2% of the world's population held 50% of the wealth. While a privileged few live elaborate lives, the vast majority live marginal lives. John D. Rockefeller, business tycoon, when asked how much money was enough, admitted he always

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\(^1\)Gore Vidal relates: "This is an age of overpopulation, where people are crowded together in cities, and they're beginning to react just like rats do when overcrowded during a lab experiment – they go crazy."

\(^2\) 99% of all animal species become extinct Jan 2014 Smithsonian article: "Time Travelers"
needed a little bit more.

I have pondered the contention of a mystic who said that for the first time in man’s history there are the necessary resources and technology to allow all of earth’s inhabitants to live decent and comfortable lives.\(^3\) In the Buddhist philosophy, the entire reason for all problems is one thing—the attachment that clings to the happiness of this life.

Adherents of wisdom schools hold the belief that “love” is the answer to life’s most fundamental problems. They profess that violence begets violence, that hatred is never stopped through hatred, and that love is the universal healing force. Martin Luther King, Jr. has said that love is the only creative, redemptive, and transforming energy in the universe.

One wisdom teaching says that before the beginning [of life] we are all pure consciousness. I have become aware that neurological evidence shows that human beings only use approx. 8-10% of their brain capacity, i.e. only about 10% of 100 billion neurons. I believe that each of us has basically unlimited potential. Coincidentally, astronomical discoveries show that there are about 100 billion stars in our Milky Way Galaxy alone, which is one of billions of galaxies in the known universe.

In terms of whether mankind will destroy himself, one could take a 'Vedantic' viewpoint and speculate that if we destroy our planet—and the planet disappears from the junkyard of the universe—what would happen? Would it likely be the case that nature would simply self-correct with our existence simply having been a blimp in the vast universe of space and time?

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\(^3\)“This world has enough resources for everyone’s need, yet not for everyone’s greed.” --- Ghandi
Chapter Three

Man will get used to anything, if only he reaches an appropriate degree of submission – Carl Jung

My personal inner search began in earnest at the beginning of 2007 when I was admitted to a state mental hospital in the Napa Valley of California. I was on an outpatient program in the community and had committed a “nuisance crime” which in the City [San Francisco] was among those crimes such as graffiti, public exposure, and prostitution. These were punishable by a citation, which was usually dismissed or resulted in a fine. As Martin Goodman has expressed, in certain political conditions, when mainstream society is looking for a scapegoat, even minor peculiarities in lifestyle can be treated as a reason for hatred. 4

I became one of the 2.5 million incarcerated Americans, of which 2.3 million are incarcerated in prisons or jails. This is the largest per capita rate of any developed country. 5 California alone has over 140,000 inmates, which was one of the reasons the Supreme Court ruled in August of 2013 that California would have to reduce its number of incarcerated persons because “cruel and unusual punishment” was being carried out. The human misery of the state prisoners is largely hidden because most state prisons are in dusty inland deserts away from the cities. The Los Angeles Jail system is the largest of any in the U.S. with over 15,000 inmates and has been described as the “largest mental hospital in the nation.” The A.C.L.U. had as of late 2012 two lawsuits against the system—-one for overcrowding and the other for deputy-on-inmate violence. According to Matthew Cate, Director of the L.A. Jail system: “America has seen prison as a place to throw people away.” versus Europe, where prisons are seen as places that people will return from. In the U.S., we prefer to spend money on “wars on crime” and “wars on drugs”, yet nobody wins such wars. Prisons reinforce the low self-esteem and sense of failure that lead many prisoners to offend. One argument for punishment is that harming offenders is in itself a good thing, with one

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4 One might recall the Salem Witchcraft Trials at the beginning of our nation.
5 According to a May 2012 Economist article, the U.S. has 5% of the world’s population yet almost 25% of the world’s prisoners. California’s prison industry has been directly responsible for the state’s recurring budget crises, with significant negative effects on education funding.
version of this argument viewing punishment as 'God's retribution.' For the vast majority of humans, ideas about "justice" are inextricably bound up with religious views and customs. "Criminals often become scapegoats with their offenses easily exploited by ambitious politicians trying to get elected or re-elected. If indeed "peace is the path", the state should not be exempt from the truth and must find some way to incorporate it into our judicial system.

I was quite familiar with this particular institution in which I was incarcerated from having served on my county's Mental Health Advisory Board in the early 1990s. What came to mind specifically were the wrongful deaths of numerous clients committed by staff at this institution, specifically improper seclusion and restraint practices that had resulted in numerous client deaths. These deaths had subsequently been investigated by numerous agencies, including the State Office of Patients' Rights and Protection & Advocacy, a federally mandated mental health agency that investigated wrongful or illegal abuses concerning clients at state mental health institutions. To my knowledge, there was no hospital lock-down as a result of any or all of these client deaths. For a more detailed description of wrongful deaths and abuses in mental hospitals, I would refer persons to the recent documentary produced by Lisa Wining, a former inmate in a New York institution. The subject matter of her documentary will be discussed in more detail later.

My general impression was that this institution, not unlike the other state mental hospitals, was one that was primarily "custodial" in terms of care, i.e. mainly engaged in the "ware-housing" of persons with serious mental health problems. The major emphasis was the administration of drugs as the primary treatment modality. Voltaire, the 18th century philosopher, said that the role of doctors is to humor their patients while nature heals the malady. The "Placebo affect" clearly demonstrates this as being true. Hippocrates, over two thousand years ago, said that the natural healing forces reside within each of us. Unfortunately, the medicine dispensed at this institution is one of "drugs" versus a healing modality that addresses the mind, body, and spirit. Bernard Lown, M.D. has stated: "Significant instances of disability and death result from the excessive prescription of drugs, from poly-pharmacy, and from drug interactions than from inappropriate use of technology. Neither surgery nor invasive
procedures cause a fraction of the damage that is done with drugs.”

Nearly 350 years ago, William Harvey, discoverer of the circulation of the blood, said “Every affection of the mind that is attended with either pain or pleasure, hope or fear, is the cause of an agitation whose influence extends to the heart.” Interestingly enough, Lewis Thomas in The Youngest Science says: “touch is the oldest and most effective tool in doctoring....medicine is no longer the laying on of hands; it’s more like reading signals from machines.” Three hundred years ago, the English doctor, Thomas Sydenham, said: 'The arrival of a clown exercises more beneficial influence upon the health of a town than 20 asses laden with drugs.”
Chapter Four

There is no scientific knowledge of why people act as they do” --Dr. Goldon Warme, psychiatrist

One needs to keep in mind that psychiatry is a relatively new field and has been described by many as a “quasi-science.” The DSM, which is often referred to as the “Psychiatrists' Bible” is developed solely by an A.P.A. [American Psychiatric Association] Committee, versus a collaborative effort as in most developed countries. A great depends on what the A.P.A. puts in the most recent DSM (now DSM V), as witnessed in who gets what diagnosis and what gets reimbursed. Ponder the fact that close to 50% of the American population could be considered “mentally ill” if the hundreds of diagnoses were applied.

As Lama Zopa Rinpoche has pointed out, psychiatrists, people who are considered “guides” or “experts” of the mind, are paid a lot of money for a few words of advice, yet when they are asked about the root of problems such as anxiety, schizophrenia and so forth, they get extremely vague. They can never point out the actual cause of unhappiness. It’s extremely difficult for them to really help people and offer lasting solutions to their problems.

Bernard Lown, M.D, related that in his experience the vast majority of symptoms lack exact explanations. Dr. Lown said: “The medical community has partially resolved this problem by devising a host of meaningless diagnostic labels that mask ignorance rather than illuminate an underlying cause.”

In doing the “disorder rag,” one can be considered abnormal or mentally ill if one uses a computer “excessively.” Likewise, if you have an extremely low math score in school, one could be labeled with “developmental arithmetic disorder.” If your child craves non-nutritious or “junk” food, he/she has a “feeding disorder.” If a teenager argues with his or her parents, this person has an “oppositional defiance disorder.” If one’s child has trouble concentrating at school or is highly fidgety, he or she could very well be suffering from A.D.H.D. (Attention-Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder or A.D.D.(Attention Deficit Disorder) both frequently diagnosed disorders and ones that commonly are prescribed Ritalin.
What can be perilous is that “normal” persons can get diagnosed as “mentally ill” and as a result receive harmful “treatments.” For instance, a person who drinks two or more cups of coffee and is irritable can be labeled with “caffeine intoxication” and be prescribed anti-anxiety drugs.

A poignant question that could be asked is “Has the Psychiatrist maneuvered himself into the position of sole judge of what constitutes “mental illness” in the U.S.?” Even more serious is the issue of whether every form of normal behavior from birth to death can be diagnosed as “madness,” “insanity,” or “mental illness.” If by chance one considers himself or herself impervious to psychiatry's power, consider that the number one health problem in the world is now “depression” in one of its myriad forms. Depression constitutes a major societal problem in terms of lost productivity in the workplace (billions of dollars/year), and millions of Americans are prescribed anti-depressants such as Prozac.

Many mental health professionals have advocated that drugs, if used for depression, need to be individualized and fine-tuned in dosage and often have unpleasant side effects. They contend that: 1) the biochemical abnormality may not be permanent and once the depression is overcome, drugs should be discontinued; and 2) as helpful as these drugs are, life is far better without them.

Chogham Trungpa Rinpoche says in “Creating an Environment of Sanity” the following: “You should look into where the patient's health is coming from...Someone might be acting paranoid and critical, yet where is that accuracy coming from? They could be extremely neurotic and destructive, yet where is the basic pinpoint of that energy? If you can look at people from that point of view of basic goodness, then there is definitely something you can do to help others.”

In the recent book The Spiritual Gift of Madness by Seth Farber, PhD, he says: “Diagnosing people as ‘mad’ has more to do with social control than therapy.” “Many of those labeled ‘schizophrenic’ ‘bipolar’ ‘ADHD’, and so forth are not mentally ill yet simply seeing and feeling what is wrong with society.”

Quite troubling is the fact that once a person is diagnosed, one almost always keeps the psychiatric jacket for life. If one, for instance, has been diagnosed with depression and prescribed Prozac, one can appear completely
normal and be considered in “remission” yet at risk of becoming sick or ill at any time. If this person acts out in an antisocial manner such that he/she is considered a “danger to self or others”, he or she can be taken from ones home and incarcerated in an institution under the “involuntary commitment” laws. If one believes that this constitutes an infringement of ones civil rights, you may very well be correct, yet you will likely need an excellent lawyer in order to protect your rights.

I personally believe that it’s no accident that Afro-Americans are disproportionately represented in the U.S. incarcerated population. It is also no accident that at the beginning of the 21st Century, we have witnessed an alarming assault on civil rights in the U.S. It is unquestionably no mere accident that comparisons have been made between the recent G.W.B. “regime” and that of Stalin, Mussolini, or Hitler. One question that a critic of G.W.B. might ask would be the following: “Are you a politician who says to himself: ‘I will use my country for my own benefit?’ If so, you are nothing but a parasite living on the flesh of others.” Isn’t it also quite interesting that G.W.B. said that God told him to invade Iraq. It’s too bad that God didn’t reveal there were no Weapons of Mass Destruction. A poignant question that might be asked of G.W.B. is the following: “Why did he declare war when the Pentagon and CIA’s intelligence showed no link between Iraq and the Sept. 11th bombing?”

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6 Interesting enough, Blacks only comprise about 12% of the U.S. population, yet there is almost a 7:1 ratio of blacks to Caucasians in the prison population.
Chapter Five

“As bad as prison is, it’s not as bad as being middle class in the U.S.”--Quote from movie Reunion (2011)

Unfortunately, at the turn of the 21st century this institution became in essence a penal colony with the erection of a barbed wire fence enclosing the entire facility. This was done due to community pressure with the underlying goal of "protecting society" from the inmates, who were considered dangerous, despite numerous well-conducted studies that have shown that the mentally ill are no more dangerous than the average American citizen. [removing the factor of “substance abuse] One patient attempted to escape on 1/22/12, yet realized the folly in doing so when he realized that he was dressed in khakis when at a nearby shopping center in the rain.7

The primary form of “therapy” has been, and continues to be, the administration of potent drugs, commonly referred to as “anti-psychotic” or “neuroleptic” drugs. These agents have the effect of controlling the patients' symptoms, yet come at a considerable cost, namely serious side effects, including tardive dyskenisia, which reportedly occurs in at least 25% of persons taking these drugs for a period of more than three years. The effect of the drugs has been described as performing a “chemical lobotomy” by those critical of the mass drugging of persons with mental health problems. The targeted area of the brain is the frontal cortex, that area responsible for planning and emotion. [Walter Freeman introduced the practice of lobotomies in the U.S. in the 1930s and would personally perform over a thousand of these barbaric practices, which involved inserting an ice pick or similar instrument through the patients' eye sockets up into the frontal cortex of the brain.] The fact that persons with a serious mental illness have a life expectancy of 5 years less than the “normal” population, is clearly attributable to the massive prescribing of psychotropic drugs to those experiencing serious mental health problems. Increased weight is also one of the most significant side effects of these drugs, and other subsequent health

7 This institution doesn’t have an electric fence, although it might be better if it did. Because it doesn’t, there are guard houses all around the perimeter with guards merely sitting there listening to music or doing who knows what else.
problems occur such as diabetes and cardio-vascular disease. [Note: The figure of "five years" is a conservative one, and I believe it should be related that estimates range from 5 on the low end to 20 on the upper end.]
Chapter Six

"Trying to find happiness in external things is like trying to find a needle in a hay stack" - Anonymous

Howard Cutler, psychiatrist, has said: "As I looked back over my years of psychiatric training, I could rarely recall having heard the word "happiness" ever mentioned as a therapeutic objective." "There was plenty of talk about relieving patients' symptoms of resolving internal conflicts of relationship problems, yet never with the expressly stated goal of becoming happy." Cutler believes that the purpose of mankind’s existence is to seek and find happiness. This opinion is corroborated in the excellent book by the Dalai Lama, e.g. The Art of Happiness.

Padmasambhava, the great Buddhist teacher who brought the dharma to Tibet, proclaimed that it's critical to overcome our conditioned awareness in order to have a chance to achieve happiness. Krishnamurti said “If I meditate and continue with what I have already learned along with what I already know, then I am living in the past—within the field of my conditioning. In that there is no freedom. I may decorate the prison in which I live; I may do all kinds of things in that prison, yet there is still a limitation, a barrier. So the mind has to find out if it can be totally quiet.”

My own mental health problems likely originated early in life, perhaps as early as birth itself. Taking into account that practitioners of "re-birthing" focus on the major trauma of birth, this possibility is not without some merit. I probably should mention however that “re-birthing” like many other beliefs such as Astrology, Past-Life Regression, and Near-Death Experiences have not been scientifically proven. If not at birth, the inception of my problems may well have been in the first year of life.

Attachment theory, a quite recent developmental psychology approach, established by John Bowlby, influential British psychoanalyst, cites experimental evidence and research that supports the idea that separation from one’s caregivers---during the first year of life inevitably causes fear and sadness in infants; basically a person's fundamental nature or personality is formulated in the first year of life. If a person receives steady support from
one's parents, primarily one's mother, one is instilled with a sense of empowerment and will live a stable life. If a person gets support in an inconsistent manner, e.g. with erratic responses, one will become a dependent person who is easily manipulated or influenced. If the person has a non-supportive first year, e.g. with no emotional responses, the person will develop an unstable personality and often be aggressive and violent in nature. A serious question that I have pondered has been: “Which category are most of the children born into single-family homes each year in the U.S.” [over one million in 2005 alone]

As previously mentioned, mystic teachers relate that we are spiritual beings having a human experience, i.e. by taking a physical form. Tara Brach, Buddhist teacher, relates that we (humans) are spirits discovering ourselves through human incarnations. Clinging to the physical form, i.e. ones body, can be detrimental in that we are essentially “born to die.” Indeed, I have reflected on the matter that "Life” could be described as “lessons in finite existence.”

I recall my best friend in elementary school, M.S., was one of only a few friends that I would have until I was put into a Children's Home in the city that I was brought up in. I would spend about one year there yet with few memories of such except for a head trauma. I do recall that the school was only a block away and that I would walk back and forth, regardless of the weather, which in the winter was quite cold with abundant snow I do recall being in a dorm of about 50 boys around my age of eight. Despite being an institution, I recall the food being good and the environment being hospitable. Perhaps on the down side, I recall going to church on Sundays, which in hindsight was likely a form of early indoctrination. I also recall that my oldest brother was placed in at least one foster home for a number of years. My family was one of the average American dysfunctional families in that my father was both verbally and physically abusive. This prompts the recollection of the statement made by the renowned psychic, Sylvia Browne, who has expressed that there should be “zero tolerance” for any physical abuse in families.

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15 The U.S. prison population is over-represented by the third category, this according to a thirty year study done by the University of Minnesota

16 Keep in mind that many parents know that behind all attempts of self-delusion, they are manipulating their children to suit their own self interests while claiming to be doing it for the children's own good.
Chapter Seven

"Nobody should have to be defined for a lifetime by the single worst moment or action of his past!" --- inmate released from Northern State Prison in Newark, N.J. After 28 years and 7 times before the Parole Board

Upon arrival in February of 2007, I was placed on the Admissions Unit, T-3, which would be my home until August of 2007, at which time I was transferred to a closed unit. I don't recall exactly what I thought my chances of getting out of this institution alive were at that time, although I believe that it was better than that of surviving a Nazi Concentration Camp, which according to Victor Frankl in his excellent book *Man's Search For Meaning*, was about 5%. “T-3” would remind me of the Nazi extermination program, which began with the killing of psychiatric patients under the auspices of the “T-4” program. Anywhere between 80-100,000 “mentally defective” adults were killed. At least 5,000 “valueless children” were put to death.

I was supposed to have a hearing within 15 business days of my arrival, yet my case would be postponed for six months due to numerous factors, one of those being that my public defender was not adequately familiar or knowledgeable of the specific issues pertaining to the outpatient program that I was on. I would not be formally revoked until the fall of 2007.

Having been created in 1985 by the California legislature with the mandate of “protecting society”, this program was highly controlling to the extent that it told persons where they had to live, where they could and could not work, who they could and could not associate with, ad finitum. Persons committed to the program would have their finances closely controlled and monitored as well as being subjected to unannounced home visits, mandatory drug testing, compulsory group and individual treatment sessions, lie detector tests [at the client's expense] and any other requirements deemed necessary in order to “protect society.” The oppressive nature of program was so restrictive in nature that one prominent attorney in the state who dealt with cases involving this program for over 25 years would describe the program as
being the closest thing to the Nazi Gestapo as there was. 17

Numerous directors of this state-run “cash-cow” program held to the belief that persons committed to the program should in fact remain on the program for their entire lives, e.g. regardless of their crime, their progress in treatment, or any other pertinent factors. I personally recalled a number of persons being sent to state prison for violating conditions of the program. One person was sent to Soledad, where Sirhan Sirhan was housed. Another was sent to San Quentin. Yet another, one who was unfortunate to have “two strikes”, was sentenced to “life in prison.” His particular violation was a D.U.I. with possession of a deadly weapon, which was a knife barely beyond the legal limit. After his arrest, the program would contend that he had committed more serious offenses, yet whether such was true was not clearly known or made public. Fortunately for many California prison inmates, the “Three Strike” law was repealed in 2012. Unfortunately for some inmates, this repeal would come too late as many had committed suicide due to feelings of hopelessness and despair.

I could go into great detail about the state of the nation’s prisons, yet let me focus on the state of California, which now has 33 prisons with a total inmate population of about 150,000. There is little doubt in many persons’ minds that the prison industry is big business. The Prison Guard Union is undoubtedly the most powerful union in the state. The guiding philosophy is retribution. Question: Is it true that the state has become a “secular god” for us”? Is that why our criminal justice system serves the purposes of the state to maintain its power better than the needs of the offenders and their victims.? I would refer persons to Johnny Cash’s song “Jacob Green” for the harsh and dehumanizing treatment that is pervasive in the criminal justice system. Regretfully, the question of “guilt” seems to be the central issue of the entire criminal justice system. Establishing guilt is the central activity and everything flows from that; the centrality of guilt means that the actual outcome of the case receives less attention. Legal training concentrates on rules and processes related to guilt and law students receive little training in

17 A relevant quote from the infamous leader Adolf Hitler is the following: “An evil exists that threatens every woman, man, and child of this great nation. We must take steps to ensure our domestic security and protect our homeland.” Proposal for creation of the Gestapo. Also, ironically, basically the same wording for creation of Homeland Security in the U.S.
sentence negotiation.

Paradoxically, a U.S. citizen can be arrested and detained without formal charges or legal representation, and held indefinitely. This is one of many provisions of the Patriot Act, created by the recent Bush Administration, which has created permanent changes to American law. I, at times, felt like I was being treated as a "terrorist" with no rights, whereby everything I said would be used against me.

It could be successfully argued, as Al Gore has done in Assault on Reason, that Americans' dignity and freedom have been compromised through enactment of the Patriot Act. Clearly the power of the government to imprison any person without a search warrant and be held indefinitely -- with the only reason being that such person is an "unlawful, enemy combatant" -- is quite extreme. One history professor, Thomas Childers, has observed that "when the rights of any group, no matter how small or marginal, are violated, your liberty ---your freedom---is put at risk." In the Age of Innocence, it's said: "When society not only dictates yet controls our behavior, what is really to be gained from following their rules?" In terms of the issue of "freedom," I believe it's worth noting that once a person's self-sufficiency is taken away, then that person's freedom is destroyed. In terms of equality and freedom, I believe the M.L.K. spoke profoundly truthful words when he said: "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all mean are created equal.'" More profound and truthful words were proclaimed by Frederick Douglass on July 4, 1852 when he said: "Are the great principles of political freedom and of national justice, embodied in the Declaration of Independence, extended to us?...What to the American slave is your Fourth of July? I answer, a day that reveals to him more than any other day of the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is constant victim."18

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18 Douglas went on to say: "there is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of these United States at this hour."
Chapter Eight

“Hope in reality is the worst of all evils because it prolongs the torments of man.”
- Nietzsche

“Somewhere there is hope amidst this cold, cold world.” --Steve Perry of Journey

I distinctly recall the words of a famous Buddhist teacher, Chogham Trungpa, who in the *The Lion’s Roar* said: There is no hope whatsoever....the situation is hopeless...absolutely hopeless! Trungpa then asks the following questions: 1) “Who thought up the idea of enlightenment?” and 2) “Who dreamed up God?” He then related that all the messages in scriptures, textbooks, information media --- whatever we have --- are not going to help us!

Ernest Becker addressed the issue of ‘hope’ with the following words: “The world of human hope is largely fictitious, and if we don’t understand this we understand nothing about man. It is largely a symbolic creation by an ego-controlled animal that permits action in a psychological world removed from the boundaries of the present moment, from the immediate stimuli which enslave all lower organisms. Man’s freedom is a fabricated freedom, and he pays the price for it. He must at all times defend the utter fragility of his delicately constituted fiction, deny its artificiality.”

The incarceration that I experienced was one which I could describe as demoralizing, dehumanizing, and debilitating. Formidable challenges were constantly upon me and maintaining hope was a difficult task. Despite the pessimistic nature of things, I would reaffirm the belief in the limitless transformation of all beings, bearing in mind that such transformation is possible at any moment, and is our very purpose of our life on Earth. During the many times of despair, I would recall the message from a wisdom teacher that: “Our days are numbered. At this very moment, thousands are born into the world---some destined to live only a few days or weeks before tragically succumbing to illness or other misfortune.” I would also reflect on the words of Pema Chodron, Western Buddhist Teacher, who said: “To be fully alive,
the President's New Freedom Commission, which was formed just after the turn of the 21st century. Such Commission would declare that the nation's mental health system was "broken," yet offered few recommendations for improvement. One has to wonder how much improvement has been made in the treatment of the "mentally ill" since James May, President of the A.P.A., said in 1933 that "mental illness was a 'medical playground' in which neurologists, neurosurgeons, and psychiatrists competed with gynecologists and ophthalmologists in the causes of psychoses." Indeed, in the 1930s, a Trenton, N.J. Psychiatrist, Henry Cotton, actually pulled patients' teeth and removed their large intestines to "cure" mental illness.

I pondered the contention of one mystic who said that for the first time in man's history there are the necessary resources and technology to allow all of earth's inhabitants to live decent and comfortable lives. The sad and sobering reality is that the political will of the world's ruling countries/leaders prevents this from happening. To put things in perspective, as of 2000, the U.S. Dept. of Defense was spending $1 billion/day. 20 The positive, constructive things that could have been created or built with such money is unimaginable. Most certainly modern, quality mental health institutions which promote recovery could have been built versus maintaining old dilapidated ones. The same applies to "correctional" facilities such as prisons and jails.

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Chapter Nine

20 According to Mother Jones article of Jan/Feb 2014, the U.S. spends more on "defense" than the next ten countries combined
Chapter Nine

"If Hippocrates is the "father" of the art that we doctors now practice, then we are his rebellious, confused, and self-centered teenagers." – David Newman, M.D.

Voltaire explained over 200 years ago that most of the work of physicians is to amuse the patient while nature does the healing. Or in the words of one wisdom teacher: “The great spirit of healing resides in each person” I would contend as Jack Kornfield, Buddhist teacher has stated: “You are not your illness, you are not your trauma---you are an untouchable spirit.” Perhaps the suggestion of: “Take loving action and do no harm” is a honorable example to abide by.

Bernard Lown, M.D. says: “The medical profession has long known that nervous activity influences every part of the body.” “The need for complex involvement with patients is never alluded to in medical texts or mentioned during medical training. Yet to succeed in healing, a doctor must be trained, above all else, to listen.” Dr. Lown then goes on to state the following: “I am persuaded that a majority of drugs intended to alleviate chief complaints are largely irrelevant.... “Our health care system is breaking down because the medical profession has been shifting its focus away from healing, which begins with listening to the patient. The reason for this includes a romance with mindless technology, which is embraced in large measure as a means for maximizing income.”

As mentioned previously, The Christian Church promoted the belief that mind and body should be regarded as province of the Church with result that madness and physical illness were inevitably conceptualized in terms of good and evil. The Christian Church had at its core the problem of evil, e.g.

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13 Interestingly enough, In Roman times, e.g. 1st Century A.D., the favorite medical treatment was "trepanning" a primitive form of neurosurgery - drilling holes in patient's head/skull to let out the evil spirits....there was also primitive form of ECT with use of
how to account for the various adversities that accompany every human life. The concept of evil originated before Christianity, the Old Testament, and related rabbinical texts that presented Satan as a lively, often menacing presence. Indeed, the origins of the idea was that the Devil was a fallen angel —yet now God’s determined enemy. Classical Greek culture also posited the existence of demons as had Hinduism. The pervasiveness of evil, the power of evil, seemed undeniable in Christian thought.

Regrettfully, our Western society is predominantly concerned with the quick fix, which often means resorting to pharmaceutical agents. If one has a headache, one takes aspirin; if a cold, cold medicine; if an itch, an anti-inflammatory agent. Twentieth century philosopher-physician Maimonides said: “May I never forget that the patient is a fellow creature in pain; may I never consider him merely a vessel of disease.” A question raised by Dr. Lown is: “What is medical wisdom all about?” His response is: “It’s the capacity to comprehend a clinical problem at its root, not in an organ, but in a human being.”

fresh eels. Source: Bedlam by Catherine Arnold
14 I have encountered some persons who believe in and worship Satan, e.g. Satanists, yet I believe such beliefs are not based in reality.
Chapter Ten

“In service of truth, in service of freedom” – Albert Camus, Author & winner of Nobel Prize in Literature

In August of 2007, I was transferred to a closed unit. I was placed in a “three man” room and quickly learned that the prevalence of violence on the unit was high, this being demonstrated by the fact that one roommate disclosed that he and the other roommate had just fought the previous day. I could tell from his lacerated face that the two must have indeed been involved in a serious altercation. Fortunately, I would spend only about a week on this unit before being transferred to another closed unit which I soon learned had a highly volatile population, despite being “coed.” Alarms were fairly frequent, although over 75% of them were “false.” I do recall being told that there were over 200 incidents of physical violence in a six-months period at the facility. I recall one interesting individual on this unit who suggested I listen to the lyrics of the Temptations’ song “Papa Was a Rolling Stone,” saying that “papa” didn’t collect any moss and that “papa” engaged in “stealing in the name of the Lord.”

I reflected on what a fellow inmate believed, namely that state institutions like this one are impersonal bureaucracies. What does that mean? It means that nobody takes full accountability or responsibility. Nobody oversees the real productivity of employees or is concerned about people the organization was created to help. It means change comes slowly and incompletely. It means both employees and clients truly can get lost in the system and if there’s nobody to pull you out, you can lose time, property, limb, and/or life. Learning the ropes is a must or one will truly lose ones mind.

My prospects would take a positive turn after a few days of living in a “five man” room on this unit when I was interviewed for an opening on one of the few “open” units at the facility. This would supposedly mean more freedom and being on a fast track toward being discharged. I was in fact transferred to an open unit within a week, yet in terms of being on a “fast
track”, this would prove to be highly optimistic, yet blatantly untrue. This would be borne out by one long-term staff member who was both open and honest about the state of affairs at this institution. She would profess that the hospital didn’t do anything at all to promote persons being discharged. In addition, she proclaimed that this institution also did hardly anything in terms of preparing persons to make it successfully once they were released, assuming that they in fact made it out alive. I took to heart the contention that the hospital has a vested interest in keeping beds fully occupied ---just like airlines and hotels.

My recollection about the issue of “life and death” brought forth the memory of a fellow inmate on the admissions unit who had been seriously abused as a boy by his step-father, namely psychological and physical abuse. Unfortunately, this young man would turn to a life of crime and illegal drugs as a young adult. Even more sad was that he engaged in self-injurious behavior, to the extent that he would commit suicide before the age of 30, this being on one of the hospital’s closed units. One individual remarked that “life is a choice.” When asked what she meant, she said that she believed in reincarnation and that she chose to come into this world. Regarding reincarnation, one lama has stated that the inability to see past lives is ignorance. Eileen Garrett\(^\text{15}\) said: “A nucleus of emotional intensity “is what survives when we die. Emotion and love are extremely strong forces of strength ...the only key that unlocks the communication between the living and 'so-called dead'”

One of the major supports in surviving in the mental asylum was music, which has been called the “universal language.” It’s been said by many that through music one can be in the present moment. One of my favorite artists was Kurt Cobain and the band Nirvana. One of his song lyrics is “All alone is all we are.” I was particularly drawn to Jackson Browne, not only for his great songs, yet also for his social justice stance. His song “Running On Empty” was a fitting song for the predicament that I had found myself in. Johnny Cash also comes to mind for his black attire as well as many great and poignant songs such as “Folsom Prison Blues” and “Ring of Fire.” One of my favorite songs by John Lennon was “Imagine.” The lyrics are quite

\(^{15}\) Garrett worked in J.B. Rhine’s ESP Clinic at Duke University.
poignant, namely "No need for greed or hunger" and "Above us only skies" Led Zeppelin is one of my favorite rock bands, with "Stairway to Heaven" being one of their outstanding songs. The lyrics: "Gold and buying a stairway to heaven" I find somewhat incredulous because "all that glitters is not gold" and I don't believe in the "Pearly Gates" or that persons could buy their way into them, if in fact, they did exist. Another favorite band of mine is Pink Floyd, which produced some excellent music, namely "The Wall" and "Dark Side of the Moon." A few profound lyrics are "Another brick in the Wall" and "The lunatic is in the hall." One of their great songs is "Shine On You Crazy Diamond." One of my favorite "soul" groups is the Four Tops, particularly their songs "Reach Out" and "I Can't Get No Satisfaction." I was naturally drawn to the Blues as a result of my many challenges and feelings of despair. B.B. King, the "King of the Blues" has had over 30 albums, one of which was recorded at the Cook County Jail. One of songs that resonated with me was "Gotta Be A Better World Somewhere." The Bee Gees is another one of my favorite bands. Some of their great hits include: "One", "Massachusetts", and "Staying Alive."
Chapter Eleven

“He who has a ‘why’ to live for can bear almost any how” – Frederich Nietzsche

In recent years the state-mandated advocacy agency called Protection & Advocacy, which later would be renamed “Disability Rights & Advocacy,” would hold an annual remembrance day. This memorial day would be held at the various state hospitals in remembrance of over 40,000 persons who had died at state hospitals from the 1880s until the 1930s without a proper burial. Over 9,000 have been buried at this specific institution. The only thing that would indicate a patient’s “identity” would be a wooden stick with a number on it. Persons would be buried in a “potters’ field”, which might more accurately be called a “pauper’s field. Such persons have been described as “lost souls” both in life and death. Other noteworthy descriptions of mentally ill persons have been “lives of semi-automatic activity” or “lives in a fog of futility.” An accurate description given in the medical community is that the “lights are on, yet there is nobody home.”

Reflecting on what had brought me to this institution, I recalled the advice of one spiritual teacher who said one needs to be present without judging either ones self or others. Indeed, this is quite difficult to accomplish as this teacher related that we are conditioned in this society [as well as throughout the world] to be judgmental -- particularly of ourselves. Out of feelings of insecurity come blame and judgment of others. Truly, for effective healing to occur, one needs to suspend ones judgments, notably self-judgments. Certainly a fundamental issue in life is the ability to trust – to trust ones self, to trust others, and the earth or life itself. Also worth remembering is that we are all seekers of a “way that is beyond this world.” Related to this idea is the saying of “Behold or sense the beloved, your inner essence, your divinity.”

Dorothy Maclean, one of the founders of the Findhorn Community in Scotland in her book To Hear the Angels Sing says: “We can communicate
with other intelligences, e.g. fairies, daemons, and angels, by getting onto the same wavelengths as them.” Kahil Gibran, the great Indian poet, said: “There are vast spaces of life which the spirit travels and which we are unable to measure with time [an invention of man]” Nikola Tesla, who died in 1943, said: “The day science begins to study non-physical phenomena, it will make more progress in one decade than in all prior centuries of man’s existence.” Eckhart Tolle said: The time-bound mode of consciousness is deeply embedded in the human psyche. Yet what we are doing here is part of a profound transformation that is taking place in the collective consciousness of the planet and beyond...the awakening of consciousness from the dream of matter, form, and superstition.” There is a quote of William Blake that I believe is relevant to the issue of “time and space” which is: “To see a world in a grain of sand, And a Heaven in a wild flower, Hold infinity in the palm of your hand, And Eternity in an hour”
Chapter Twelve

"Whereas the 'fear of life' is anxiety at going forward [taking risks], the 'fear of death' is anxiety at going backward, i.e. losing individuality. Between these two fears the individual vacillates all his/her life." --- Otto Rank, Psychoanalyst

Shortly after admission to the open unit, I would be brought before staff for an orientation conference. At this meeting I would be told by the attending psychiatrist that the crime I had committed that resulted in my incarceration was "quite serious" in nature. I don't recall any positive feedback or support from those staff that were in attendance. My coping mechanism was to take a "sacred pause" as advocated by Tara Brach, Buddhist meditation teacher. I guess if I wanted compassion, I had come to the wrong place, although the hospital did employ nurses, who belong to one of the few professions that truly care about their patients and who can profess their compassion.

After the meeting, I recalled the horrific story of a young girl who had suffered abuse and trauma at the hands of her mother, who was cruel and uncaring. This young girl, as the story goes, would sneak out in the middle of the night into the kitchen where she would eat some bits of bread and cheese. Upon returning to her bed, she would pretend that her hands belonged to somebody else – those of a comforting, reassuring being, perhaps an angel. Such being would stroke her head, comfort her, and tell her to go to sleep and that everything would be all right. In a nation that [as of 2005] had over one million unwanted children brought into the world, e.g. born to unwed mothers, too many children are raised in severely dysfunctional families. Children are physically, emotionally, and sexually abused --- robbing them of normal and meaningful lives.16 Such horror is graphically

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16 A recent study of 150 persons convicted for murder found that 94% had experienced severe physical and sexual abuse as children. Coincidentally, the average cost of murder in the U.S. (2010) is $17 million, which includes investigations, court hearings, and incarceration.
portrayed in books such as *A Boy Called It*. Unfortunate as the abuse is in of itself, further damage is inflicted by the scarcity of resources, time, and concern in terms of addressing the problem of child abuse. For instance, at this institution, the prevailing treatment has been, and continues to be, drugs with the intent of subduing/managing the symptoms with very little individual or group therapy. Certainly there is a scarcity of real and meaningful therapy that addresses the causes of mental health distress, including trauma inflicted upon persons in their formative years. Consequently, a vast number of adults have been carrying unhealed wounds since childhood. The following are the words of one person who had a traumatic childhood: "I remember distinctly the faces of those persons who made my life a living hell---I can't help recall all the decisions I avoided, all the risks I dared not take, and all the relationships I didn't pursue because I didn't want to be hurt again."
Chapter Thirteen

“Full Comprehension of Man’s Condition Would Drive Him Insane” – Ernest Becker

I recall distinctly what the former director of the division of schizophrenia at the N.I.M.H. (National Institute for Mental Health) would state in his letter of resignation from the A.P.A. (American Psychiatric Assn.). Mr. Loren Mosher would state that the discipline of psychiatry had become tainted by the drug industry and the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, the families organization. He would profess that the three had become collaborators in a formidable effort to undermine the mental health of persons diagnosed with serious mental illness. Coincidentally, Mr. Mosher directed the experimental program in CA. in the 1970s called Soteria House, which employed the use of lay persons (as supports) and no medication for the treatment of persons with “schizophrenia.” This program clearly demonstrated through strict scientific protocol that their outcomes were better than the control group, e.g. persons diagnosed with schizophrenia who were on medications. Soteria House would shortly thereafter lose its funding, largely through lobbying by the drug companies, who clearly had a vested interest in keeping persons with schizophrenia on their drugs, for a lifetime in most instances. An extremely poignant statement was recently made by Herbert Spiegel, psychiatrist, who stated: “If I were a young man today, I wouldn’t go into psychiatry. It’s contaminated by the drug industry and the insurance companies. We are over-medicating people and not giving them enough psychological instructions to help change behavior and solve problems.”

A sobering fact is that even into the 21st century, psychiatrists are still being taught as part of the training that “once a schizophrenic, always a schizophrenic.” This disturbing fact has historical origination with Kraeplin, psychiatrist in late 19th century Europe who conducted studies of incarcerated
persons diagnosed with Dementia Praecox, the earlier term for schizophrenia. Such studies were fraught with error in that scientific protocol was not used, yet instead focused solely on persons with schizophrenia on the wards of mental institutions or asylums, as they were then called. More recent studies conducted in the U.S. and elsewhere have shown that persons diagnosed with schizophrenia do in fact recover and in significant numbers. Courtney Harding of the U.S. has conducted one of longest and largest longitudinal studies involving persons diagnosed with schizophrenia. [1970] She studied the lives of 1,000 persons diagnosed with schizophrenia over a ten year period in the Vermont State Hospital as well as 1,000 persons diagnosed with schizophrenia in the community. Her findings showed that close to two-thirds (2/3) of those living in the community who had adequate supports successfully "recovered" from their mental illness. A surprising finding of the study was the fact that the persons who recovered did so despite not being given psychotropic medications."
Chapter Fourteen

Whether we live in a gold or tin prison, one is still imprisoned—Rev. Yoo

There was little doubt that the institution I was incarcerated in was in dire straights for a long time. Around 2001, when the World Trade Center disaster occurred and thousands lost their lives, this institution would be found to be out of compliance with numerous basic conditions as required by J.A.C.H.O., the federal agency responsible for the accreditation of state hospitals. To address this situation, this institution would turn to the assistance of several so-called "experts", namely a couple of "medical-model" psychologists. These professed experts would be under the purview of the Dept. of Justice and would formulate a corrective course of action. [2005] Noteworthy among the "achievements" of these psychologists would be the creation of a "therapeutic mall" whereby patients would attend scheduled groups that were facilitated by designated staff members. [A more suitable description, and one which was actually used, would be "day treatment," which coincidentally is a structured program in the community that persons residing in Board & Care homes attend during the day.] Structured groups included various basic activities such as exercise, arts & crafts, and music. I would admit that a few of these groups were actually beneficial, namely one that incorporated yoga & aerobics as well as a relaxation group that used tranquil music. Regretfully, persons were taken to and from the mall like cattle. This led me to a recollection of an opinion given by Stephen Hinshaw, PhD, Professor of Psychology at U.C. Berkeley. In his course Origins of the Human Mind, he relates that the mentally ill have been treated like "wild animals" throughout the course of American history.

Hinshaw’s personal narrative was given as part of the course and was particularly enlightening. He told of his father being diagnosed with schizophrenia in 1936, following the experiencing of delusions, which

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17 Incorrect Diagnosing of Patients was just one of the infractions.
18 One should perhaps keep in mind that at this point in time it was John Ashcroft who was Attorney General and a great deal of his efforts were directed to enforcement of the Patriot Act.
included the belief that he could fly and that such act would convince world leaders to stop Hitler. Despite no treatment and no medications, his father recovered within six months. Later, however, his father would have a manic episode that would result in his being incarcerated in Philadelphia State Hospital, which was known in the 1940s as the “worst mental hospital in the U.S.” despite being located in the “City of Brotherly Love.” While incarcerated in this despicable place [location for filming of the Snake Pit with Olivia De Haviland] he would suffer delusions such that he believed he was incarcerated in a Nazi Concentration Camp. There did, however, exist a germ of truth to this belief, in that the Nazis persecuted Jews, Gypsies, gays, as well as the mentally ill. In 1954, his father was treated with Thorazine and ECT, the later being effective for some forms of serious mental illness, namely life-threatening depression. ECT originated in Italy in 1936 with Dr. Ugo Cerletti, who had seen hogs killed after stunned (socked) with electric current. Massive use of ECT took place at many U.S. mental hospitals in the 1940s and 1950s,. For instance at Greystone Park Psychiatric hospital in N.J., approx 100 patients received shock treatment in a huge room. They were all strapped down and all were twitching and jerking. One famous person subjected to ECT was the American author Ernest Hemingway, who described the “treatment” as one that saved his body yet killed his soul. Hemingway would in fact commit suicide, yet the matter as to whether ECT was a contributing factor is not known. Some persons believe it’s not an exaggeration to describe ECT as comparable to the 'Electric Chair' ---the difference being that one produces a prolonged death versus the other a quick one.

According to professor Hinshaw 25% of the world’s population is affected with moderate to serious forms of mental illness in any one year. Add in the milder forms, e.g. phobias, and the figure becomes one third of the population being mentally ill.
Chapter Fifteen

"Life is a vicious cycle because we (humans) are always grasping at things ---attachment & desire---T.B.D.

Nasubandhu said: "Living beings, each and every one of us, are lured by the five senses all the time---and overwhelmed thereby both day and night” “All of humanity shares your dilemma---you suffer if you don’t get what you want---and even if you do get exactly what you want, you still suffer because you can’t hold on to it forever.”

For a intriguing story of one of America’s “Premier” mental institutions, I would refer persons to Gracefully Insane, by Alex Beam. He relates the following about the upscale, private mental institution named McLean, located just outside of Boston, Mass.: 1) it’s a teaching hospital of Harvard University; 2) Robert Lowell, famous American poet, immortalized McLean’s Bowditch Hall [locked unit] in his famous poem “Walking in the Blue”; 3) John Nash was involuntarily committed at McLean while attending M.I.T. in 1959. [Nash, who would win a Nobel Prize, would be portrayed in the film A Beautiful Mind. ] ; 4) McLean would be the “home” for Susanna Kayson, who wrote the best-selling memoir of her stay in Girl Interrupted; 5) Ray Charles, the American musical genius, would spend time in McLean versus a short stay in jail, this for possession of narcotics. It would be reported that Ray wrote his best-selling song, “Born to Lose” at McLean. Ray also expressed in one of his songs: “I don't need a doctor...I don't need any pills.” ; 6) Joan Baez would perform at McLean; 7) the infamous doctor, Walter Freeman, visited McLean in his Cortez camper-van (loboto-mobile) proselytizing his “while you wait” ice pick lobotomies that were performed on patients that had been “sedated” by E.C.T. and 8) the cost of a stay at McLean in the year 2000 was approximately $300,000/year [as compared to the facility I was incarcerated in at about $150,000.] Interesting is the fact that McLean was created with the idea in mind of that originated in Europe at
the end of the 18th century, e.g. that a life in a pastoral setting [coincidentally the same as with the facility I was incarcerated in] would alleviate the suffering of the mentally ill. Indeed, there are quite a few similarities between McLean and the facility I was incarcerated in, one of these being that both had “working farms” that provided residents [and staff] with milk, eggs, meat, and produce. In fact, McLean's Superintendent in 1913 related that emphasis was on outdoor exercise, high quality food, and treatments such as “hydrotherapy.”

Regretfully---with the major harmful effects being on the recipients---was the introduction of Thorazine, the first major anti-psychotic drug, in the 1950s. This immobilizing “drug straight jacket” would prompt James Taylor, famous American singer, to write his famous song “Knockin' Round the Zoo” with lyrics “Now they lock you up in a chemical jail.” This was his reference to McLean, where Katie Taylor, James' sister, would spend some time at. James, himself, spent 9 mos. incarcerated at McLean. James wrote his 1st song at McLean in 1965. Paul Roberts conducted music therapy classes at McLean. Roberts described life as follows: “Their method of containing somebody was to throw them into a locked room.”

Supposedly the advent of Thorazine and other anti-psychotics was meant to be an improvement over the previous prevailing practice throughout Europe in the late 1700s and 1800s of shackling patients down and whipping them in the hope of “waking” them from madness [or from the demons that possessed them.] The belief developed that madness was caused by evil spirits and could be driven out by immersion in cold water and exorcism. The Church of Rome (now Catholic Church) still maintains priests who specialize in “demonology” and exorcism. After the introduction of the anti-psychotic Thorazine in the 1950s, inmates would be described as doing the “Thorazine Shuffle.”

In 1941, two McLean psychiatrists, John Talbott and Ken Tillotson, reported “encouraging results” from a therapy called “hypothermia: which reduced the patients' body temperature to a near death state. 40% of their patients who had their body temp. reduced by 20 degrees for up to 3 days showed marked improvement, yet one patient who they kept cold and semi-

19 Ironically, one Monsignor of “Demonology” believes that extraterrestrials must be composed of bodies and spirits and that they obviously are more advanced than us (humans)
conscious for 50 hours died, despite efforts to revive him. The procedure involved sedating patients with barbituates and muscle relaxants and then wrapping the patients in special blankets made by Therm-o-Rite Products of Buffalo, N.Y. through which a refrigerant circulated. One woman recipient, a 25 year old medical student had received insulin shock, metrazol, and typhoid vaccine therapies before coming to McLean. One common hydrotherapy involved wrapping patients in cold wet sheets (48-56 degrees F.) in an effort to "pacify" agitated patients. [used as late as the 1970s]
Chapter Sixteen

Styx: “Is it any wonder that I am not crazy... is it any wonder that I am sane at all.”

The institution I was incarcerated in has promoted itself in its mission statement as a facility that promotes "recovery" and serves its clients in a respectful and dignified manner. This institution would further promote itself as an institution that had "state of the art" equipment. In regard to the promotion of recovery, there could easily be a strong case made that the institution fell short of this goal in numerous ways, namely the lack of clear communication among the various levels of the bureaucracy; in addition to the pervasive lack of there being a strong promotion of a consumer-centered treatment modality. Also, there would be the strong and pervasive lack of hope experienced by the vast majority of clients. What was supposed to be a strong consumer voice was the C.A.C. (Consumer Advisory Council), that was comprised of patients from each of the hospital units. This group of clients would address concerns voiced by the patients at the institution. Undermining the efforts of the group, however, was an administrative liaison, who would edit the minutes of the C.A.C. Meetings so they would be amenable to the Executive Director. In an ironic turn of events, the Executive Director of this institution was arrested in late 2010, having served three years and having garnered over 1/3 of a million dollars. Charged with multiple felony counts, the Executive Director subsequently faced a sentence of over 100 years, yet would quietly fade from memory as had thousands of “lost souls” at this institution.
Chapter Seventeen

“The mental health field perpetuates so strongly a “us vs. them” mindset, by consistently placing a rift between practitioners and patients ---a rift it intends to keep deep.” - Lauren Slater, Consumer-Provider

I have been particularly moved by Lauren’s story, which is both poignant and revealing. Lauren has stated: “Wounds, I believe, are never confined to a single body, yet reach out to us all.” To all her patients, “when I weep for you, I weep for myself as well.” Lauren recalls being diagnosed with borderline personality. Her chart read: “patient clearly has had a long career as a mental patient and we will encounter her as an admission again in the future.” The message to mental health practitioners is “admit your pain, yet only to a certain degree. Go into therapy yet don't call yourself one of us if you are more than a neurotic.” At age 14, Lauren’s mother in a rage and perhaps delusional, told her in presence of social worker “I can't handle you anymore. I no longer want you in my house”...she was given over to foster care. Lauren said: “What set me apart from the “sick” ones is simply a learned ability to manage the blades of deep pain with a bit of dexterity...I believe that nearly every person has the same warped impulses, the same scarlet id, as the wobbleiest of borderlines, the most florid of psychotics.” Lauren recalls how she had been in one room hundreds of times with psychiatrists who tried to treat her. Ultimately, it was not their treatments or theories that helped her, yet instead the kindness by others in a difficult world. [my emphasis]

In October of 2010, an event occurred that radically changed the environment at the institution I was housed in--- for the worst., i.e. the death of a psychiatric technician at the hands of a client. This death was unfortunate in a number of ways, including the fact that it happened on the grounds versus on a unit. This resulted in a hospital-wide lock-down, whereby all patients had their grounds access suspended. The administration subsequently enacted numerous measures with the intention of ensuring safety of both staff and clients, including the creation of numbered guard
houses, grounds patrols, and increased police presence. When the Anniversary of this staff person's death took place [October 21, 2011], staff would invite a local television station to cover the event. At this staff-only event, staff would be quoted as saying that they were still concerned with their safety and that the patients being treated were "maximum security." These provocative opinions would do little to promote an environment of trust and cooperation, yet would instead fuel the myth that the mentally ill are "dangerous."

I personally was effected in a negative manner as a result of the lockdown, namely loss of the following: my part-time job, being able to go out on the grounds throughout the day, and having a sense of peace and tranquility. Despite the impositions, I clung to the advice of the wisdom teacher, Ram Dass, i.e. "to keep one's heart open through Hell."

I would deal or cope with these impositions through a number of proactive measures, including focusing on heightened spiritual development – largely through accessing resources from a wisdom tradition company based in Boulder, CO. I would also access materials from the Prison Ashram Project/Human Kindness Foundation. Included in my holistic approach would be reading spiritual material and practicing yoga on a regular basis. I found the latter to be quite helpful, particularly with the strong adherence to the basic philosophy of yoga, i.e. being the achievement of union between the person with the universe. A similar goal is the awakening to the divinity within ones self. This, in my opinion, is not the same as what Neal Donald Walsh has related in his Conversations with God books. I would also employ meditation on a daily basis, whereby I would achieve increased clarity of mind in addition to a heightened state of awareness.

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20 The institution is “minimum security.”
21 It would be through this company that I would find my long-term Yoga teacher [via DVD] e.g., Maya Fiennes.
Chapter Eighteen

Find peace of mind in the midst of strong emotions; find profound insight in the midst of extreme confusion; find the seeds of compassion in our darkest moments—even when we feel completely lost and alone—Anonymous

Under the influence of the psychotropic drugs that I was on, one day blurred into another. It was if I was in a fog, which hardly ever lifted. I recall feeling like Humpty Dumpty, which as the childhood story goes as follows: “You have fallen off the wall and you know all the king’s horses and all the king’s men are never going to be able to put you together again.” I was super-vigilant and sensitive to the slightest stimulus. I asked myself: “Had I been exiled into the depths of Hell?” I distinctly recalled the lyrics of a Bee Gees song: “How Can You Mend This Broken Man? I experienced feelings of immense sadness, helplessness, hopelessness, fear, irritability, anger, guilt, and isolation.

One coping strategy I used was to say to myself: “One Day to Live” and “I need nothing” in order to make it through that day. Trying to make sense of things was like trying to put together a picture puzzle which has pieces of many different ones interspersed. In a true sense I was trying to put the pieces of my life back together. What I was experiencing might best described as “medication madness,” which Peter Breggin describes as a drug-induced psychosis. There is little doubt—at least in many persons’ minds—that neuroleptics can cause far greater harm than they do good. It might be worth noting that Jill Bolte-Taylor, author of Stroke of Insight, said she believes that medications masked her ability to know herself.[my emphasis]

Alarms on the unit were frequent, although most were “false”. Hospital-wide, however, incidents of violent outbursts or actual physical assaults were not uncommon. If the alarm was “real” and the police showed up, the delay—which might be up to 15 minutes or more—could mean that significant injuries had occurred. Many clients suffered broken bones, black eyes, and in some instances death. I recall one client from my unit who was “taken down” by officers and suffered a heart attack and died. No negligence
was found, yet certainly the assault on the client could have been the primary cause of death.

Many patients/clients would watch their watches as if such measure would bring about some nebulous positive outcome that would shorten their incarceration time. Yet I would be reminded again of Einstein and his belief that there is no real linear time. “Time” is a human construct, just as war, discrimination, and hatred all are. Many clients “zoned out” even more than they already were by watching T.V., which has been described as the biggest hypnotist in our nation.

I would remind myself often that all human beings aspire to be happy and be loved by others. At the same time, I reminded myself that we all have been wounded and betrayed. I would also recall what Tara Brach, Buddhist teacher, would say, e.g. that the sacred begins with suffering. I have taken solace in Tara’s “words of wisdom” with the following meditation: “Break your heart no longer; each time you judge yourself you pull away from the love that is the wellspring of your vitality. Now the time has come--your time to live and celebrate and trust the essential goodness that you are. There is no evil, no wrong in you. Your true reference is pure awareness, aliveness, and love. Let no one or idea obscure this truth. Breathe into the goodness that you are.”
Chapter Nineteen

"Every time a doctor sees a patient, the patient should feel better as a result."
---Soviet Siberian doctor

In January 2011, I developed a distressing scalp condition. I would as a result of the experience conclude that although I had the right to medical treatment, that did not mean prompt or effective treatment. It would not be until March that I would receive a referral to an outside Dermatologist in a nearby city. I was seen by the Dermatologist in June. However, the condition continued despite the prescribed treatments. It would not be until late October that I would receive a follow-up appointment with the Dermatologist. I was put on an antibiotic for a second time. Despite this and other treatments, the condition continued into 2012. Paradoxically the institution receives close to $150,000 per year for each patient, e.g. to cover costs of food, housing, and medical care. One would think that the medical care provided would be great, if not first-class. However, this unabated condition would be just one of many instances of poor, if not deplorable medical care. Some patients expressed the opinion that the doctors employed by the institution were some of the least qualified medical practitioners that were obtainable. I would have to concur with this opinion. One instance that corroborated this claim was when I had a skin blemish on the Admissions Unit. The doctor would state his professional medical opinion that the blemish was an "age spot", which could not be treated. The blemish, however, would be gone within a few days, thereby proving this doctor to be woefully inadequate in diagnosing a simple ailment. I would remind myself to "Keep ones heart open through hell."

This incident caused me to recall a somewhat tragic case study of Dr. Lown's. The woman, who was in her early 20s, had experienced bothersome heart palpitations. The doctor she consulted told her that her symptoms could be "harbingers of instant death." She subsequently ended up seeing him on weekly basis, with EKGs on regular basis. Dr. Lown diagnosed her with M.V.P. (mitral valve prolapse), which is a completely benign and trivial condition, in fact one which 25 million Americans have. Fewer than 1 in 5,000 will encounter any problem. Despite this fact, M.V.P. is widely
regarded by doctors as potentially life threatening.” As Dr. Lown accurately points out: “Doctors receive no instruction in medical school or thereafter on how to cope with error. The reflex tendency is to fudge, cover one’s tracks, to shift responsibility, or to withdraw versus coming forward to admit a mistake.”

Around 2009, I was having problems breathing, including waking up during the night. I was given a “sleep study” whereby I was hooked up to a “c-pack” machine that monitored my oxygen intake during the night. I was subsequently considered to be suffering from Sleep Apnea and was almost put on “C-pack” machine indefinitely, yet after referral to another doctor at the clinic, it was decided [based on his opinion], that I did not need the “C-pack” machine after all. The quality of the air coming through the vents in the rooms is undoubtedly poor in quality, simply from the fact that the bldg. is over 50 years old. Also numerous clients have complained of coughing and difficulties breathing. I subsequently asked for permission to have an air purifier. The Nursing Coordinator for the program expressed that she did not believe there was any reason for my not getting approval of an air purifier. Members of my treatment team also expressed verbally that they were in favor of my getting an air purifier. However, my request was denied for sole reason that the air purifier is not on the hospital's allowable list. I appealed the decision, yet still did not obtain permission. I also talked to the unit's medical doctor, yet he would not agree to write an order for the air purifier. He basically argued that the decision resided with the treatment team. Returning to advice from Dr. Lown: “Regardless of the explanation, there is absolutely no justification for assaulting patient with language that frightens and dis-empowers.” “If there is to be a meaningful partnership in medicine, the senior partner has to be the patient—who must not be deflected from having the decisive word.”
Chapter Twenty

"God and Country are an unbeatable team, they break all records for oppression and bloodshed" – Luis Bunuel, Spanish film director

In this line of thinking, I believe it's worthy to mention a few examples of 'man's inhumanity to man.

1) In Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* one finds the following:

   After landing in the Caribbean, Columbus would write: “Thus the Eternal God, our Lord, gives victory to those who follow his Way over apparent impossibilities.” In 1495 they went on a great slave raid and rounded up fifteen hundred Indians (men, women, and children) and loaded them up onto ships to be sent to Spain. In two years, through murder and mutilation, half of the 250,000 Indians on Haiti were dead. Columbus wrote: “Let us in the name of the Holy Trinity go on sending all the slaves that can be sold.” Spain sought gold, which was the new mark of wealth.

2) In *Slavery By Another Name* one finds the following:

   After the Civil War, “Pig” laws enacted whereby in Mississippi the theft of a pig could result in hard labor for Black-Americans. Vagrancy laws were enacted whereby Black-Americans were arrested if they could not prove they were employed. Prisoners were placed with industry with Black-Americans rented by the month; “convict leasing” became prevalent in the South. In 1890, in Alabama, there was $164,000 brought in for the state through rental fees. In 1884, Ezekiel Ashley wrote harrowing story of “we have looked death in the face” referring to hundreds of Black-Americans who were forced to work in mines in Birmingham, AL. Black-Americans were exploited for the usage of underground coal. John Milner called “Father of Southern Industrialization” subjected prisoners to work in unsafe and primitive conditions in mines. Prisoners left their cells at 3 A.M. and returned at 8 P.M. Prisoners were forced to process 4 to 5 tons of coal daily J.T. Comer would hit prisoners hundreds of times.
In the 80 years following Civil War, 800,000 Black-Americans were subjected to involuntary servitude. Black-Americans were “nameless and faceless.” It wasn’t until 1921 that a white person would be arrested and convicted for first-degree murder of Black-American. It would not be until 1966 that the second white person was convicted for first-degree murder. At the turn of the 20\textsuperscript{th} Century, there would be the Ford Motor Co., Wall Street, and abject slavery. The criminal justice system was fraught with corruption whereby thousands of Black-Americans were arrested for minor crimes ...30\% of total prison population was Black-Americans...perception portrayed by the media was that Black-Americans were “criminal race.” Black-Americans were demonized. Segregation laws were mandated by states in South and upheld by Supreme Court in 1896 in ‘Plessy vs. Ferguson.’ Many whites were indifferent as to whether Black-Americans lived or died. Forty years after the Civil War, the U.S. had emerged as leading industrial nation in the world as result of black labor. At turn of 20\textsuperscript{th} Century, President Theodore Roosevelt initiated investigation of “peon” laws being broken. Two white men plead guilty yet were pardoned by Roosevelt. Black-Americans had been falsely accused, arrested, incarcerated, and then bought and resold. Contracts allowed whippings and being subjected to horrendous conditions. Black-Americans were subjected to chain gangs and 50-70\% interest rates in share-cropping.

Let me share some of my reflections on issues in life.

1) “U.S. Prisons (and jails)”-- Prisons reinforce the low self-esteem and sense of failure that lead many prisoners to offend. One argument for punishment is that harming offenders is in itself a good thing with one version of this argument viewing punishment as 'God's retribution.” For the vast majority of humans, ideas about “justice” are inextricably bound up with religious views and customs. Criminals often become scapegoats with their offenses easily exploited by ambitious politicians trying to get elected or re-elected. There is little doubt that incarceration makes most offenders worse. The predatory societies that prisons create make most of them more like hell than places to reform. Prisons dehumanize and offer no way for prisoners to deal with their feelings of guilt and their need for forgiveness. One sobering statistic is that
twenty-five percent of the prisoners in U.S. have parents who are either alcoholics or drug addicts. Viewed from a more optimistic position, it has been said that real change is being able to stand up in the face of immense adversity and maintain one's dignity.

2) Freud: Psycho-analyst from Vienna, Austria in late 19th Century --- had profound affect on field of psychology....gave into professional peer pressure with the denial of the harmful effects of childhood sexual abuse suffered by significant number of adults, largely women. Freud was addicted to cocaine.

3) George W. Bush --- former Governor of Texas ---able to win Presidency in 2000 despite not having received the majority of popular vote in the U.S. presidential election. It was his brother Jeb, who was Governor of Florida at the time of his victory. As Commander-In-Chief, he would lead the U.S. into war with Iraq under false pretenses, i.e. claiming that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. Bush’s ‘black and white thinking’ was epitomized with his “holy war on evil” Bush was indirectly responsible for thousands of American soldiers' deaths and tens of thousands of injuries, including life-time disabilities. There is incontrovertible evidence that Bush took this nation to war in Iraq under false pretenses ....a war that has caused thousands of American soldier deaths as well as over 500,000 innocent Iraqi men. women, and children.--George W. Bush: Prosecution for Murder  Vincent Bugliosi – Vanguard Press [Note: George W. Bush said that God told him to invade Iraq. It’s too bad that God didn’t reveal there were no Weapons of Mass Destruction.] Bush would promise strong environmental protection, yet would succumb to pressure from companies that were responsible for major pollution in the U.S. Would take the U.S. from a treasury surplus into a huge multi-trillion dollar deficit by giving large tax cuts to the most wealthy citizens of the U.S.

4) “Health” ---Larry Dossey, M.D. writes: “Our picture of human illness and health will be considerably enriched and more accurate if we can relax our insistence on strict beginnings of illnesses for they do not exist. They can be defended only out of a kind of clinical or therapeutic convenience. In effect, we detract from our role as participants in the universe when we instill the “strep” bacteria as the sole progenitor of disease. This is a bad habit not only in this illness, yet in all illnesses. It denies the richness of the world...and it instills simplicities where a greater complexity always reigns.”
5) “Untouchables”: In India, as of 2011, there were eleven million abandoned children, with three million living on the streets. One million “untouchables” living in slums of Bombay alone. In Calcutta, hundreds of thousands of persons with leprosy are segregated in leprosy colonies. In Argentina first-hand report that there are four million homeless children traveling around in groups with ex-police squads going around killing them like wild dogs.

6) “Awareness” --- Fritz Perls, Gestalt therapist, said: “I believe that this is the great thing to understand---that awareness per se---by and of itself---can be curative. Because with full awareness you can become aware of the organismic self-regulation, you can let the organism take over without interfering, without interrupting; we can rely only on the wisdom of the organism.”

7) “Death Row” -- Place such as San Quentin, where condemned inmates are given one hour a week in exercise yard, at which time the guards shout “Dead Man Walking.” This phrase, paradoxically, could apply to inmates of many mental hospitals in that inmates are often so debilitated from the drugs taken that they are like walking zombies.

8) “Auschwitz” -- Before Hitler sent millions to the gas chambers, Freud insisted that human life is one long struggle against what he called the “death instinct” and that we must learn to keep these destructive stirrings within bounds lest they send us to our ultimate destruction. See Auschwitz by Dr. Miklos Nyiszli for story of how tens of thousands of Poles, Hungarians, Austrians, Russians, Greeks, Czechs, and others were imprisoned for minor slips and infractions of the law and had such turned into incredible, trumped-up charges such as being a partisan spy. They would be court-martialed and sentenced to death---either by firing squads or sent to the gas chambers.
Chapter Twenty-One

"Take loving action and do no harm" - Embellishment of the Hippocratic Oath

The past 25 years have seen the U.S. give up long-term residential mental health care; at least nobody's paying for it. "Psycho-pharmacology" is the "order of the day." To health care executives or managers that means quick diagnoses, speedy drug prescriptions, and hoping for the best. 15 min follow-up visits address the drugs' side effects and possible drug changes. Dr. Bruce Cohen, recent President of McLean, said: "How can you know how somebody is doing if you don't have enough time to ask 'How are you feeling.'" Cohen has devoted his life to drug research, yet even he is currently uneasy with the state of mental health in the U.S. He contends that it's not enough to ask: "Do you have a dry mouth" or "Have you had any hallucinations lately?" Cohen believes that simply doesn't work well at all.

Many mental health hospitals have closed their doors or have sold portions of their land to developers in order to stay open. Chestnut Lodge, Dr. Stanton's old stomping grounds, has gone out of business.

Shervert Frazier, Psychiatrist-In-Chief at McLean and former director of the N.I.M.H., lost his job in a plagiarism scandal as reported on the front pages of the New York Times and the Boston Globe. The publication of Stephen Bergman's Mount Misery also tarnished McLean's reputation through his depiction of many of his former colleagues at McLean as "lunatic, sex-crazed, pill pushers."

Of somewhat dubious merit was McLean's doctors making important contributions to Eli Lilly's "miracle drug" Prozac. Throughout the 1990s U.S. News & World Report paradoxically rated McLean in the top 10 private mental hospitals in the U.S. Currently, psychiatrists and insurance companies adhere closely to the syndromes and conditions of the D.S.M. V, which has over 300 diagnoses. All of these diagnoses are the product of an A.P.A Committee, versus an inter-disciplinary effort that is done in other developed countries. Using the DSM and insurance guidelines, psychiatrists must stabilize, diagnose, and treat—usually with drugs.

In Hippocrate's Shadow, the author said: "Doctors are trapped by their education, by undue pressures of the health care system, and trapped by their
desire to heal in a culture of the “magic pill.”

For a compelling account of the “drug industry” in America, I would refer persons to Unhinged by Daniel Carlat, M.D. In his book, Dr. Carlat relates that the practice of hiring physicians to give sales talks has become an integral part of the marketing strategy of all drug companies. According to a survey by Eric Campbell and colleagues from 2003-2004 at least 25% of all doctors in the U.S. received drug money for lecturing to physicians via Speakers' Bureaus or to help market drugs in other ways. That's approximately 200,000 or twice the number of drug representatives [Source: “A National Survey of Physician-Industry Relationships” – New England Journal of Medicine (2007)]
Chapter Twenty-Two

"How wonderful that we have met with paradox. Now we have some hope of progress." --Neils Bohr

By the 1990s, insurance plans would generally only pay for a 13-day stay at a mental hospital. A 1993 medical record of one patient showed on admission that she was put on Depakote 500 mg. 2xs/day; Trilafon, 8 mg. @ bedtime; Zoloft 300 mg. (A.M.); Ativan, 1 mg. prn for anxiety; Motrin, 600 mg. 3xs/day for muscle pain; and Synthroid 0.2 mg. as a mood stabilizer.

By the 1990s, McLean started signing multi-million dollar contracts with Medi-Care and Medicaid. Doctors complained that McLean had become a “welfare hospital.” By the mid 1990s, McLean was losing $8 million/year on an annual budget of $80 million. McLean resorted to an auction of its furniture, oriental rugs, silver tea sets, etc. which raised $160,000. The mid 1990s saw all non-medical services, e.g. food prep., laundry, and lawn care being out-sourced to independent contractors. One third of all staff were laid off. One clinician told of a meeting where the hospital director showed a slide presentation “Your options in Dealing with Managed Care” with bulleted recommendation of “Move to Wyoming.” In 1997, Harvard University consolidated all of its teaching hospitals into one huge company, Partners Health Care System. Partners tried to close McLean, yet the trustees fought back. The Hospital Re-Use Master Plan saved the hospital's closure by selling 200 of the 250 acres for luxury homes, an office park, and housing for the elderly.

Bruce Cohen, M.D., is a modern mental health executive, psychiatrist, and has 300 publications to his credit. His specialty is biochemical research. In 2000, he and associates raised $5 million from donors. Politicians and H.M.O. executives make the financial decisions that affect McLean's future. Cohen said: “We're weaker and stigmatized compared to conventional medicine. People don't stand up and say I have Bi-polar disorder and I want you to pay for it.” One contributor to McLean's economic well-being is its new ward, the Pavilion. At $1,800/day it caters to the Donald Trumps of the world. Six suites—all inclusive—include room service and limo rides to and from Boston and Cambridge. Susanna Kaysen of Girl, Interrupted has
returned to McLean and said: "I'm always happy to be back at McLean ...because it feels so good to leave." Kate Taylor returned recently to deliver the commencement address for the Arlington School. Kate said: "You are the destination of your beautiful road."
Chapter Twenty-Three

“He who has a ‘why’ to live for can bear almost any how” – Nietzsche

Robert Whitaker, author of Mad In America, has also written Anatomy of an Epidemic. Coincidentally, Whitaker recently attended a D.B.S.A. (Depression & BiPolar Support Alliance) meeting at McLean in 2008. D.B.S.A. was formerly D.M.D.A. (Depressive & Manic-Depressive Assn.). Whitaker has observed that persons diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder are often prescribed an atypical anti-psychotic such as Zyprexa, which usually causes persons to gain weight. Whitaker observed that after the introductory talk of the D.B.S.A., the larger group broke up into smaller groups. In such, persons said a few words about the themselves or their situations. One man was an executive who had lost his job due to recurring depression. One woman, a nurse recently hospitalized at McLean for depression, told of caring for her sick father, a stressful job, and years living with an “abusive husband.” She related that she had responded adversely to numerous antidepressants given her; she had an allergic reaction to five different drugs. Whitaker has accurately pointed out that in medicine, personal stories of patients diagnosed with a disease are “case studies” and are “anecdotal accounts” that cannot prove whether a treatment works; only scientific studies qualify for such.

The following is a “case study” given by Whitaker of a person diagnosed with mental illness:
1) Cathy L. -- believes that Risperidal has “saved her.” She recalls being molested when young by several boys. At 18, while in college, she became manic and paranoid, which resulted in her being hospitalized and put on Haldol and Lithium. She was told by psychiatrists that she had a “chemical imbalance in the brain” In 1994, she was hospitalized for the 15th time. On Risperidal, she went back to school and earned a degree in radio, film, and TV. In 2005, she took a part-time job as editor for Voices for Change, a newsletter published by M-Power, a consumer group in MA. She remains on SSDI, claiming that although Risperidal has helped her quite a bit, it has prevented her from working full-time. She is 60 lbs. overweight at height of
only 5'2". She also has high cholesterol, one of many metabolic problems associated with atypical anti-depressants. In 2006, her tongue began rolling in her mouth, a sign of tardive dyskensia, an irreversible condition. When this sign appears, it means the basal ganglia is becoming dysfunctional through years of drug treatment. She lamented when interviewed by Whitaker, that a life on anti-psychotics means "you lose your soul and never get it back." [my emphasis] In 1978, she had been told by psychiatrists that she would have to take drugs for her entire life. See Appendix for further case studies.
Chapter Twenty-Four

“Mental illness is no respecter of persons; we are all vulnerable; mental illness does not discriminate according to class, gender, or ethnicity” --Anonymous

William Salt, M.D. and Neil Neimark, M.D. say: “The truth is, we are all mentally ill, in the sense that the stresses of life can throw even the strongest and clearest mental attitude out of alignment.” 31

Let me relate the compelling and true story of Richard Price, Co-founder of Esalen, Personal Growth Center in Big Sur area of California. Following a manic episode in December 1956, Price was taken to Letterman Hospital in San Francisco. Here he experienced a “ecstatic energy, past-life regression, energy fields, and spontaneous healing.” Price described the experience as “transitional psychosis.” Price was subsequently referred to the psychiatrist who had treated Allen Ginsberg. Price’s father gave him an ultimatum: to go willingly to the Institute of Living in Hartford, CT. or else be committed. The Institute was a mental hospital for the wealthy and privileged, and Price decided to go there. Price’s institutionalization was basically enforced by a series of deceptions carried out by his parents. Price entered the Institute of Living on 12/7/56. During the next nine months, Price was given 59 insulin shock “treatments”, approximately ten E.C.T. treatments, and large doses of phenothiazines. The torture became so intense that Price came to the conclusion that he would have to escape or perish within the trauma. Price recalled: “the so-called “psychosis” was an attempt toward spontaneous healing---a movement toward health not toward disease. In some categories, it would be called a mystical experience.” Price had paid a very high price for deviating from the acceptable path of behavior that had been established for him by the values of his parents. Price would spend eleven months incarcerated before being released in November of 1957. [ Ref: Esalen by Jeffrey Kripel 2007 ]

31 This brought to mind the contention that the psychotic is drowning in the same thing that a mystic is swimming in.
Dr. N. Ghaemi, Tufts Medical Center, said in 2008 at an A.P.A. convention: “I would like to point out that in the history of medicine, there are many examples of situations where the majority of doctors did something that turned out to be wrong. The best example is bloodletting, which was the most common medical practice from the 1st Century to the 19th Century.” A “startling revelation” at this same conference, was at a seminar titled “Antidepressants in Bipolar Disorder.” During the presentation, Robert Post, one of the nation’s top bipolar experts and a proponent of biological psychiatry, said: “We are building more episodes, more treatment resistance, more cognitive dysfunction, and there is data showing that if you have 4 depressive episodes, unipolar or bipolar, it doubles your lifetime risk of dementia and that isn't the half of it....in the U.S., people with depression, bipolar, or schizophrenia are losing 12-20 years of life expectancy compared to people not in the mental health system.” [my emphasis] [Note: This means that for a male with life expectancy as of 2000 of 75 years, that it’s reduced to 55-63]

In Anatomy of an Epidemic, Robert Whitaker relates that “moral therapy in the late 1800s produced very good results with more than 50% of newly admitted patients being discharged within 1 year and significant percentage of these not returning. For instance, the Worchester Lunatic Asylum in Massachusetts Found 58% of its patients remained “well” for the rest of their lives.” [through a LT outcome study done]

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, asylum psychiatrists embraced a trio of therapies which the popular media reported as “miracle cures.” 1) Insulin Coma Therapy; 2) Metrazol or ECT –inducement of a seizure which would “free patients of psychotic thoughts and create happiness”; and 3) Frontal lobotomy, the surgical destruction of the frontal lobes which according to the N.Y. Times “transformed wild animals into gentle creatures in the course of a few hours” [June 7, 1937 article “Surgery Used on the Soul Sick.”]

In 1946, Congress passed the National Mental Health Act, which sponsored research into the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of mental disorders. The act also provided grants to states and cities to assist in the creation of clinics and treatment centers. In 1949, Congress created the N.I.M.H. (National Institute for Mental Health) to oversee the reform. What actually transpired was drastically different. The “magic bullet” model of medicine would prevail, having originated with Paul Ehrlich in 1909 in
phenothiazines for their “magic bullet” properties. They discovered that promethazine had anti-histamine properties and was suggested for use in surgery. In 1949, a 35 year-old surgeon, Henri Laborit of France, gave it to patients in Tunisia and found it induced “euphoric quietude.” Laborit explained “the drug made it possible to disconnect certain brain functions.” Laborit tested Thorazine as part of a drug cocktail in 1951 and found it put patients into a “twilight state.” It was Laborit who made the observation at a conference in Brussels in 1951 that suggested Thorazine might be of use in psychiatry. “It produced a veritable medicinal lobotomy.” Just one year later two prominent French psychiatrists, Jean Delay and Pierre Deniker, began giving Thorazine to psychotic patients at St. Anne's Hospital in Paris. U.S. psychiatrists dubbed Thorazine as a “major tranquilizer.” Delay and Deniker coined the more precise scientific term “neuroleptic” ---meaning it took hold of the nervous system. Symptoms progressed from reversible somnolence to all types of dyskinesia and hyper-kinesia and even parkinsonism. Psychiatrist E.H. Parsons spoke at a 1955 meeting devoted to Thorazine and said: “We are using a neuro-pharmacologic agent to produce a specific effect and 'not treating diseases'."

Regarding the “natural outcomes” of schizophrenia, one can look at a N.I.M.H. study that showed 62% of first episode psychotic patients admitted to a state hospital (Warren, in PA.) from 1946-1950 were discharged within one year and 73% within three years. Other studies showed similar outcomes. According to conventional “wisdom” it was Thorazine that made it possible for persons diagnosed with schizophrenia to live in the community. It should be noted that during this five year period from 1946-1950 that many patients diagnosed with schizophrenia would be diagnosed with bipolar or schizo-affective today. It’s also worth noting that the arrival of Thorazine did not improve discharge rate in the 1950s for persons newly diagnosed with schizophrenia nor did it trigger the release of chronic patients.

Looking at Benzodiazepenes, one finds that short-term effects include the following: 1) rebound anxiety; 2) insomnia; 3) seizures; 4) headaches; 5) blurred vision; 6) extreme depression; 7) hallucinations; and 8) depersonalization. Withdrawal, one patient related was like “living death...I thought I was going mad.” In terms of long-term effects, in 2007 French researchers surveyed 4,425 long-term Benzodiazepene users and found 75%
(¾) “were markedly ill to extremely ill...and had significant symptomatology, in particular major depressive episodes, generalized anxiety disorder, often with marked severity and disability.” In 1976, David Knorr, physician at the Univ. of Tenn said: “I was convinced that Valium, Librium, and other Benzodiazepenes cause damage to the brain. I have seen damage to the cerebral cortex that I believe is due to the use of these drugs and could be permanent.” In a study funded by Hoffmann-La Roche, manufacturer of Valium, University of Michigan investigators determined that taking Valium was “associated with poor quality of life, poor performance in work and personal life, low social support, perceived lack of internal control, poor perceived health, and high levels of stress” In 2002, Dr. Stevan Gressitt helped create the Maine Benzo Study Group, comprised of physicians and other health care professionals and it concluded: “there is no evidence supporting the long-term use of benzodiazipenes for any mental health condition.”

Turning to the topic of “anti-depressants” I would cite that in 1995, Italian psychiatrist Giovanni Fava said: “Anti-depressant drugs in depression might be beneficial in the short-term, yet worsen [my emphasis] the progression of the disease in the long-term, by increasing the biochemical vulnerability to depression....Use of anti-depressants may propel the illness to a more malignant and treatment unresponsive course.” In 2007 the N.I.M.H. informed the public that depressive disorders affect one in ten Americans every year, that the long-term outlook for those afflicted is poor. A study conducted by the World Health Organization in 1998 found that 484 of 740 persons identified as depressed who were not exposed to psychotropic drugs had the best outcomes. The group that suffered most from “continued depression” were the patients treated with an anti-depressant. University of Iowa psychiatrist William Coryell and N.I.M.H-funded colleagues studied the 6 year “naturalistic” outcomes of 547 persons who suffered an episode of depression and found those who were given drugs were three times more likely to suffer a “cessation” of their “principal social role” and seven times more likely to become “incapacitated” versus non-medicated persons. In the U.S., the percentage of working age Americans who said in health surveys that they were disabled by depression tripled during the 1990s. The N.I.M.H. has reported that major depressive disorder affects 15 million American
adults and 58% of this group (approximately nine million) are “severely impacted.” S.S.R.I.s such as Prozac also cause a lot of troubling side effects including: sexual dysfunction, suppression of REM sleep, muscle tics, fatigue, emotional blunting, and apathy. Investigators have reported long-term use associated with memory impairment, problem-solving difficulties, loss of creativity, and learning deficiencies.
Chapter Twenty-Five

From 1939-1945, hundreds of thousands of adults and children with mental & physical disabilities were murdered in an euthanasia program that was designed to eliminate anyone, who according to Nazi ideology, threatened the purity of the German race. *Hitler's Forgotten Victims*, Suzanne Evans

Regarding eugenics, one of the primary proponents of it was Alexis Carrel (1873-1944) French born who emigrated to the U.S. in 1906 where he began work at the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. Carrel won the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1912 for organ transplantation. Carrel wrote in 1935 *Man, the Unknown*, a book which endorsed an unorthodox brand of scientific holism, mysticism, and eugenics to overcome the decline of Western civilization.

The book's success along with his friendship with Charles Lindberg brought him wide public attention. What was to become the dominating image of Carrel until the 1990s was, to a large extent, the result of a conscious (deliberate) process of historical rewriting by Catholic authors who, after his death, purged him of his fascist eugenics and reinvented him as a "humanist."

Carrel's relationship with the eugenics movement dated back to 1911, when he became the surgical "expert" of an advisory committee on sterilization set up by the American Breeders Association (A.B.A.) to study the "means for eliminating the defective strains from the population." Carrel shared his fellow American eugenicists' obsession with "feeble-mindness" and other mental pathologies as both symptoms of degeneration and seeds of criminal behavior. He echoed Elenor Weinbridge's *Life Among the Lowbrows* (1931) to raise awareness about the alarming increase of the "unfit" whereby he cited statistics such as those "provided" by C.W. Beers that 1 of 25 persons in the state of N.Y. had to be placed in an asylum at some point in their life. He professed the following: "In the U.S., hospitals care for eight times more feeble-minded or lunatics than consumptives."

....Each year 68,000 new cases were admitted to the insane asylums. If the admissions continue at such rate, about one million children and young
persons will sooner of later be confined in asylums...the diseases of the mind are a serious menace...they have to be feared, not only because they increase the number of criminals but chiefly because they **profoundly weaken the dominant white races.**” [my emphasis]

Proponents of Social Darwinism included Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, Kellogg, and James D. Hill. These businessmen rationalized their cut-throat business practices through their beliefs and opposed public health and social welfare programs. Proponents of Social Darwinism invoked their beliefs to foster Western Imperialism, colonialism,, militarism and scientific racism. The Episcopal Church was a proponent of eugenics as were Winston Churchill, Teddy Roosevelt, and Calvin Coolidge. Proponents of eugenics invented I.Q. tests to quantify intelligence, and I.Q. tests were brought to America to categorize persons. Sociologists as well as scientific, professional, and philanthropic organizations promoted eugenics actively in Western Europe and the U.S. Eugenic mating advice was actually cited in American academic textbooks in the first part of the 20th Century. Biological Darwinism was used to justify racism with the contention that more civilized races [namely Western Europe] were more highly evolved than less civilized races, namely African, Australian, and Far East societies.

Eugenics gained widespread acceptance after Mendelian genetics was combined with evolutionary thought. Ernest Hegel, an ardent German nationalist, argued in the late 1800s that the separate German states should unite for a unified Germany that should rule the world. Followers of Hegel propelled Germany towards Nazism after WWI. It would be Darwin's cousin, Francis Dalton, who conceived the idea of applying his teachings to human development. He raised the question of “Could not human undesirables be eliminated and the “fit” increased?” Dalton would coin the term “eugenics” in 1883. He and his followers believed that fit humans bred fit offspring and conversely that unfit humans bred unfit offspring. Those persons who were “fit” or “desirable” possessed the traits of intelligence, beauty, and good health. Traits such as mental retardation, mental illness, and criminality were deemed hereditary ones that could and should be eliminated. In the U.S. from 1900 to 1960, 60,000 citizens who possessed these undesirable traits were sterilized, with the U.S. Supreme Court upholding the constitutionality of the practice.
Chapter Twenty-Six

Take every breath as if it’s your last for it could very well be!

To deal or cope with the challenges of daily “life” in the mental health prison, I would develop many coping strategies. These included the followings: 1) Saying to myself: “This too will pass”; 2) Saying to myself that this day might be my last – therefore I should try my best; 3) Saying to myself that millions of persons are in worse circumstances than myself, due to being oppressed, living in abject poverty, and living with hardly any hope at all. From having been totally dis-empowered I turned to and embraced empowerment teachings, namely the following: 1) There is only one force in life, i.e. “love.”; 2) Realization and acceptance of anything means absolution of this wrong-doing, and 3) Most of the things we believe about life are not true. I would recall what one stroke survivor advised, i.e. “Chaos is the first step in the creative process” – Jill Bolte-Taylor. I would also say to myself “That which does not kill me, strengthens me.”

I would keep in mind that even the best of hospitals is an environment organized to depersonalize, infantilize, and disempower. Adding to the disintegrating image of self is the usurpation by others of decisions about life’s ultimate fundamentals. State hospitals and prisons devote a great amount of energy invested in maintaining control; they are highly structured with multiple counts daily.

In seeking solace and comfort I turned to a retreat by Thich Nhat Hanh as described in Shambhala Sun magazine....

"I walk on thorns, but firmly, as among flowers
I keep my head high.
Rhymes bloom among the sounds of bombs and mortars.
The tears I shed yesterday have become rain.
I feel calm hearing its sound on the thatched roof.
Childhood, my birthland, is calling me,

32 For instance, in India as of 2011 there were eleven million abandoned children with three million living on the streets....One million “untouchables” living in slums of Bombay alone.
and the rains melt my despair.”

I would be inspired by Bo Lozoff’s words: “Life is about something more wonderful than you can imagine. You are divine. You are bigger than you can possibly imagine. You do not die. Don’t be afraid. This world is not what it appears to be. Wake up to your true nature. Wake up and rejoice.”

The Road to “Recovery” can indeed be a long and arduous one. Jill-Bolte-Taylor, author of My Stroke of Insight, relates that her complete recovery from her stroke would take eight years. She expressed that the following were important for her recovery: 1) Competent and attentive caregivers; and 2) support persons that focus on one’s abilities versus disabilities....regretfully, there is a great amount of criticism---both of self and others. Jill-Bolte-Taylor has also stated: “I was seriously mentally ill and realized that I had been a 'figment of my imagination.' “I realized I was a beam of light, a cellular masterpiece---perfect, whole, and beautiful.” “I experienced people as concentrated areas of energy.” “Some hospital staff brought me energy, yet others drained me of energy.”

We greatly seek to be heard and seen because this is the first step in a healing relationship; we seek persons who believe that you can recover and heal. Compassion shown by others is also a very important issue. However, the expression of compassion is a rarity in the U.S. We are all interconnected and in essence we are all sisters and brothers seeking peace.

I have been quite impressed by the wisdom of Pema Chodron, Buddhist Teacher. Pema contends that everybody has the intelligence to heal themselves.
Chapter Twenty-Seven

"We (humans) are like bees ... alone in this world ... buzzing around searching with no place to rest" -- Tibetan Book of the Dead

The U.S. public was forced to confront a stark reality in the early 1940s with 425,000 persons locked up in the nation's mental hospitals. Life magazine and journalist Albert Deutsch took Americans on a photo tour of the decrepit facilities. The images depicted unimaginable neglect and suffering. Deutsch drew the comparison to the Nazi concentration camps. "As I passed through some of the wards I was reminded of the Nazi concentration camps. I entered buildings swarming with naked humans herded like cattle and treated with less concern. The buildings were pervaded by a fetid odor so heavy and nauseating ... I saw 100s of patients under leaky roofs and surrounded by moldy, decaying walls, and sprawling on rotting floors." Upon reading this description, I could easily relate to the conditions at the facility I was in. For instance, the bathroom floors were cement with many cracks, the walls with plaster pealing dust blowing in through the vents, and the tub/shower with one faucet that one couldn't adjust the temperature. I guess one cannot expect too much in a facility that has some buildings 75 years old and in some places over 100 years old. In Nirvana's song "Where did you Sleep Last Night?", the lyrics: "In the palace where the Sun don't ever shine, I would shiver the whole night through"---this brought recollection of the place I was detained at of being very cold in the Winter-time. In fact, there would be cold air pumped in. In the Summer-time, there would be hot air pumped in.

I recalled the words of a psychiatric survivor, who had been incarcerated in a state hospital on Long Island in the late 1960s and early 1970s: Lisa Wining... inmate for about 3 years. --- Long Island, N.Y. Portrayed staff member killing an inmate by strangling with wet towel folded...no marks left on body....5,000 inmates...no oversight...dorms with beds in close proximity; if medical emergency, staff had to climb over beds Over 100 inmates sprawled on day-room floor....liquid medications...no 1-1 or group therapy...showers once a week with only one washcloth per
patient...Wining trying to bring attention to public about history of mental hospitals in U.S. A lot more needs to be done to improve conditions. Many inmates hospitalized for entire lives....some only released as result of hospitals closing....Present day many persons incarcerated in prisons or jails often for nuisance crimes....significant % of mentally ill in jails and prisons...Often little hope for the mentally ill. 33

To relate a blatant example of “man's inhumanity to man,” I would contend that solitary confinement certainly qualifies. Juan Mendez of the U.N. believes solitary confinement amounts to torture and inhumane treatment when used indefinitely or for a prolonged period for persons with mental disabilities. It's been stated that inmates subjected to isolation often experience confusion, hallucinations, great anxiety, among other distressing symptoms. I can personally attest to this being the case.

A more subtle form of “man's inhumanity to man” might be that as described by a contemporary historian who says: “Those around you, particularly one's parents, can be ruthless in their use of emotional blackmail to stop you from experiencing your infinite self.”

33 See Chapter 36 for more detailed description
Chapter Twenty-Eight

"Of all things that move men, one of the main ones is the terror of death...it is the basic fear that influences all others, a fear from which nobody is immune" Ernest Becker in the classic work The Denial of Death

“Our lives are always in the hands of death” “We are all born with weight of death on our shoulders.” “Soon we will all will die, our hopes and fears will be irrelevant. Humans project all images of demons and gods with these images becoming our complete reality. We submit without thought to their dance. We project our fears about death and make every effort to ignore it or deny it.” -- Tibetan Book of the Dead

Before Hitler sent millions to the gas chambers, Freud insisted that human life is one long struggle against what he called the “death instinct” and that we must learn to keep these destructive stirrings within bounds lest they send us to our ultimate destruction.

Is it possible that the fear of death is what drives close to 10 million Americans to use illicit drugs and 20 million Americans to use alcohol excessively? [in an effort to escape a shared reality.] Paradoxically, Ram Dass said: “Death is the culminating adventure of this adventure called 'life'” Dr. Bernard Lown said: “I am persuaded that death’s anguish is largely man-made. It’s a product of Western culture, which denies death its due and foolishly allocates huge resources to prolong the tormenting act of dying.” Dr. Lown recounts his mother’s death as follows: “Our carefully laid plans for allowing my mother a 'human' ending to a well-lived life were short-circuited by a sick, robotized system that wages mindless battles against death.”

In Western Society, we often turn to medicine to repair what essentially are tears in the social fabric wrought by violence, economic oppression, class ostracism, racism, sexism, and a host of other factors.

Every day cells in the human body clone themselves by the billions with
transcription errors occurring... Oxygen, itself, is a "slow poison"

"The pervading fear is not that life is too short, but that death is far too long. We choke with sorrow on the forever of our absence."

Dr. Lown recalls the following tragic case: Betsy Lehman, Boston Globe columnist, died at age 39 near end of grueling three month treatment of breast cancer. She did not succumb to her disease, yet rather to a massive overdose of an experimental anti-cancer drug. The autopsy found no visible evidence of breast cancer! "Our health care system is breaking down because the medical profession has been shifting its focus away from healing." "One primary reason is the romance with mindless technology, which is embraced in large measure as a means for maximizing income." "Since it's uneconomical to spend much time with patients, diagnosis is performed by exclusion, which opens floodgates for endless tests and procedures."

Teach me how to know death
and go on with my life
Teach me how to love life
and not fear death —Judith Viorst

· Dr. Sherwin Nuland: "Of all the professions, medicine is the most likely to attract persons with high personal anxieties about dying. Persons become doctors because the ability to "cure" gives them the illusion of the 'power over death' of which they are so afraid."

· David Kessler, author of The Needs of the Dying, said: "we mortals may never feel more alone than we ourselves are dying."

· Advice from One Wisdom Teacher: "The best thing to do is recite every morning: 'I am going to die today.' This cuts off/eliminates all problems!"
Problems come from your wrong ideas, your wrong conceptions."

· "The complex rituals of diverse cults and religions are largely driven by the denial of life’s inexorable finality. The powerful clamor of denial and rejection can't stop life’s ticking metronome, which every day brings death's inevitability closer."

· "There is only one liberty, to come to terms with death--after which everything is possible."---- Albert Camus

· Jim Morrison of the Doors created proficient poetry. Morrison's preoccupation with death would be portrayed perhaps best in his moving song entitled "The End" in which he professed that "death" was his only true friend.

· Samuel Johnson said: "The prospect of death concentrates the mind most wonderfully."

· "Consistency is contrary to nature; contrary to life. The only completely consistent people are dead." --- Aldous Huxley

· "Not to know what happened before you were born is to be forever a child!" ---Unknown Mystic

· "The Prophet said: 'None of you should wish for death, as a result of a calamity that has befallen you. If you have to wish for death, you should say: 'O Allah, keep me alive, as long as life is better for me, and let me die if death is better for me.'" Book of Invocations 7/10 "The Qur'an does not claim that anybody who destroys himself is doomed to Hell."

· "The people with serious illnesses are regarded as dying; those who visit them in the hospital are regarded not as dying, yet instead as living. Yet in reality there is no difference. Both are the same because each is constantly nearer to death with not much time left!" — The Door to Satisfaction
Stephen Levine in "Who Dies?" said: "We think we are our thoughts. We call our thoughts 'I'. In letting go of thoughts we go beyond who we imagine we are. Beyond the restless movement of the mind is the stillness of being, the stillness that has no name, no reputation, nothing to protect. It is the natural mind."

Marcel Proust said: "We say that the hour of death cannot be forecast, yet when we say this we imagine that hour as placed in an obscure and distant future. It never occurs to us that it has any connection with the day already begun or that death could arise this same afternoon—this afternoon which is so certain and which has every hour filed in advance."

Let me conclude this chapter with one of the most profound statements regarding the issue of 'death' namely that provided by Daniel Liechty in *Principalities and Powers*. Leichty said: "We are born into cultures that provide us with immortality narratives and symbols, and we tame the terror of mortality consciousness by vicarious identification with these narratives and symbols of transcendence . . . But to keep ourselves from noticing that these transcending symbols themselves are human artifacts, we begin to treat the artifact as if it really had the power to bestow immortality upon us. It is the only way to keep from consciously doubting its ability to do so."
Chapter Twenty-Nine

"Big Brother is not coming; he is already here!"  

"All propaganda must be so popular and on such an intellectual level that even the most stupid of those toward whom it is directed will understand it. People can be made to perceive paradise as hell and the other way around to consider the most wretched sort of life as paradise" --- Adolf Hitler, Mein Kempf

"The most fundamental knowledge about the nature of life and reality has been systematically suppressed and written out of history to keep people in ignorance and enslaved." --Contemporary Historian

One might ask "what things have been kept hidden from the public?" Keep in mind that it's the media who determine what is actually displayed on our collective radar screen and are 'stunningly successful in telling us what to think about.'

Consider the following:

- The U.S. was born (founded) with the unsavory seeds of colonialism, genocide, and slavery.

- The biggest and worst terrorists are not those in the streets such as the S.L.A., I.R.A., etc. who can kill a few thousand persons yet are those in the government, which can kill millions

- 500,000 Iraqi children were killed as result of sanctions imposed by U.S. in 1990s; 1 million Iraqis killed or maimed since 2003

- A.C.L.U. was silenced by the Patriot Act. Gag order imposed. There were permanent changes to American law as result of Patriot Act.

- Americans spend $30 billion/yr. on diet products, which is greater than the G.N.P. of many countries. As of 2000, there are over 200 million overweight or obese Americans
• Bernie Madoff raked in $65 billion from over 10,000 individuals, charities, and institutions before being finally prosecuted—and then only when the world financial crisis occurred.

• Studies confirm that hearing voices isn't always a symptom of mental illness. Normal people hear voices too. A 1984 study of college students showed "overall 71% reported some experience with brief, auditory hallucinations of the voice type in wakeful situations." 34

• "In the U.S., anybody can become president, yet only if the person controls the media and has the necessary amount of money"—Investigative Journalist

• As institutions, prisons are meant to deprive their inhabitants of as much power as possible. To enter a prison is to be stripped of personal power and individual choice.

• An enormous amount of the money people pay in taxes goes straight to the private banks to pay back interest on "money" that governments could create themselves interest-free.

• People and governments are submerged in debt and desperately trying to pay interest on money that has never, does not, and will never exist.

• "The need for complex involvement with patients is never alluded to in medical texts or mentioned during medical training; yet to succeed in healing, a doctor must be trained, above all else, to listen."—Bernard Lown, M.D.

• "If there is to be a meaningful partnership in medicine, the senior partner has to be the patient—who must not be deflected from having the decisive word."—Bernard Lown, M.D.

34 Hallucinations of the most violent kind occurred with canonized Saints such as St. Teresa, who wrote in great detail of the Devil's unwelcome impositions on her.
• “The longer a patient remains hospitalized, the higher the doctor’s income. Often a daily brief visit of a few minutes earns a substantial fee.” “The hospital has a vested interest in keeping beds fully occupied”35 --- Bernard Lown, M.D.

• In 2010, $10 billion was spent on anti-depressants and $14 billion was spent on anti-psychotics. Over one million children were on two or more drugs in 2010.

• A rape happens every 13 seconds in the U.S. with over 2,500,000 per year --- Laura Ledever, Take Back the Night (1980) In her memoir After Silence: Rape and My Journey Back, Nancy Raine describes how difficult it is to write about silence, since the very act of writing often produces precisely the painful themes which one is writing about.

• If you feel trapped in the religion of your upbringing, it usually arose from childhood indoctrination. If one is religious at all, it’s highly likely that your religion is that of your parents.

• Rush Limbaugh, Fox News and the Wall Street Journal have created a self-protective enclave for conservatives.

“The most dangerous person to any government is the person who is able to think things out for himself—almost inevitably, the person comes to the conclusion that the government he lives under is insane and intolerable.” --- H.L. Mencken, American Writer

Question: “Why’s that the case?”
Answer: “Governments are not there to serve people; they are there to control people.”

“Control” is key word. If you control somebody’s mind, you control their thoughts, emotions, behavior---everything!

In the U.S. and England there are now National D.N.A. Databases, which have all the names of persons who have been charged with a crime---not

35 Just like airlines, hotels, and prisons.
convicted, yet only charged. In Britain there is now law ---due to Tony Blair--- which allows police to take DNA sample of anybody arrested for a crime---lifetime registry---police are simply following the “law.” In cities, there are hundreds of cameras which track the movements of citizens. The implanting of microchips in persons has become a reality.

In the “War on Terror,” Guantanamo Bay – base in Cuba – had Geneva Convention circumvented...no legal restrictions since base not on American territory....avoidance of all laws including Geneva Convention and U.S. Constitution. Prisoners were subjected to military tribunal. Bush expressed belief that detainees were “bad” persons. January of 2002 first captives were incarcerated per use of military force....no formal charges...torture allowed per Defense Memo. There was targeting of communities based on stereotypes. Persons detained were presumed guilty until proven innocent. Persons were incarcerated in terrible conditions----so bad that approximately a third of detainees attempted suicide. Portions of the Patriot Act did not have anything to do with the “war on terror.” President Bush and John Ashcroft basically said that they didn’t have to follow the rules. Donald Rumsfield said that detainees could be held indefinitely and without trial.36

Consider the following U.P.I. Story: The U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services (HHS) said it was about to begin testing a new technology designed to help more closely monitor and assist the nation's homeless population. Under the pilot program, which grew out of series of series of policy academies held over the last few years, homeless people in participating cities would be implanted with mandatory Radio Frequency Identification Tags (RFIDs) that social workers and police can use to track their movements. Data from the RFID tracking stations mounted on telephone poles will be transmitted to police and social service workers, who will use custom windows NT software to track movements of the homeless in real time. In what has become a chronic social problem, people living in shelters and on the streets don't seek adequate medical care and frequently contribute

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36 The Patriot Act brought to mind the Siberian USA bill, which would have created a huge asylum in Alaska where anybody could be incarcerated against their will. The Church of Scientology was one of the opponents of the bill. [This was during the Bush administration.]
to the rising crime rate in major cities. Supporters of the sub-dermal (RFID) tracking system say the technology will discourage implanted homeless persons from committing crimes while making it easier for government workers to provide social services such as delivery of food and medicine.

- "The rich win and the poor lose....we doubt our laws, and we doubt our institutions....the U.S. justice system is supposedly the best in the world, yet how just is it?" ---The Verdict

Former CIA operative Victor Marchetti in his book The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence said: "There exists in our world today a powerful and dangerous secret cult. This cult is patronized and protected by the highest-level government officials in the world. Its membership is comprised of those in the power centers of government, industry, commerce, finance, and labor. It manipulates persons in areas of important public influence, including the academic world and mass media---it acts covertly and illegally."

- The public has allowed themselves to become sheep---to acquiesce to a "herd mentality." whereby teachers are taught to instruct students through repetition; where doctors are influenced by drug representatives..." --- Contemporary Historian

- "The real truth of the matter is, as you and I know, that a financial element in the larger centers has owned the government ever since the days of Andrew Jackson" --- F.D.R. To Colonel Edward House 10/21/1933
Chapter Thirty

“All we see and seem is but a dream within a dream.... A hologram within a hologram” -- Edgar Allan Poe

“This world is after all but a show—a phenomenon or appearance, no real thing. All deep souls see into that—the Hindu, the Mythologist, Shakespeare, whoever.” -- Thomas Carlyle

Question: “What is “real” and who are we really?” Question: “How often in waking consciousness do we question whether any of this is really happening (or real)?” Question: “How do we become who we really are, i.e. infinite Awareness—infinite Love—while in this computerized “madhouse” called life?” Answer: “We don’t need to learn—we need to unlearn what the program has manipulated us to believe.” 37 Mind is not the road to Enlightenment... we need to awaken from the hypnotic trance and remember and know who we really are. When we identify with Infinite Awareness, we can know all” --- Contemporary Historian and Truth-Seeker

Dzongsar Jamyang Khysentse says: “Most of the time we are not in control of ourselves; our mind is always attached to or distracted by something—our enemies, our lovers, our friends, hope, fear, jealousy, pride, attachment, aggression...in other words all these phenomena control our mind.”

“Most of the time we are hallucinating, not seeing the true nature of things—not understanding the reality of even the sense world.” -- Lama Yeshe, Becoming Your Own Therapist

Is is possible that even our relatively rare moments of conscious choice may be nothing but an illusion?

Researcher Skip Largent has reported that “At least five human behaviors originate in the reptilian brain: obsessive-compulsive behavior; rituals and

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37 When Alvin Toffler was recently asked what was the most pressing need in public education in the U.S., he said: “shut down the public education system.” — Bill Gates agreed.
superstitious acts; conformance to old ways of doing things; ceremonial re-enactments; obedience to precedent, as in legal, religious, cultural; and all manner of deceptions.”

“There is a certain part of all of us that lives outside of time. Perhaps we become aware of our age only at exceptional moments, and most of the time we are ageless.” -- Czech writer, Milan Kundera

Eckhart Tolle said: “The time-bound mode of consciousness is deeply embedded in the human psyche. Yet what we are doing here is part of a profound transformation that is taking place in the collective consciousness of the planet and beyond...the awakening of consciousness from the dream of matter, form, and superstition.”

The fourth dimension was articulated by Georg Riemann in the 1800s and overthrew 2,000 years of Greek geometry and led to explanations of the fourth dimension by artists, musicians, writers, and philosophers. Max Tegmark of M.I.T. believes in 50 years the existence of parallel universes will be an established fact like galaxies are today.

H.G. Wells in the Invisible Man brought forth theory that dark matter, which comprises greater than 75% of the universe, is ordinary matter floating in a parallel universe. Coincidentally, it was H.G. Wells who before his death said: “This world is at the end of its leash. The end of everything we call life is close at hand.”

Ironically, quantum theory is the most successful theory ever proposed by the human mind, with accuracy to one part in ten billion---yet built on a ‘sand’ of chance, luck, and possibilities. Just as ironically, the wonders of the modern age: lasers, Internet, computers, T.V., cell phones, and radar, are all based on shifting sands of possibilities! Nobel Prize laureate Richard Feynmann said: “Quantum mechanics describes nature as absurd from the point of view of common sense. I hope you can accept nature as She is ---absurd.”
Henry Stapp, Head of U.C. Berkeley Physics Dept, embraces the quantum principles of 'non-locality' whereby the secret of matter transcends space, and time. Complementarity—whereby -an electron can be measured as a wave or a particle,---means mind-matter parallelism and that consciousness cannot be reduced to anything other than itself. 'Awareness is independent of the body'

Nikola Tesla, who died in 1943, said: “The day science begins to study non-physical phenomena, it will make more progress in one decade than in all prior centuries of man’s existence.” Scientists presently believe that at least 95% of the mass of the universe is “dark matter or energy” that we can’t see because it does not reflect light that humans can perceive.

“We are all one consciousness, yet are divided against ourselves...we are all experiences of each other.” --- Vedic Teaching

“I believe every person is a spiritual being having a human experience – and that the point of our brief time on Earth is to come to grips with what is eternal inside us” Scott O’Grady, USAF Pilot who survived 5 days in war-torn Bosnia in 1995

Andrei Linde of Stanford, one of the co-creators of the inflationary universe idea, said that if we can create baby universes, then “maybe it's time we redefine God as something more sophisticated than just the creator of the universe.”

“All matter is merely energy condensed to a slow vibration; we are all one consciousness ..... Life is just a dream and we are all the imagination of ourselves.” --- Bill Hicks, Brilliant American Comedian
Chapter Thirty-One

There is only one force in life, i.e. “love.” – The Power

I recall some of the words of wisdom given by numerous persons over the years, including the following:

1) “Prisons are places where power is the currency of exchange with overcrowding and our cultural programmed male aggressiveness intensifying the power issues” – U.S. Prisoner

2) “God has made our souls prisoners of our bodies.” -- Kahlil Gibran

3) “We are all of one faith --- for the diverse paths of religion are like the fingers of the loving hand of one Supreme Being”

4) “Let reason be your light and your beacon of truth.”

5) “I saw preachers looking in adoration towards the heavens, while their hearts were buried in the pits of greed.”

6) “If we are always 'doing' versus 'being,' we are slaves of the intellect rather expressions of Infinite Awareness.” – Contemporary Historian

7) As one “crazy” person (Vincent Van Gogh) said: “Let's not forget that the little emotions are the great captains of our lives, and we obey them without realizing it.”

8) “Only love can break your heart; therefore be sure from the start.”

9) “Love is our fundamental nature, and we long to realize it.”

10) “I try hard to not be judgmental about others' religious beliefs that I don't share; however, I don't think much of a religion that controls its adherents by frightening them. I believe obedience for obedience's sake out of fear of punishment is the morality of little children.” – Critic of Organized Religion

11) “I have heard many a sermon that focuses on hell and punishment for wrong-doings; however, I believe such are remnants of an outdated mind-set and the religious equivalents of bizarre theories of medieval medical malpractice.”

12) “Mankind is apparently doomed to vacillate between the two extremes of distress and boredom.” – Schopenhauer
13) “The difficult truth to bear is that we all die from something. vegetarians die, joggers die, persons with low cholesterol, etc.”

14) “You are the truth and only the truth exists” -- Unknown Mystic

15) “Disability” is not a fixed concept, yet one that is relative to a historical moment “Neurotypical” = “Normal Person.” It’s been found that autistic persons perform some tasks better than “normal” persons. As one autistic person has said: “an autistic person has both great gifts and deficits.”

16) In certain political conditions, when mainstream society is looking for a scapegoat, even minor peculiarities in lifestyle can be treated as a reason for hatred.38 – Martin Goodman This led to recollection made by Gore Vidal that if all the U.S. statutes regarding sexual behavior were enforced, over 90% of the population would be incarcerated.39

17) All of the world’s mystical teachings state that when one finds the ability to quiet the mind, you will find the love that you are looking for --- as Whitney Houston has expressed “The greatest love of all is for oneself.”

18) “The more one forgets himself by giving to a cause or another person to love the more ‘human’ he/she is and the more he/she actualizes himself.” — Viktor Frankl

19) “Most people are other people....their thoughts are somebody else’s opinions, their lives an impersonation, their passions a quotation” — Oscar Wilde

20) “Divinity is the true nature of Man.”

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38 “There is the uncomfortable possibility that offenders today have become our scapegoats for larger social problems.” Q: “If punishment deters other would-be offenders, why does the U.S., which punishes a larger percentage of its population that any developed country, continue to have such a high incidence of crime?”

39 Perhaps an overs-statement yet keep in mind that there are over 2,500,000 cases of rape in the U.S. and these are “reported” cases.
Chapter Thirty-Two

“All that glitters is not gold.”

I believe that it's important to relate the compelling story of Bernie Madoff, who symbolized one of Buddhism's “three poisons” specifically “greed.” Madoff's story is described in the recently released film Chasing Madoff [2011 – Cohen Media Group]
The primary participants who sought to bring justice were Harry Markopolos, Frank Casey, and Neil Cielo

Harry Markopolos,: “....Wall St. is a for-profit enterprise.”...took him 5 minutes to determine that it was a fraud. Money Manager disclosed as Bernie Madoff, former Chair of NASDAQ. Ascot Fund was 100% feeder fund for Madoff fund.

Harry took case in 2000 to Boston SEC. No action taken....There were steps that could have been taken yet were not. Harry: “You have to be a very evil person to perpetrate the scam that Madoff did.” Madoff generated fake trade papers ....Harry went to Access International Advisors (Thierry, CEO) who had access to best money managers in the U.S.
Harry: “Madoff could have been shut down in one half hour if allegations had been followed up on.” Harry: “The U.S. is fighting terrorists while ‘Financial terrorists’ are getting away with financial murder.”

Harry and group submitted 12 pages of documents to Forbes magazine, yet editor didn’t do anything. Michael Ocrant, Madoff Whistleblower, actually had interview with Madoff. Madoff admitted that his firm was trading over $1 trillion annually. On May 1, 2001, scathing article printed by Ocrant. Barron magazine went to press with similar story six days later, yet S.E.C. still didn’t do anything.

** Leading investigative attorney for SEC quit job and went to work for
Madoff. Pitch was made to Prince Charles for funds to invest with Madoff. Ponzi Scheme was glocal in nature with a lot of powerful people involved. Off-shore banks were being used, some of which have organized crime and drug cartels involved. Madoff would have nothing in writing.....Enron scheme similar to Madoff scam with thousands losing their entire savings. Harry went to Eliot Spitzer, N.Y. Attorney General, yet nothing concrete resulted. Tens of thousands of persons throughout the world were damaged beyond repair!

The U.S. Government put Harry in very precarious and dangerous position. Harry feared for his life. Harry discovered since 2003 that there is huge amount of corruption on Wall Street. Feeder funds were making large sums of money with Madoff skimming off small percentage. Harry contacted Taxpayers Against Fraud in Wash., D.C. who put him in touch with Wilke, Wall Street Journal leading investigative journalist. Harry believed that if Wall Street Journal printed article, that Madoff would go down....somebody higher up at Wall Street Journal canned/killed the story. It was the 2008 World Financial Meltdown that brought Madoff down ...when arrested, Madoff plead guilty and would leave large number of unanswered questions, including how many documents were destroyed?....how many cover-up stories destroyed?
Chapter Thirty-Three

“You are the truth, and only truth exists.”

Let me convey what I believe is some useful and constructive advice that I have gathered from Buddhist teachers over the last few years.

First of all, I have heard and believe that persons are easily deluded and hallucinate quite easily. Secondly, the craving mind projects onto objects something that is beyond the relative level, which has nothing to do with those objects—thereby hypnotizing us. The mind is hallucinatory, deluded, and holding the wrong concept. Third, bodhicitta is an extremely high form of realization and is completely opposite of the self-cherishing attitude of me and mine. You completely give yourself to the service of others in order to lead them to the highest freedom, which is beyond temporary happiness.

I also have learned and believe that we often place too much emphasis on activities from which we basically gain nothing. Examples of this are motorcycle jumping, car racing, sky diving, mountain climbing; persons end up killing themselves—-for what?

Let’s look at a flower from the Buddhist point of view. My attachment to the flower is a symptom. It shows that I over-estimate the value of the flower. I wish to become one with the flower and never separate from it for the rest of my life. Can you understand how crazy this is? This ‘craziness’ is attachment.

Let me say that we should not be attached to any philosophy or religion. We should not have any object of attachment. We should not be attached to God, the Bible, or the Buddha.

Humans or animals—-we live our lives stumbling unconsciously into suffering, completely under the control of delusions.

I believe that we are all on the same journey, and that peace is the path. Lastly, I would encourage you to know that pleasure is transitory, impermanent—-going, coming, going....like a Californian friend.
Advice from a Tibetan Master: Mingyur Rinpoche related the following about 3 year retreat when only 13 years old: “My first year in retreat was one of the worst of my life. All the symptoms of anxiety I had ever experienced —physical tension, throat tightness, dizziness, and waves of panic were especially intense during group practices—'attacked' in full force. In Western terms, I was having a 'nervous breakdown.' In hindsight, I can say that what I was actually going through was a 'nervous breakthrough.'” [Shambhala Sun 3/2012] In 2002, Rinpoche was invited to Waisman Lab for Brain Imaging & Behavior at the Univ. of Wisconsin where scientists examined the effects of meditation on the brains of advanced meditators. While the adepts meditated on “compassion” neural activity in a key center in the brain increased 700%.
Chapter Thirty-Four

99% of human history has been primitive nomadic structure with life expectancy of less than 20 years. ---- Physics of the Impossible

What I believe are truly “Insane” and/or Incredible things:

1) San Francisco Bay Bridge ---budgeted at $1.5 billion with result of over $5 billion with plans to spend $50 billion for a high speed train from San Francisco to Los Angeles.
2) Sports like boxing and football ---brutal sports that result in irreparable brain damage and serious injuries—football was described by Carl Sagan as a “substitute for war.”
3) Golf courses ---occupying high priced land, taking great amounts of water, and providing little positive tangible results to society.
4) Car races---using great amounts of fuel for a “sport” that has negligible positive results
5) On February 21, 2006, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a church in New Mexico should be exempt from the law prohibiting consumption of hallucinogenic drugs” namely DMT. Apparently, it’s sufficient that the congregation believe that the drug (DMT) enhances their religious understanding.
6) Fifty of the world’s largest economies are not nations but corporations with the world’s largest corporations accounting for about 70% of the world’s trade.
7) The aptly named Oral Roberts told his T.V. audience that God would kill him unless they gave him $8 million” Almost miraculously, it worked! Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, OK is valued at $250 million [1/4 billion dollars]
8) The U.S. Department of Defense has allocated for latest fiscal year: $2.5 billion for drugs, $10.4 billion for guided missiles, $1 billion for bombs, $547 million for mines, and $85 million for tobacco products.

39 This is a clear instance of M.A.D. (Mutually Assured Destruction)
The latter figure is more than the annual budget of the referenced state hospital. It's ludicrous for the government to spend money on a known cancer-causing agent. The fact is that addiction to cigarettes pollutes the mind and body.

9) In U.S. poultry farms, chickens live in heavily guarded fortresses. 29 million lbs. of antibiotics are used in livestock industry each year. Each year 200 million day-old chicks are dropped into grinders while alive.

10) Bo Lozoff, founder of Prison Liberation Project, during his twenty-five years that he worked in prisons, saw the national budget for building and operating prisons go from $500 million per year to $30 billion per year.

11) Quantum Cosmology---at instant of Big Bang, the universe had electron as the smallest element---since electron can exist in parallel states, the universe must exist in parallel states.

12) In our Western culture, we have persons shamed for being poor, shamed for being a minority, shamed for making mistakes, shamed for "not being successful," and shamed for being incarcerated.

13) 'Bizarre Paradox of Life' as depicted by quantum theory---that humans exist simultaneously as the sum of all bodily states, e.g. a child, a teenager, and an elderly person.

14) Between 1998 and 2006, that the number of mentally ill persons incarcerated in the nation's jails or prisons rose 400% to 1,264,000

15) In S.F., in the Tenderloin District, which encompasses 35 square blocks, there is estimated 6,000 homeless persons. Cindy Gyorfi, Hyde Street Community Services Director, said: "Our society is set up to create Tenderloins...we're dealing with the most stigmatized population there is in society." People who are homeless, including those with mental illness, are not valued in our society. They're considered as inferior, 2nd class, or disposable citizens in a "throwaway" society.

16) On average, doctors spend 2.9% of their gross income on malpractice insurance. The insurance companies are collecting the loot versus the victims of malpractice. In 1991 alone, malpractice policies earned insurance companies $1.4 Billion in profits.

17) Approximately 1/3 of Medicare disbursements each year are for the 6% of the beneficiaries who die in that year." "The health care system is
structured to torment the elderly because it's a program based on reimbursement rather than what is best for the individual patient.”

18) William Miller prophesied that the “End of the World” or “Doomsday” would be on April 3, 1843. Tens of thousands of devout followers called Millerites awaited the coming of Armageddon. When 1843 came without the arrival of Doomsday, the Millerite movement split into large factions, one of which became the Seventh Day Adventists with fourteen million members and the Jehovah's Witnesses with six million. The Branch Davidians broke off from the Seventh Day Adventists, which came to a fiery end in their tragic encounter with the F.B.I. at Waco, Texas with 75 members dying, including their leader, David Koresh.

19) The Church of Rome (now Catholic Church) still maintains priests who specialize in “demonology” and exorcism.

20) Coca-Cola was introduced in 1886 as a “valuable brain tonic and cure for all nervous afflictions.”

21) Estimated number of Chinese who starved to death during Mao Tse-Tung's “Great Leap Forward” in the 1950s was between 20-40 million. Keep in mind that Mao-Tse-Tung was responsible for the invasion of Tibet in the 1950s with millions of Tibetans being killed and hundreds of Tibetan monasteries destroyed.

22) There are eight million persons in the U.S. diagnosed with A.D.H.D. Two million children are on Ritalin. [As one doctor admits: “We diagnose them, medicate them, and subject them to constant surveillance”]

****What’s really “insane” is forcing the criminal justice system to substitute for mental health services; it's not cost-effective or cheap. $2,000-$3,000 in treatment saves $50,000 in jail costs. What’s transpiring, regretfully, in our “lock-em-up” mentality is that huge numbers of persons are ending up in “dungeons” --- padded rooms or rooms with barricadable windows or places where a “sane” person would have a nervous breakdown within ten minutes.
Chapter Thirty-Five

“You can check out anytime you want, yet you can never leave” --lyrics from *Hotel California* by the Eagles

This lyric is quite appropriate or correct for most of the mental institutions throughout history. As mentioned previously, over 20,000 persons have died at this particular mental institution in California. Until just recently (1970s) persons could be committed to U.S. mental institutions without much difficulty\(^{40}\), and often the commitment would be life-long.

At the California State Hospital I was in, there would be pervasive violence --- over 200 incidents of violence in first half of 2011 --- one inmate killed another on admissions unit---pen to eye socket—and was subsequently transferred to another state hospital where he killed an elderly man. Despite this killing, there was no meaningful remembrance of the patient who was killed. This would be in stark contrast to the staff person who was killed in 2010.

Perhaps it's best to keep in mind that one preoccupation which endured into the 19\(^{th}\) century was that the mad constituted a lower class of humanity ...like brute animals, they were deemed insensitive to heat and cold, making physical abuse more acceptable.

Ours is the wealthiest society in the history of the world. Despite being so, we basically abandon prisoners and mental patients to society's scrap heaps---the nation's jails, prisons, and state hospitals. One strong and clear voice in this wilderness has been Sunny Schwartz, who developed the R.S.V.P. (Resolve to Stop the Violence Project) in the San Francisco Jail System. Initiated in 1996, this innovative program has demonstrated that violence can be successfully reduced and prevented. Sunny has shown that our overpopulated and expensive penal system-- which historically has failed to solve the problem of violence--can be changed for the better. Through the investment of time, dedication, courage, and money, in-house violence can be reduced and recidivism rates can be drastically reduced as well.

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\(^{40}\)Essentially two psychiatrists signing orders for incarceration
Chapter Thirty-Six

“There's no hell...hell is here on Earth!...God has forsaken me” -- Former Patient at King’s Park State Hospital on Long Island, New York

Award-Winning Documentary Film-Maker Lisa Wining recounts horrific story of incarceration at King's Park when 17 years old following suicide attempt at private facility. She recalls telling mother that she was going to overdose on sleeping pills and being told “good night!”

Among the highlights and depictions of life at King's Park are the following:

- Kings Park had 9,000 inmates at its height. Staff had all the power and held the keys
- Ward attendants did almost all of the work yet their input was largely ignored by psychiatrists....hierarchy of staff with psychiatrists at pinnacle of power
- King's Park first built in 1885, ironically the same date as the asylum I ended up in
- Lisa recalls admission staff-person (woman) was very bossy and arrogant. Lisa didn't know if she would ever see her family again. Lisa said that when staff took away her clothes they “stripped her of her identity.”
- Upon admission on Ward 210, Lisa found over 100 patients sleeping on the floor....over-medicated or 'zombies.'
- Many patients were incarcerated for 30 years or more.....hospital was overcrowded with staff who had minimal training...patients had little hope of getting out alive
- Staff worked 12 hour days for 10 days straight.....great incidence of alcoholism with staff
- Until 1970s there was unpaid patient labor....shoe-making, bakery, sewing, dairy, swinery
- Patients were only allowed to shower once a week with one wash cloth!
On her second day, Lisa was told to not cry for “they (staff) will hurt you.” For the next twenty years, Lisa would not cry.

- Patients were looked upon as “throw-aways” or “disposables”
- Lisa would ask: “How had a hospital become like a prison?”
- Staff psychiatrist admitted that staff smothered clients to death by using wet pillow cases which would leave no marks on their necks. None of these deaths came to the attention of the public.
- Lisa expressed opinion that there is no excuse for torturing and/or neglecting patients.
- One former patient told of patients being put in restraints for days on end
- One patient, man who was committed in the 1940s when a teenager, suffered horrific abuse and had come from an abusive foster home only to be abused even more in a mental asylum.
- Patients who survived were “Uncle Tom” patients in that they were obedient. Among the inmates at the hospital were the following: orphans, alcoholics, drug addicts, epileptics, elderly, and those diagnosed as mentally ill, which was almost always “schizophrenia.”
- Many patients were told by staff that they would never get well; subsequently, many committed suicide
- The “treatment” that was offered throughout the 1940s-1960s consisted of ECT, insulin therapy, and lobotomies. Most patients were abandoned by family and friends
- Thousands of patients were buried with unmarked graves.

Final reflections:

- Today at Suffolk County Jail/Correctional facility [New York], two-thirds of the inmates are mentally ill and most are in for “nuisance crimes.” Inmates are put into cages like prior centuries.

* Asylums originated in France in the 17th Century when Louis XIV locked up anyone likely to oppose him, with over 6,000 incarcerated in the Hospital General. Asylums were instruments of social control with prisons disguised
General. Asylums were instruments of social control with prisons disguised as hospitals --- *Bedlam* by Catherine Arnold

- Recently, I recall a friend getting married at the age of 42 and saying that he didn’t really know what he was doing. Just imagine teenagers who get married, and more so with those who end up having children.

* Divorce rates in U.S. are at astonishing high percentages: at 50% for first marriages; 65% for 2nd marriages, and 75% for third marriages. Many mental health professionals have stated that marriage doesn’t make any sense.

- I recall the message of a Najavo saying, e.g. “May you walk in Beauty,” which means only use words that create beauty in a person’s life. I recall a poignant Native American story that goes as follows: “A fight is going on inside me. It’s a terrible battle and it’s between two wolves. One wolf represents fear, sorrow, regret, guilt, resentment, inferiority, and pride. The other wolf stands for joy, peace, love, kindness, empathy, and truth. This same fight is going on inside of every person on earth.” The question arises of “Which wolf will win?” The answer is “The one I feed.”

- “Our time is too precious not to love—knowing life is short, how can we quarrel?” Buddha

- Whosoever stops the harmful deeds he has done, By doing healthy deeds instead, Such person illuminates the world, Like the moon freed from the clouds  
  * “Take Loving Action and Do No Harm” Zen Saying

- Dr. Bernard Lown said: “Significant instances of disability and death result from the excessive prescription of drugs, from poly-pharmacy, and from drug interactions. Neither surgery nor invasive procedures cause a fraction of the damage that is done with drugs.”

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42This brought to mind the following saying: “How can I go forward when I don’t know which way I am facing? How can I go forward when I don’t know which way to turn?” --- John Lennon
• “There is not a single problem in the world—starvation, over population, integration, ecological pollution—that would not change if the consciousness of mankind changed.” – Ram Dass

• Dr. Bernard Lown has related that listening to patients is very important; that fundamentally the doctor’s aim is to understand both the patient’s medical problem (s) as well as the person behind the symptoms.

• Carl Jung said: “Your vision will become clear only when you look into your heart. One who looks outside, dreams; one who looks inside, awakens.”

• Let me conclude with some profound remarks by Claude Thomas, author of At Hell’s Gate

  • “When violence strikes close to home, we look for an excuse—the mental illness of the adolescents—their dysfunctional families—rather than recognizing that the actions of these young men are one reflection of the constructs of the larger society.”

  • “We have all experienced the trauma of violence in our lives, directly or indirectly; an acquaintance killed by a drunk driver, a friend recounting childhood abuse, the endless scenes of war on T.V., the daily bombings and shootings, and attacks in Israel and Palestine, Kashmir, Burma, etc.”

  • “Many times I felt that the men who died in Vietnam were the lucky ones. Those who didn’t die had to live with the trauma and reality of the experience. We were the scapegoats for an entire country. ---for an entire culture that didn’t want to take responsibility for its decisions and actions.”

  • “It seems in this society we are conditioned to think that we are different—different from the homeless, the drug-addicted, the murderer, the child molester—yet we are not different. We may not be any of these things, yet this does not mean that we are different. If we live without awareness, without looking deeply at ourselves, we too can find ourselves homeless, in prison, divorced, a rapist, a child molester.”
Epilogue

“Sometimes you have to reach through the flames and take the chance for escape —for a better future, to reach ones dream”---Wisdom Teacher

“If you don’t protect your mind, you can neither close the door to suffering nor open the door to happiness.”— The Door to Satisfaction

• The institution in which I am incarcerated remains in “lock-down” status ...now over three years!

When all has been said and done, I have found that I have been sleep-walking and dreaming that I am awake! Isn’t it true that most of our lives are spent or involved in “sleepwalking” with doing vs. being...with little or superficial awareness of the doing?

In the U.S., Americans face the following epidemics: 1) mental illness and massive prescribing of drugs; 2) violence---in the homes, schools, work sites, and prisons; 3) Alcoholism and illicit drug use---affecting over 10% of the adult population; 4) Eating disorders, namely overweight and obesity---affecting over 2/3 of the population; 5) “Consumerism” whereby transnational corporations exploit foreign and domestic labor with subsistence wages; and 6) “Defense” spending, which consists largely of manufacture of “weapons of war” ---with enough nuclear weapons to destroy the world one hundred times.

Two final quotes: 1) “Life is bitter and fatal, yet men cherish it and beget children to suffer the same fate.” ---Heraclitus, Greek Scholar
2) “We are truly all doing time and all on the same journey; realizing this is perhaps our best hope for a bright future.”---Bo Lozoff, Prison Ashram Project
APPENDIX

“Case Studies” of Persons Diagnosed with Mental Illness in the U.S.

[Source: Robert Whitaker, Anatomy of an Epidemic]

Case study – Geradine – fine life with family and job until unusual feelings following birth of daughter. Doctor ruled out infection and figured she was anxious – prescribed Ativan. Although it helped in the short-term, after a few months she felt something wasn’t right. She went to see a psychiatrist who told her she had a “chemical imbalance.” The psychiatrist also told her she would have to take medications for the rest of her life, explaining that “if you were a diabetic, you would have to take insulin for the rest of one’s life.” Soon after, the psychiatrist added an anti-depressant. She became more anxious and found she could not return to work. She went on S.S.D.I. and over the next eight years she cycled through an unending combination of anti-anxiety agents and anti-depressants. The anxiety and panic remained and she suffered numerous side effects, including rashes, sexual dysfunction, weight gain, and tachycardia. She also underwent a hysterectomy, which she said all of the women who she knew that were on Ativan long-term ended up having.

Case study: Before medications, elegant woman who posed like a model with smiling face. After medications, she had eyes hollowed out and blood shot, face taut and drawn, hair thinned, and looking like a “crazed speed addict.” She had been put on Klonopin following an anti-depressant and kept on it for 13 years. This woman grew up in an affluent suburban community and attended private schools. She was a vibrant, creative, and gregarious person in high school and went on to college at Ohio State. During her sophomore year she experienced anxiety and depression and decided to visit the college psychiatrist. He placed her on an anti-depressant, yet when she experienced increased anxiety she was put on Klonopin, a benzdiazepine. The psychiatrist told her that Klonopin was not addictive and told that she would likely have to take it for the rest of her life -- just like a diabetic needs

43 As I had been many years ago
44 This is not true
insulin. For 10 years she functioned O.K. and earned a master's degree in counseling. She obtained a position teaching in public schools. However, she experienced higher levels of anxiety and subsequently went to her psychiatrist, who increased her dose of Klonopin. Her level of functioning diminished and she began experiencing panic attacks, depression, in addition to symptoms of obsessions and suicidal thoughts. She was then told she was “bipolar” and was prescribed Abilify, an anti-psychotic.

**Case study** Monica – born in 1967 in Wellesley, MA, a wealthy town. She had severe depressive episode in freshman year of college. She was put on anti-depressant, Desipramine. Subsequently, she experienced several periods of “highs and lows” and attempted suicide by consuming handfuls of sleeping pills. She was hospitalized 30 times over the next 15 years. Doctors prescribed one anti-depressant after another in an attempt to find the “magic pill.” She earned a B.A. at the Massachusetts College of Art. In 2002, her mother died and she became psychotic and was put on SSDI. She began work PT at the Transformation Center in Boston, a peer-run organization Whitaker raises the interesting question of “Did she 'suffer' her first manic episode because she was “Bipolar” or did the anti-depressant induce the mania?”

**Case study** Dorea – Diagnosed in 1998 with Bipolar Disorder. Psychiatrist told her she suffered from “chemical imbalance in the brain.” In 2002, she was on multiple drugs, inc. Zyprexa, an anti-psychotic. By 2008, she weaned herself off all of the drugs and doing post-doctoral research at the Massachusetts. General Hospital. She was convinced that her “bipolar” years had been a mistake. She believes that she was one of millions of Americans caught up in a frenzy to diagnose the disorder and it nearly ended up with her becoming a “mental patient for life.” She recalled that as a 7 yr. old she had angry outbursts and crying a lot. Her parents were extremely conservative Christians. This issue would prove significant when she became aware that she was a homosexual and disclosed her sexual orientation to her parents. Despite her parents being social justice advocates, they cried and became angry when she made her disclosure. The reason likely centered upon their being entrenched in their religious beliefs. In 1998, following a period of
insomnia, she was told by her psychiatrist that she had Bipolar illness and would need to be on psychotropic drugs for the rest of her life. Dorea, having read Kay Jamison's book *Touched with Fire*, realized she had something in common with many writers. She went to Boston University for a PhD in math and biology, toting many drugs, including a mood stabilizer, an anti-depressant, and an anti-anxiety agent. One drug would make her sleepy, another tremors, yet none would provide her emotional tranquility. In 2001, she was put on Zyprexa, which at first seemed to work well. She actually “loved” the drug because it caused her to have no feelings or emotions. She gained 30 lbs. and slept 10-12 hours/day. Her partner, Angela, bore the weight of care-taking. Dorea's possibilities were quickly dwindling and she would have continued downhill except for the fact that in 2003 she read literature that raised questions about Zyprexa's long-term safety and the merits of anti-psychotic drugs. She then weaned herself off Zyprexa although she suffered many side effects, including panic attacks, paranoia, and tremors. She attempted to wean herself off Klonopin, a benzodiazepene, yet suffered severe headaches. She recalled that she had originally seen a therapist because she “cried excessively.” There had been no mania, insomnia, or tremors until after she had been put on an anti-depressant. She recalled believing she had an illness that was “biological.” befitting the “medical model.” One major stressful event was her coming out as a lesbian with no family support as a result of such. An important question raised is: “If one expands or increases the boundaries of mental illness (which is clearly the case in the U.S. the last 25 years) and subsequently treat these persons with psychiatric medications., does one run the risk of turning anxiety-ridden teenagers into lifetime mental patients?” Dorea's story is one of a very possible iatrogenic process at work, i.e. of an otherwise normal person made chronically ill by diagnosis and treatment. Indeed, “Do we have a paradigm of care in the U.S. that sometimes creates mental illness?”

**Case study** One Family's story---son at age of three being hyperactive and throwing temper tantrums. Boy is taken to pediatrician who refers them to a psychiatrist, who tells them their son has “A.D.H.D.” and the “problem” is “chemical” in nature. Boy is put on high dose of Ritalin. Mother recalls “he was like a zombie.” Boy's medication is switched to Concerta, a long-lasting
stimulant. On such, he began showing obsessive behavior such as needing to constantly have something in his hands. He is then put on Prozac to control these symptoms. However, on this drug combo he experiences terrible “rages” and threatens to kill both his sister and mother. The boy is subsequently taken off Prozac and re-diagnosed with both A.D.H.D. and Bipolar Disorder. His mother was told these two diagnoses go “hand in hand.” She realized at this point that her son would need to be on medications for the rest of his life. The boy's doctors didn't express any concerns over the long-term effects of the drugs, which included “stunted growth.”

Case study A family's story --- Seven year old daughter began having problems when attending daycare. She experienced “night terrors” and was highly sensitive. The family turned to school district for help. The daughter was placed in “special ed” school and referred to State Univ. of N.Y. for psychiatric evaluation. A Nurse Practitioner concluded immediately that the girl had “Bipolar” illness. She told the parents that their daughter had a “chemical imbalance.” and recommended three medications, namely Depakote, Risperdal, and Lithium. Her mother recalled experiencing extreme shock of her 4 year old daughter being put on anti-psychotics. Her father, Jason, recalled “the experts tell you that it's 'biological' and drugs are essential.” Yet he, as a pharmacy technician, knew that the prescribed drugs had powerful detrimental side effects. He was afraid of what might happen to his daughter. The mother subsequently researched the drugs on the Internet and could not find even one study that showed good long-term outcomes for such a drug combination. In addition, the short-term effects were “scary.” The girl's pediatrician was opposed to her being put on drugs as was the daughter's grandparents. The decision was made in 2005 to pull her off the drugs, despite occasional quarrels with other kids. The daughter is doing quite well --- getting an “A” average in school. Parents wanted their daughter to grow up healthy and successful in life.
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