

THE CULTIVATION OF A COMPASSIONATE EDUCATOR:
HOLISTIC EDUCATOR PREPARATION

by
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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Transformational Education
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Maui, 2009

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation work on compassion and education as a tribute to, and in memory of, three precious figures in my life who have truly taught me the essence of compassion through their never-ending kindheartedness, spiritual recognition, acceptance of my pain and suffering and their total honor and support of my individuality and life purposes. They are (in birth order) my dad Herbert Solomon Rappaport, my soul-sister Leni Eisler Rudder Gisselle, and my daughter Tara Skye who has been my spiritual guide White Tara, Mother of Compassion.

Each of these amazing beings has been continuously and unconditionally available to offer, and inspire me to express, the most powerful and tenderest gift of compassion. They each dedicated their own lives to being compassionate and to actions of compassion. I have been truly blessed to have received these personally from them as well as to have been witness to their gifting these to others.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Cultivation of a Compassionate Educator:
Holistic Educator Preparation

by:
Lesley Deluz

A Doctor of Philosophy in Transformational Education
International University of Professional Studies
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This dissertation utilizes a combination of heuristic, narrative and theoretical research methods to investigate the potential for the cultivation of a compassionate educator as a viable transformational holistic educator preparation. This study postulates that the cultivation of a compassionate educator could prevent, and effectively deal with, the problems of educator stress and the dimensions of burnout that are experienced by many educators today. It theorizes that various practices of holistic self-compassion can be used by educators to increase self-awareness and transform their educator-related pain and suffering so they can be liberated to sense how to serve themselves and others in their educational settings compassionately and creatively. Through her narrative work of excellence a holistic educator uses herself as the key subject of this study to research, discover and heal her compassionate and non-compassionate educator roles in her educator realm in order to ascertain whether or not narrative inquiry is a viable compassionate holistic educator preparation that may be beneficial for other educators. She also contributes to the field of Transformational Education by heuristically creating Practices of Self-Compassion and Greater Compassion. She uses these personally to holistically transform her own educator pain and birth wholeness in the hopes of freeing herself to taste the Oneness, to then better sense how to serve and ultimately increase her ability to be a more effective educator. These potential tools have also been created for the educational community at large for the sake of humanity and all sentient beings.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

MY VISION COMMITMENT

I would like to make a commitment to alter the behavior patterns in myself... to commit to helping myself become the being who I really want to be. To become who I know I really am. I want to be able to respond from my heart... without reacting from my mind with judgments... without taking my anger and upset out on others... So I commit to my own healing... to becoming whole... to do whatever is necessary to walk my talk – to really experience my compassion... then I can pass it on. Give myself time for... strengthening my clarity... connecting from my heart... for the benefit of all humanity. (My Personal Journal: August, 1996)

My highest social aspiration is for world peace. I believe this can be achieved through being compassionate and acting with compassion. However, considering the violence and dissatisfaction in the world, I sadly sense that many of the adults in power have lost their capacity to be and connect with others compassionately.

One main reason I have entered the field of education was because I wanted to make a contribution to society by inspiring compassion in children. I believed that if our children actively possessed this skill of compassionate beingness and communication, that they would be inclined to value this for themselves and utilize it in their interactions with society; then my aspiration for world peace could be realized! But why should I assume educators could be compassionate enough to teach compassion? Perhaps an educator preparation is necessary... like the type of commitment I had made in 1996 and never fully acted on - for compassionate conscious transformation.

Compassion and love have made little headway into our schools. (p. 60)
Teachers need to work on themselves through various practices to become more present, mindful... If we can be more centered and caring, then we can create a space where students may also share these qualities. (p. 135)

Miller *Educating for Wisdom and Compassion* 2006

COMPASSION

In this dissertation the term *compassion* will mean a heartfelt, tender and caring way of being, receiving and responding to all parts of oneself and all parts of another who may be suffering, who may be having a less than pleasurable experience, whose needs are not being met and whose purposes are not being achieved. Therefore, compassion can be used to care for pain and suffering, but it can also simply be used to help meet a need or purpose.

For this study I have looked at compassion as holistic, an inclusion of all the parts of a particular system. The systems this dissertation will be addressing are human beings and the educational system. With regards to a human holistic approach to compassion, this study encourages educators (mainly myself) to become aware of, and to then make conscious compassionate connections with, all parts of their whole self. I consider this to include an educator's: spiritual nature (which this study will be calling the *magical self*) and its intentions, goals, purposes and desires; the physical body and its various sensations and programming; the mind and its programming, emotions, various *personas* and their thoughts, feelings and intentions; a connection with the elements of this natural, physical plane. Throughout this dissertation the term *persona*, which was used in Latin theater to represent a character in a play, shall mean any aspect of the whole self that acts as a separate individual, often related to a specific body part, which appears to possess its own intentions, needs and feelings and is driven by survival goals.

A characteristic intrinsic to compassion is the concept of *lovingkindness*. As this is a holistic study, it is to be noted that this term is mentioned in many spiritual texts. The English translation of the Pali word is *metta* (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metta>) and the translation of the Hebrew word is *hesed* (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/lovingkindness>).

Lovingkindness, for the purpose of this dissertation, will mean that type of tender loving that includes the desire for unconditional kindness toward oneself and toward all of life.

It is possible to make the development of compassion a living practice for both teachers and students.... there is a meditation that can cultivate this sense of compassion and it is called *lovingkindness* practice. (p. 61)

Miller *Educating for Wisdom and Compassion* 2006

Compassion, I will find, can be truly realized only if it is understood secondarily as a perfecting of the skills required for the *doingness* of compassion, and primarily as the cultivation of the *beingness* of compassion. I refer to these in this study as *compassion in action* and *being compassion*. The term *compassion in action* was coined by the Dalai Lama (April 12, 2008) in his talk on compassion and education. This is compassion on the “action level,” a “realistic method” to face and solve problems through “non-violent dialog” which is appropriate on the “global level, national level, community level or family level.”

However, in order to accomplish this, I will find that the cultivation of *being compassion* is necessary. This will include being present and unencumbered, feeling warmth, being mindfully sensitive, having the willingness to positively control the situation by assisting in the transformation of the pain and suffering, and finding caring ways to get needs met. Robbins appreciates the significance and power of *being emotions* and states:

“Being emotions” such as joy, awe, gratitude and compassion... are not only the result of Being cognitions or values. They are disclosive of the very essence of the meaning of... human beings as the “shepherds of Being” (Heidegger, 1993).

Robbins *Joy, Awe, Gratitude and Compassion* 2003
<http://www.metanexus.net/conference>

Compassion may be expanded to include the term *self-compassion*, which will mean compassion felt and given to oneself. Upon investigation *being self-compassion* it will appear that this concept might be the missing link in accomplishing grand success during my earlier attempts at *compassion in action* with other educators. Self-compassionate beingness and doingness will be found to be an educator preparation, a prerequisite for compassionate beingness and doingness in an educational setting.

What do educators currently think self-compassion means? My interview question of educators, *what does “self-compassion for educators” mean to you* will indicate both confusion and understanding among educators. The answer from middle school teacher teaching for 38 years defined empathy but not self-compassion:

It means that a teacher has to think back and remember what it was like being a student. If you have been there and done that, you can have compassion for them.

(Educator Interview 2008)

A veteran computer teacher was in touch with her heartfelt goal of social change through education, but not in touch with her other needs or how she was affected by her students.

Self-compassion is people that have a love for teaching and want to make a change in society no matter how small or large.

(Educator Interview 2008)

However, I thoroughly enjoyed and resonated with one elementary school teacher’s personal understanding of self-compassion, Vince J. Rosato (2008). He trained himself through “professional development with...inquiry...through prayer and reflection... by listening and not doing... and through... the reality that the answers lie within the questions and questioner, the truth lies within.” A daily practice of self-compassion might prevent him from having to get burnt out before realizing he needs to *fully* take care of himself.

Taking care of myself is foremost to taking care of anyone else. My motto: “Nemo Dat Quod Non Habet” You can’t give what you don’t have! It’s like the story of the Good Samaritan where the least likely one takes the time to care for the beaten stranger in the ditch. I like to consider that parable so that it is me being the one in the ditch whenever I feel worn out or mugged by the rigors of teaching. I need to let others pick me up, and be humble enough to know when I’m drained and worn out and take care of myself, in order to serve others.

(Educator Interview 2008)

EDUCATOR COMPASSION

The term *educator*, for this dissertation, will mean anyone responsible for, or taking responsibility for, the education of a child. The term *educational setting* will mean any location or situation where children are being educated by educators. To recognize the fullness of what being a compassionate educator implies seemed to require noting what is within their *educator realm*. For this study, the term *educator realm* includes these roles: teachers, parents, tutors, mentors, children, students, learners and anyone else that assumed the role, or to whom the learner assigned the role, of educator. *Educator compassion* can be seen as preventing, mitigating, alleviating or reducing the pain and suffering, and getting needs met, within the educator realm or in an educational setting.

Teaching compassion to children, parents and educators has been mostly rewarding. However, this study teaches me that when educators are stuck in their own pain and suffering, they are less capable of being compassionate to everyone. Perhaps, educators themselves need to receive compassion for their pain, as well as learn how to be self-compassionate, so that they can embody its meaning before attempting to give it, and teach it, to children. Can we, as educators, be compassionate to the whole student if we have not been truly successful in being compassionate to all parts of ourselves?

Over the years, even though I thought of myself as a compassionate educator, I oddly began to feel more and more stress and experience many of the dimensions of educator burnout (this is elaborated upon in the *Background of the Study*) arise within me, limiting my compassion. Eventually I had no choice but to reluctantly close down my educational center which had been quite successful. That began my last major heuristic research endeavor for IUPS which has reaped many long-lasting results.

If you know yourself as a human being - no more, no less – you teach your children without imposing upon them. (p. 133)

McClure *The Tao of Motherhood* 1991

RESEARCH

The heuristic research initially explores and discovers ways in which I can heal from my personal burnout. My first main heuristic discovery is finding my true purpose: to be free to sense how to serve compassionately and creatively. What prevented me from being free to confront my problems in my educational setting? As I was unable to maintain compassion, why was my level of compassion inadequate? What eventually prevented me from being free to sense how to serve compassionately? A large portion of the theoretical research is reviewed at that time to assist the heuristic research which will lead me to heuristically formulate various holistic self-awareness practices to cultivate self-compassion. Having a practice will be found to be a good educator preparation.

A discipline is critical to any discussion of social or self-transcendence, since these two values are, in the final analysis, a coming-to-terms with the self in an honest, accepting and self-trusting way. (p. 152)

Sinetar *Ordinary people as monks and mystics: Lifestyles for self-discovery* 1986

Many of my practices help me to deal with and transform my educator triggered *pain energy* through my Process of Self-Compassion (see *All Practice Versions* in

Appendix). Throughout this dissertation, *pain energy* will mean that portion of the energy in the electromagnetic field of human beings that has been converted into a compressed, dense, vibratory energy state, and due to being held static, is no longer flowing naturally throughout the whole self. It is experienced as sensations of greater or lesser discomfort which can precipitate suffering. The associated term *pain energy package* will mean a group of personas and/or areas of pain energy that are clustered together and that can be found under the umbrella of a major area of difficulty or addiction. The term *educator pain energy* will mean pain energy that originates and/or is triggered by any person or persona within the educator realm, by an educational setting or by a part of an educator pain energy package.

It becomes clear that transforming my pain energy has to arise from compassionate self-awareness, and will not occur through talking about it or trying to change those around me; this is a part of my path of conscious evolution. As Dass and Gorman (1985) points out, “Things change as they are seen differently, not necessarily because we are busy altering circumstances.” I find that by applying all of the elements of my practices, including inquiry, focused spiritual presence, and vigilant awareness of the area of pain or personas that are associated with this pain, I can appreciate the underlying intentions and needs. This can transform the emotional and/or physical pain energy.

It is very easy to talk about our fears, but when we probe them, we find that it is a very long process to get down to the actual pain associated with them. We want to be free from fear, but the pain behind it is hard to face. The painfulness of our fears impel us to turn our attention away, outside of ourselves, and blame or attack what we fear or who threaten us. We need to work with these emotions both within ourselves and in our relationships. (p.84)

Sundara Ajahn (Dalia Lama et al.) *Transforming Suffering* 2003

I discover my major educator pain energy of confusion, overwhelm, insecurity, fear and anxiety which are revealed within the pain energy packages of perfectionism and workaholism. One of the causes of my educator pain and suffering is that I have to make huge efforts at forcing my brain to learn in most traditional educational settings. Through the theoretical research I come to realize that it isn't that I get overwhelmed by words and concepts because I am not quite bright enough, but that it is truly difficult for me because my natural learning style is so different from the style traditional teaching and the traditional educational system is geared towards.

The remainder of the theoretical research is performed once my practices of compassion need no further revisions. This research method is aimed outside of my own personal educator and compassion sphere. I then decide to adjudicate whether or not my experience of great educator stress, burnout and leaving my educational setting is common to other educators. If so, I seek to discover to what extent these educator problems are occurring and find out the reasons for their occurrences.

The theoretical research for the *Background of the Study* reveals the causes of high educator stress, the many symptoms, sources and dimensions of burnout, and the ensuing grave issue of a large percentage of educators leaving their educational settings. This chapter studies the problems of great stress, anxiety, absences, illness, burnout, and resignations of educators over the recent years. Given my research results, it seems evident that many educators have been suffering from emotional and physical pain, reducing their *life force*. This pain may be disturbing not only their personal lives but also taking its toll on their students, thereby reducing the educator's satisfaction, self-worth, connection with their students and academic performance in educational settings.

Each person is born with the good virtues of gentleness, kindness, respect, honesty, fairness, and righteousness, but as he or she grows up all kinds of social and cultural influences gradually change all the good virtues, the person begins to live under constant stress, feeling the pressures of hastiness, anger, fear, worry, and other negative emotions. These gradually eat up the principle life-force. (p. 4)

Chia *Healing love through the Tao* 1986

My next theoretical research results in the *Statement of the Problem*. This will disclose the core educator problem of educator holistic ill-preparedness, which I then delve into. Two key areas that educators are ill-prepared to deal with are the corporate/political machine and disciplinary problems. Government programs (such as *No Child Left Behind*) and teachers' reactions to having to implement these programs (such as *teaching to the test*) will be discussed in this section.

This chapter will show traditional educator/student relationships and cultural distress to be a couple of the main causes of disciplinary problems. Educators are not impervious to acting out this culture's educator pain energy. Their pain energy packages of authoritarianism, workaholism, guilt and fear of authority are a part of the human psyche and can stand in the way of being free to sense how to serve compassionately and creatively. Many educators will be found to be ineffectively handling these areas of pain.

Thus, educators' ill-preparedness increases their educator stress and their tendency towards burnout. The negative effects of educators not paying attention to, dealing with, or transforming their pain and suffering appears to be widespread. Noting that this applies to me as well, I then include a summary of my personal core educator problem realizing that I, too, am holistically ill-prepared to educate.

Many educators, including myself, will be found to be ill-prepared to deal with the emotional and psychological pain that gets triggered outside of, by, or within their

educational settings. Minimally, they will need compassion for the pain they are suffering. Educators receiving compassion from others can be very helpful. But is that sufficient to effectively deal with the causes of their major stress, the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual pain that is not being healed, and the resulting burnout? Can receiving compassion prevent reoccurrences? What would possibly accomplish this?

My next theoretical research is of the *Research Methods* themselves. The methods that this dissertation will utilize are heuristic, theoretical (scholarly), and narrative (an inquiry for personal research in story-telling form). Ways that these methods will be used and combined are explained within this section.

It is an act of educator compassion for me to expound upon these methods in great length. As both learning and studying directly relate to education, offering various possible research methods, study techniques and learning styles (along with their benefits and limitations) can help other educators become more aware of a unique combination that best meets their needs and honors their abilities, as well as respects their disabilities. Additionally, this can then enable educators to be more mindful of compassionately sensing these same aspects in their students. If the government, the corporations and the teachers basically want the students to learn, then I can assume that educators who know the learning styles of their children can better help all involved to be more satisfied (and increase student performance) by recognizing, honoring and being compassionate to each child's strengths, weaknesses and needs.

Compassion moves teachers to acknowledge their students' struggles...
Few things impede students' learning more than teachers who seem
dismissive of their difficulties or who diminish or deride their
achievements. (p. 87)

Banner *The Elements of Teaching* 1997

This theoretical research elucidates my heuristic dilemma: What could make me a joyous student? Knowing the type of learner I am and my personal optimal learning styles can bring about new awarenesses as to the reasons I had experienced years of pain as a student. During the difficult times I have been having with writing this dissertation, I compassionately begin to lessen my pain as I begin to honor how I learn best. My experiments with employing the correct study techniques frequently alleviate my painful symptoms, compassionately helping me to, each time, return happily to this study.

What brings me then to my *work of excellence*, my narrative treatise on compassion and education, is the inspiration from all of the above results. What kind of holistic preparation could serve educators so they could be compassionate to their children? As Jersild knows, it would include an educator preparation that through self-awareness deals with educator pain. My understanding parallels that of Jersild; however I find the added ingredient of self-compassion to be highly useful in this endeavor.

An essential function of good education is to help the growing child to know himself and to grow in healthy attitudes of self-acceptance. A teacher cannot make much headway in understanding others or in helping others to understand themselves unless he is endeavoring to understand himself. If he is not engaged in this endeavor, he will continue to see those whom he teaches through the distortions of his own unrecognized needs, fears, desires, anxieties, hostile impulses. (p. 13)
 Jersild *When Teachers Face Themselves* 1967

During this theoretical investigation I discover narrative inquiry as a personal research and potential transformational method. I was already using narrative inquiry for pain energy packages (see *Appendix: Pain Energy Tara Narrative: Excerpts*). I realize that one way I as an educator could prepare myself is by increasing my self-awareness and confronting everything that might stand in the way of sensing how to serve. This

means re-connecting with the educator pain energy that filled my lifetime while transforming my pain energy through narrative inquiry into my educator realm.

The nice thing to know is that it can change. Your adult awareness can enter the pocket of time and make all the difference in the world. (p. 47)
Napier *Getting Through the Day: Strategies for Adults Hurt as Children* 1993

My own educator pain that I had experienced throughout my life needed to be fully addressed. I had known that, but never gave myself the opportunity before now to entertain taking on that daunting task. I was successfully applying my own holistic self-compassion practices on a daily basis, but though that was healing me from my burnout I still remained disconnected from the field of educational. I could no longer deny my next necessary step: how could I suggest using narrative inquiry as a useful self-compassion preparatory healing technique to other educators without finding out if I approached this fully, and got myself deep into the muck, then I knew I could come out revived?

I decided to heal my life not only of my educator pain, but address my entire past through the eyes of compassion and non-compassion. My research of other authors using this research style provided encouragement, which I needed to begin this journey. For instance, Covey (1989) said, “Inside-out means start first with the self; even more fundamentally, to start with the most inside part of the self – with your paradigms, your character and your motives (p. 42).”

At first, I feared that this narrative inquiry might throw me into a depression. Then I remembered that my self-compassion practices could be my refuge as needed. *Being self-compassion* during this inquiry could keep me strong, tender and grounded. Hanh’s views on this matter also provide great insight into how to apply this method.

If you do not look at the past, how can you learn from the past... We can go back to the past to fix things in the past... The past is alive in the

present moment... so there is the possibility to change the past... Since you can touch the past in the present why not do the healing right now. When you are firmly grounded in the present moment you can look back at the past... and learn a lot of things. You do not get lost in the past... You do not leave the present moment to clearly see the past... Bring all your energy back to the present moment if you want a breakthrough!

Hanh *The Art of Mindful Living* 1991

If “the past is alive in the present moment” then when we are in educational settings we can be negatively affected by our earlier educator pain. However, the good news is that this means we can also transform the pain energy, “change the past” and “do the healing right now” as Hanh encourages. I had found success using narrative inquiry in healing specific educator pain. Then I learn that by compassionately viewing my entire educator realm and exploring my compassionate and non-compassionate educator influences I could transform large quantities of pain energy and evolve my relationship to education. This would align with my self-compassionate conscious evolution path.

I avail myself of all versions of my practices to assist me in deeply exploring each mini-inquiry. This sometimes necessitates engaging in creative expression of my pain energy and personas if my emotions are raw. I will then find all of these practices to be successful in helping with the transformation of educator pain energy, as is the inquiry and the writing of the narrative itself. Integrating the self-compassion practices with the narrative inquiry and writing is then a winning research and transformation package.

This narrative *work of excellence* requires my being compassionate to myself as well as cultivating compassion for all those I am re-connecting with in this realm. But how am I going to make this happen? The only way I find it possible to be compassionate and not get sucked into my past pain and memories, “get lost in the past,” is to prepare myself for each narrative writing session.

This narrative also requires personal preparation. In order to “not leave the present moment to clearly see the past,” as Hanh implores, I would have to utilize a practice I created. This is my *Mindfulness Set-Up Practice of Self-Compassion*. For the use of other educators, I have included this within my *All Practice Versions* located in the *Appendix*. This practice helps me to remain mindful of the present prior to, and if needed during, my inquiries. Through commitment, physical and spiritual connections, re-experiencing my true essence and then choosing to *be compassion* I am then set-up, prepared and available to “bring all [my] energy back to the present moment” and get my “breakthrough” when gently entering my painful past.

This main narrative is my *work of excellence*, my personal journey towards becoming a compassionate educator. It is a thorough exploration of my main educator experiences, the pain and the compassion I felt, gave and received in all of my educator roles. This self-compassionate inquiry requires self-discipline, courage, self-awareness, commitment, holistic connection, presence, appreciation, forgivingness and caring – all aspects of compassion.

The three main narrative sections in *My Journey towards Being a Compassionate Educator* include my ancestry, being parented and being a public school student in *My First Meetings with Educator Pain and Compassion*, being a student of traditional curricula, transformational holistic learning and my educator training in *Reaching for Higher Education*, and being a dear friend, sister, mother, teacher and doctoral candidate in *Cultivating Compassion: Hits and Misses*. Each area is explored with self-compassion which includes numerous heuristic journal citations, as well as author and recording artist entries. Every section brings forth educator pain, its relief, new awareness, increased

compassion for others and even a sense of joy. The results of this combination of narrative inquiry into areas of educator pain and into educator compassion succeed in cultivating self-compassion and an increase of compassion for everyone in my educator realm.

The largest narrative section, *Reaching for Higher Education*, is mainly devoted to a narrative-style *Review of the Literature*. Here, the main authors I researched will be compared and contrasted with each other and with myself regarding the subjects of compassion and education. My main wonderful teachers that I will review are Maria Montessori, L. Ron Hubbard, Thich Nhat Hahn and Marshall Rosenberg. How each has affected this study needed to be explored. It was important for me to learn which of their gifts to the world had been, and still is, applicable to me and which had not.

This narrative section ends with *Transformational Education Doctorate Study: from Compassion to Self-Compassion towards Greater Compassion*. This is an in-depth look at the evolution of my entire study, from the onset of entering the doctoral program through to this point in time. It includes various works of excellence that I began during this study, various pertinent educator workshops that I taught during the time period of this study, a detailed introduction to my Practice of Self-Compassion and its applications, as well as my journey of writing this dissertation.

OUTCOMES

The study results answer all of my heuristic research inquiries. What had prevented me from being free to confront my problems in my educational setting and why my level of compassion had been inadequate is then realized. It is my holistic ill-

preparedness for each educational encounter, my lack of self-awareness of my educator programming, my denial of my educator setting triggers and of their negative affects, and my having insufficient methods of transforming the associated energy of pain. Learning these answers propels me to remedy these maladies through the narratives I am engaging in and my holistic practices that I created.

Towards the end of my research I understood a bigger picture of educator compassion. I perceived the possibility of *greater compassion*. This means to me, *being self-compassion* while *being compassion* to others - true compassion in action. Once being compassionate to my *self*, I then am also compassionate to another as a part of the/my *greater self*.

Each time I experience holistic self-compassion, being my full presence living in my body, a sense of energized joy emerges, opening a portal to safely extend beyond myself and gently taste my interconnectedness with all things, the Oneness. Once I become relaxed in that mystery, I am ready for the next exciting, but humbling challenge: to feel this holistic compassionate interconnectedness with others in any educational setting. When educator pain energy is newly triggered, because of these consistent results, I can take heart that through narrative inquiry and holistic compassion practices I can transform this energy and will once again be liberated to proceed successfully with any educator endeavor.

I propose that cultivating and utilizing a personal practice that brings us in touch with our body, mind and soul in such a way as to offer ourselves an effective means of dealing with our own pain, and create a state of being that models self-care and wholeness, may be a necessary preparation for any parent or teacher. The intention of

such a personal practice for educators is so that no child be “left behind” and negatively affected by any degree of their adult caretaker’s pain. Educators who have prepared themselves for dealing with their inevitable triggers can offer children the possibility of receiving the education they deserve. Until such time that these educators become a model of how an adult deals compassionately with difficult situations and inner pain, crucial positive patterns that need to be developed for a child to actualize its full potential may never get formed.

How we can keep people’s pre-frontal cortex, which is helpful in generating compassion, really alive and developing well... what can we do to awaken people out of this automatic reaction where we shut down the very circuit in the mind where we can see our own mind and other people’s minds that are essential for compassion? How can we help people move from the automatic biased form to this much larger circle of compassion that you are encouraging us to consider. What would help someone move to that larger space of compassion?

Dan Siegel (Dalai Lama) *Scientific Basis of Compassion* April 11, 2008
<http://www.seedsofcompassion.org/webcast/index.html>

This was addressed to the Dalai Lama, whose answer to Siegel was:

Religious people practice it for thousands of years, but still are not getting there. The hopeful side is that more and more people, mainly from the scientific community are sharing deeper realization of this deeper reality.

This study then demonstrates that there is another answer outside of hope from the scientific community. Cultivating self-compassion may be able to move one “to that larger space of compassion.” Exploring and actively being in the state of self-compassion while being present with the triggered pain stemming from the core of these programs empowers me to transform the precise energy that keeps these programs alive. My self-compassion beingness encourages me to be conscious of, and at one with, my own programming and the personas associated with them that seem less than compassionate.

I find self-compassion to increase educator self-awareness and naturally result in effective conscious re-programming which frees me to be more compassionate as an educator. This means consciously becoming more present and better available to mindfully lead students toward being compassionately triumphant. Consequently, this can provide a beginning educator step, an educator preparation, towards the creation of a compassionate classroom.

Based on my heuristic, narrative and scholarly research, I deduce that the cultivation of educator compassion is then viable and beneficial as a holistic educator preparation. However, this may only be true for educators who can and do activate self-compassion, meaning they take care of themselves spiritually, emotionally and physically and transform their educator pain. They may then be free to wisely and intuitively sense how to serve everyone in their educational setting compassionately and creatively.

As this study explores holistic educator preparation and its potential for holistically transforming the educator and then positivity transforming educational settings, this style of preparation of the educator which is outside of the sphere of traditional teacher training may fall into the realm of *Transformational Education*.

Transformational Education... offers an innovative approach to examining and researching transformative changes in individuals, groups, businesses, institutions, and cultures. We recognize the innate resources that reside in each of us, which can activate our cognitive learning, emotional development, physical performance, and spiritual evolution.

<http://www.iups.edu/Programs/TransformationalEducation>

Getting my degree in Transformational Education meant engaging in educator transformation leading to enriching Transformational Education settings. Through the holistic educator preparation that I am making through this study, I develop the heuristic creation of practices of self-compassion for educators which can transform educator

energy and I further cultivate myself as a compassionate educator via my narrative inquiry. While doing so I engage in “cognitive learning, emotional development... and spiritual evolution,” In addition, through this study I transform my educator identity which begins to transform the traditional problematic educator/student relationship that the study reveals.

I am transforming my body-mind connection with my spiritual connection to consciously create a higher evolutionary step for myself and mankind.
(My Heuristic Journal: July 26, 2005)

As my natural learning style is so different from the way traditional schools teach, exploring Transformational Education adds an exciting element to my understanding of learning. As a Transformational Education student and teacher, I am learning a great deal about the core of learning. During the course of this study I have been progressing across the *five dimensions of learning* broadening my learning capacity.

The teacher (and student) is actively searching for, and documenting, positive evidence of student development across five dimensions: confidence and independence, knowledge and understanding, skills and strategies, use of prior and emerging experience, and critical reflection.
<http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~syverson/olr/dimensions.html>

CONTRIBUTION

My personal view of Transformational Education is that it is an educational system which is a transformation, a structural alteration, from the traditional educational system. I sense it having a respectful focus on, and appreciation of, student needs, limitations and goals with the purpose of assisting the actualization of the student’s innate potential through providing individualized curricula and life-enhancing skills and

accommodating a variety of learning styles. Since this study's results meet those criteria, then I consider it to be a valid contribution to the field of Transformational Education.

I have performed this labor of love for this university in which I am enrolled, for the benefit of myself, for the benefit of all teachers and parents with a similar struggle, and for all children whose birthright is to be taught by compassionate educators so that they can learn everything they need to become confident self-reliant compassionate adults and become happy, productive members of society.

In Millman's (1993) *The Life You Were Born to Live* numerology system, I am a 38/11. My life path is to express my energy "with compassion and generosity" being "in service of a larger cause" and make "creative contributions that uplift and empower those around them, helping others find their own source of energy and inspiration (p.142)."

Thus, my wish for all who read this dissertation is that I have paved a way for you and other educators to feel uplifted and empowered. May you be inspired to find your own source of infinite energy through self-compassion and more successfully reach greater compassion through this study! May this study bring more truth to the surface and inspire you to investigate your own Transformational Education journey with compassion! May it lead you to be models of compassion in your own lives and in your educational settings! May all educators who experience pain energy to a greater or lesser degree, frequently or infrequently, utilize this dissertation to free themselves to be the teacher of their dreams!

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM FORMULATION:

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The background of this study is threefold; it is a study of compassion, a study of compassion and education, and a study of the educator problems that initiated this study. The background of the study of compassion that is included in my narrative work, Chapter 4: *My Journey towards Being a Compassion Educator*. This will include a scholarly review of the literature through a personal study of my educational background and a cultivation of self-compassion and compassion and their potential utilization by educators.

This background of the study specifically addresses the educator problems that I had been experiencing that led to my initial heuristic investigation. These educator problems were high stress, burnout, and eventually the abandonment of my educational setting. The previously stated narrative will address my experiences of these initial problems. This background study will address the theoretical background of these apparent problems that initiated this research study so as to include a broader educator spectrum and be more relevant to the educator community.

This background study will be a review of predominantly traditional education literature relevant to the understanding of the problems and solutions of the educator problems of high stress, burnout, and career abandonment. The scholarly research utilized in this background study will present a theoretical investigation of traditional and non-traditional views of these educator problems. Some traditional and non-traditional

attempted solutions to these problems will also be included in this section. The references used in this background study are mainly from the fields of psychology and education.

INTRODUCTION TO EDUCATOR PROBLEMS

The problems of high educator stress, burnout, and leaving the educational setting are alarmingly widespread, both in the United States and abroad. Many studies even show an inter-relationship among these educator problems. Dworkin (1987) represents only a few of a plethora of works which have “explored the interconnection between high stress, burnout, social support systems, and their ramifications for health and interpersonal relations”. As Guglielmi, R.S. & Tatrow (1998) further notes, “indicators of teacher stress can be found in the abundance of articles and books issued by educational researchers and by the National Education Association on strategies for teachers to survive stress and its attending sense of burnout.”

Although other fields may have high incidents of stress and burnout, Weisberg & Sagie (1999) say that “teaching in particular has been identified as a stressful situation. It is also the most debated subject in burnout literature.” This study addresses each of these educator problems individually and then inquires if there is a common denominator for these prominent educator problems.

EDUCATOR STRESS:

DEFINITION OF EDUCATOR STRESS

Stress has been defined in *Stress and work: A managerial perspective* as "an adaptive response, mediated by individual characteristics and/or psychological processes that are a consequence of any external action, situation, or event that places special

physical and/or psychological demands upon a person" (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1980, pp. 8-9). However, the viewpoint of stress being "a consequence of any external action, situation, or event" doesn't address the internal component of stress. Therefore, defining stress as "the body's reaction to the stressors we encounter" (Kaiser & Polczynski, 1982; Terry, 1997 cited in Adams, 1999) presents a more compassionate and self-reliant, rather than a blame - inducing, point of a view as it considers stress to primarily relate to a programmed reaction that an individual has, and that external events, stressors, can potentially stimulate. This definition can better empower educators to be pro-active in caring for themselves by relating to, and dealing with, their reactions to stressors.

STRESS AND EDUCATORS

The teaching profession is now referred to as a *high strain job*. This stress-related term means that the job's demands are high and the autonomous decision-making is low. "The ideal and least stressful job is one in which both demands and decision latitudes are high." Although all service-oriented professions have a reputation of being generally more stressful, clinical psychologist Dr. Tony Humphreys discovered that educators "are now ahead of nurses, doctors and policemen in terms of stress" (Healy, 1997).

Many psychological studies include analytical assessments that indicate the degree of educator stress, which for educators are disproportionately high. Borg and Riding (1991) concluded from the findings of numerous surveys that one-fifth to one-third of the educators reported that they were either "very stressful or extremely stressful" (cited in Nagel, 2003). That figure increased just a few years later in 2000, when further analysis via *The Scale of Occupational Stress* found "41.5% of teachers reported themselves 'highly stressed', and [the remaining] 58.5% came into a 'low stress' category"

(Moore, 2002). It is then not surprising that Nagel and Brown (2003) additionally noted in *The ABCs of Managing Teacher Stress*, that “one-third of all teachers... would not enter the field of teaching if they had an opportunity to choose again.” Although this problem has been evident for many years, it has not been adequately dealt with putting educator stress unfortunately on the rise.

Fimian & Fastenau (1990) studied the occupational stress of 3400 teachers in eastern United States through the use of a *Teacher Stress Inventory*. It is interesting to note that educators who tested as *highly stressed* had certain personality characteristics in common with one another (which this dissertation refers to as *common educator pain energy*) in relationship to their educational settings. These educators... “easily over-commit themselves, become impatient when others do things too slowly...have little time to relax during the workday...are sensitive to discipline problems in the classroom, continually monitor pupil behavior...perceive their authority as being rejected by pupils and/or administrators.” This inventory additionally discovered certain common perceptions of these highly stressed educators, such as “feeling that the school-day pace is too fast...and that their personal priorities [were] being shortchanged due to job demands.”

It is important to note, however, that stress is not all bad; it depends upon the quantity and quality of the stress. There is productive stress, *eustress* (Selye, 1976) and unproductive stress, *distress*. “Productivity levels decrease when individuals are over or under stressed.” Selye (1974) argues that some stress is inevitable. “Complete freedom from stress is death.” Low level productive stress can be beneficial to educators for motivation which may actually improve their performance. However, stress in excess is

“motivation gone bad” (Stewart, A.M. *Coping with stress*. 1989, cited in Harden, 1999). Managing stress levels to keep it within an optimal zone can be the key, which would appear to require self-awareness. Educators can then use stress consciously if they can properly control this energy and understand the characteristics connected to it. Otherwise, as is noted in Adams’ (1999) report on *the manifestations of stress*, unconscious unproductive stress can be quite harmful.

SOURCES OF EDUCATOR STRESS

The appearance of stress in educators has both external and internal sources. However, the external source has to match an internal reactive program for an external activity to stimulate the reaction of stress. Dr. Claran O’Boyle, professor of psychology explains, “Stress occurs when a person perceives a mismatch between the demands of a job and his or her ability to cope” (Healy, 1997). Therefore, a particular educator may be able to personally cope with certain situations that could otherwise produce a stressful reaction in a different educator. Consequently, though many external situations in educational settings may produce stress in the majority of educators, it may be the perception, and perhaps also the lack of the holistic health of the educator and not necessarily that situation, that is largely responsible for that stressful reaction.

EXTERNAL SOURCES OF EDUCATOR STRESS

Although this study will be focusing on the internal sources of stress, recognizing the external stressors in an educational setting are important as well as they are a part of the current stressful situation of the educator and can potentially point the way to the internal source of stress that the external stressors represent. Additionally, gaining an

awareness of their external stressors may be able to help educators to embrace their personal story, thereby offering them the opportunity to increase their self-compassion. Consequently, this study hereby includes a review of literature on the key external sources of educator stress.

The results of the *Teacher Stress Inventory* mentioned above indicated *work overload* as a key stressor and thereby this item deserves additional attention (Fimian & Fastenau, 1990). Work overload seems to fall into both external and internal stressor categories. Harden (1999) refers to a study by Whyte (1948) who views this work-related stress problem as either *quantitative overloading* or *qualitative overloading*. Quantitative overloading is an example of stress being external; educators perceive they have been given an overload of work which needs to be complete in too early a time. Qualitative overloading is an example of stress being internal; educators have been ill-prepared and “lack the skills or abilities needed to complete the teaching commitment satisfactorily.”

A few years after Fimian & Fastenau’s work gained recognition in the United States, Wendy Moore (2002), journalist and freelance writer, researched and wrote many articles about teachers and stress in the United Kingdom. She reported in “Tackling Stress” that The National Union of Teachers (NUT) had researched educator stress and created a long list indicating its common causes. Similar to the United States reports above, the key causes of educator stress that NUT had found were: long working hours, excessive workload, pressures of school inspections, providing cover for teacher shortages and absences, poor management, disruptive pupil behaviour, unnecessary bureaucracy [and] low self esteem...” All of these are external sources of educator stress except for *low self-esteem* which is an internal source of stress.

Many of NUT's key external causes of stress are mirrored by other researchers as well. *Long working hours, excessive workload, and unnecessary bureaucracy* are foremost in many studies. Cary Cooper, BUPA professor of Organizational Psychology and Health, likens the current educational setting to "political football" because of its continual changes and excessive workload which are coupled with "long, unsociable hours and poor pay." Moore (2002) also notes that government originated bureaucratic demands, weigh educators down and contribute to the sense that stress is external. An overview of common educator pain and common external stressors may help educators to consciously become aware of their particular external sources of stress, in order to delve into and find the associated internal stressor; doing so would be a self-compassionate act.

INTERNAL SOURCES OF EDUCATOR STRESS

Through acknowledging the numerous external stressors in educational settings that educators' experience on a daily basis, this study focuses on the internal sources and characteristics of stress as these are seeds planted within the educators that allow the external stressors to take hold. This study, therefore, attempts to discover the internal sources of educator stress through the awareness of the external stressors in order to increase educator self-responsibility and their proactive potential.

Responsibility, as defined by L. Ron Hubbard (1975) is "the ability and willingness to assume the status of full source and cause for all efforts and counter-efforts" (p. 348). "Proactive people," notes Stephen Covey (1989) in his writings on the advancement of the restoration of the *character ethic*, "recognize their responsibility. They do not blame circumstances, conditions, or conditioning for their behavior" (p.71).

Additionally, as this study is geared towards the cultivation of compassionate educators, it is important to note, that empowering educators to become more proactive in relation to their educator stress can involve self-compassionately recognizing and addressing the internal characteristics and internal sources of their educator stress. Furthermore, as educators familiarize themselves with, and learn to take responsibility for, their internal stressors, educator compassion may then be able to transform the pain connected to their once external stressors potentially freeing them of their stress connected with education.

Elaine Adams' (1999) study also agrees that recognizing internal stressors has great value. Her study entitled *Vocational Teacher Stress and Internal Characteristics* is the result of her investigations into the underlying causes of external educator stressors. Adams found that the internal characteristics of educators were the most important sources of unproductive educator stress. She noted that researchers Byrne and Fimian (1999) found that the degree to which educators were susceptible to external stressors and the methods educators used to deal with external stressors in educational settings were directly related to their internal characteristics. Adams' investigation into a variety of potential internal characteristics that affected vocational educator stress resulted in her discovery of specific characteristics which were pivotal in educator productivity and in the creation of external educator stress: "...self-esteem and role preparedness."

EDUCATOR ROLE PREPAREDNESS

It is difficult to say which adjustment has the more tragic consequences - the teacher who desperately tries to be what he is not, to conform to the authority, and who succeeds at it, or the teacher who tries with great effort and fails at becoming what is expected by the authority. In either case there is an inner battle with inevitable consequences...more often teachers develop, sometimes with great skill, a kind of compromise with authority.

This is the kind of adjustment to authority where teachers comply in public and disagree privately (p.123/124).

Greenberg, *Teaching with Feeling: Compassion and Self-Awareness in the Classroom Today*, 1969

Educators want to play the role of an educator *correctly*, though they may not be able to do so in ways that satisfy them or work well for their educational settings; this, thereby, may precipitate external educator stressors. The personality of the educator coupled with their preparation as an educator could determine the degree of role-related stress in their educational setting. These factors could potentially generate a lack in occupational confidence which could become an additional internal stressor (Adams, 1990). “Perceived professional incompetence has been found to be a source of stress for many teachers,” says Fimian & Santoro (1983) (cited in Adams, 1990). The rapid changes of the technological world of today have contributed to educators feeling incompetent in their professional role. This rapidity created internal stressors and triggered educator pain energy because it has been difficult for educators to get the training necessary to stay current in their field of expertise (Perera, 2004; Fimian & Santoro, *Ibid*).

Being required to assume multiple roles is another educator role-related internal stressor. Educators may have been professionally and personally prepared for some of these many roles, but not for others. Harden (1999) and Dworkin (1988) both have found that stress arises from role ambiguity, manifold duties and a questioning of their abilities to perform well. These can lower their self-esteem. Specific roles that educators may not have been prepared to assume often pertain to dealing with *cultural distress* and

disciplinary problems in educational settings. These will be further covered in the next section of this chapter, *statement of the problem*.

EDUCATOR SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem is the disposition to experience oneself as being competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and of being worthy of happiness... it is confidence in our ability to learn, make appropriate choices and decisions, and respond effectively to change. It is also the experience that success, achievement, fulfillment—happiness—are right and natural for us.

Branden, *What Self-Esteem Is and Is Not* 1997

Moore (2002) noted that NUT recognized low self-esteem as a key cause of educator stress. Adams (1999) viewed self-esteem as an internal characteristic that negatively affected vocational educator stress. His study showed that educators with low self-esteem were “more susceptible to stress than those having high self-esteem.”

Therefore, when considering self-esteem and educator stress, including Branden’s (1997) above definition of self-esteem, his further clarity indicates that “the survival-value of such confidence is obvious; so is the danger when it is missing.”

The dangerous affects of low self-esteem and how they relate to stress are addressed by Brach (2003) in her book on *Radical Acceptance*. She relates blame, which is stress as external, to unworthiness and insecurity, which are internal sources of stress.

The trance of unworthiness intensifies when our lives feel painful and out of control... if we had only done better, if we were somehow different, thing would have gone right. While we might place the blame on someone else, we still tacitly blame ourselves for getting into the situation in the first place... Convinced that we are not good enough, we can never relax. We stay on guard, monitoring ourselves for shortcomings. When we inevitably find them, we feel even more insecure and undeserving. (p. 7/8)

In order to truly be able to compassionately handle this internal form of educator stress, educators need to make the important distinction between *pseudo-self-esteem* and authentic self-esteem. Branden (1997) defines pseudo-self-esteem as “a pretense at a self-confidence and self-respect we do not actually feel.” He considers that pseudo self-esteem is an “effort to compensate for our deficiencies” and is an escape from reality when fears or obsessions, a part of educator pain and suffering, are not confronted. Authentic self-esteem always “reflects our deepest vision of our competence and worth.”

The Educator Interviews (see *Appendix*) I did greatly surprised me by the amount of pseudo-self-esteem I found. As educators are attempting to assume a positive educator role, increasing their awareness of any forms of pseudo self-esteem they possess and compassionately processing it can therefore be highly beneficial to those educators. I believe authentic self-esteem can result only after pseudo-self-esteem is no longer denied.

The negative affects of low self-esteem are evident in any profession. However, as educators are responsible for the enrichment of the lives of the students in their educational setting, modeling low self-esteem can have deleterious effects on both educators and others in their educational setting. Educators have been encouraged to boost self-esteem in their students; however, Perera (2004) says that educators “need a good level of self esteem themselves before they can encourage their students in self esteem boosting ways.” This study will investigate the relationship of self-esteem and self-compassion as to its potential benefits of increasing educator self-esteem, thereby assisting educators to better handle their own external stressors and become more available to confidently bring compassion to their educational settings.

Besides educator low self-esteem, there are many other internal sources of educator stress (forms of educator pain and suffering) that this study will investigate. The manifestations of educator stress are both numerous and potentially quite harmful to both educators and their educational settings. The following two sections of the background of this study will present various stress manifestations by exploring two major possible results of educator stress: educator burnout and educators leaving their educational setting.

EDUCATOR BURNOUT

In this dissertation educator burnout is viewed as an educator pain energy package. This burnout package includes many areas of pain energy associated with educators, the field of education and educational settings. My heuristic research delved into the symptoms, dimensions, sources, and manifestations of my personal educator burnout. Various sections of my Chapter 4 narrative, *My Journey towards Being a Compassionate Educator*, include an investigation into my burnout and its causes. The research and writing of that *work of excellence* was an act of self-compassion which resulted in compassion for other educators with similar educator pain energy manifesting as educator burnout.

Becoming compassionate to my own burnout through personal awareness has brought me greater awareness and compassion for other educators' pain relating to their burnout. Increasing my understanding of the various aspects of educator burnout is a further compassionate act as this could be helpful in my potentially facilitating the transformation of the pain energy that educators may be experiencing associated with

their educator burnout. Thus, investigating the intense holistic difficulties that relate to burnout brings me towards *greater compassion*, being at once self-compassionate and compassionate to all educators, their symptoms, dimensions, sources, and manifestations of educator burnout.

DEFINITION OF BURNOUT

The psychological term of burnout has been evolving as an awareness of this vast problem has been surfacing over this past half a century. Psychologist Herbert Freudenberger first coined the term burnout in 1974, in his book by the same name. After studying professionals in helping /service careers, such as teachers, social workers, and police, he found many of them were in a state of near-constant stress; he used the term burnout to explain this phenomenon that these service-oriented professionals were experiencing (Asner, 1994; Weisberg, 1999). After further study, the definition of burnout, also referred to as *occupational stress*, entered the holistic realm by extending it to include feelings and the body. This is evident as Pines, et al., (1981) defined burnout as “a state of mind resulting from prolonged exposure to intense emotional stress and involving three major components: physical, emotional and mental exhaustion.”

The construct of burnout was greatly advanced by Dr. Christina Maslach. Through extensive measurement of this construct through her Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), Maslach, working with Jackson (1981), Schaufeli (1993) and then Leiter (1996), understood the multidimensionality of the meaning of this term. Most current views of burnout relate to Maslach’s theory of *the three dimensions of burnout* which offers an expansion of the original definition to focus specifically on emotional exhaustion,

reduced personal accomplishment and depersonalization (Wood & McCarthy 2000; Taris et al. 2001).

BURNOUT AND EDUCATORS

Burnout results from the chronic perception that one is unable to cope with daily life demands. Given that teachers must face a classroom full of students every day, negotiate potentially stressful interactions with parents, administrators, counselors, and other teachers, contend with relatively low pay and shrinking school budgets, and ensure students meet increasingly strict standards of accountability, it is no wonder many experience a form of burnout at some point in their careers.

Teri Wood & Chris McCarthy, (2002)
Understanding and Preventing Teacher Burnout

From the perspective of the field of education, the fact that “alarming statements have been issued in the educational literature about the growing prevalence of teacher stress and burnout and the adverse effect this has on the learning environment and on the achievement of the educational goals” (Harden, 1999) is highly significant. From an educator outlook, realizing that “burnout can be one of the most devastating conditions any worker may face” and that “teaching, with its mental and emotional demands, is a profession particularly susceptible to this problem” (Renshaw, 1997), may be even more important both for themselves and for their educational settings.

You wake up an hour-and-a-half early because you're afraid of being late. The night before, you weren't able to sleep more than two hours at a stretch. Instead of being tired, you're wide awake because you're so nervous. Will the kids like you? Will you make a mistake? Will you know any of the answers? You put on the outfit you laid out days before, the right combination of clothes that says you're hip, comfortable, but authoritative. A quick bowl of cereal and a cup of coffee later, and you're off, not knowing whether you'll succeed brilliantly or fail miserably...in this case it isn't a student who is obsessed with what the kids will think -- it's the teacher.

Surpuriya & Jordon, *Teacher Burnout* 1997

As burnout is a psychological construct, the majority of the background of educator burnout within this section will be the result of the research of psychological references. However, this sub-section will be more from the personal vantage point of the educator. It will include authors who are both educators themselves and who have researched and written for and about educators.

An essential question to reflect on might be why educators are particularly predisposed to burnout. Could it be, as Banner (1997) notes in *The Elements of Teaching*, because, as few educators will deny, “teaching can be fiendishly difficult and draining” and because “few other human activities require of their practitioners so much in application, awareness, and energy that must be maintained from day to day, week to week, month to month and year to year” (p. 137)? What aspects of the educator persona allow for this educator burnout package to prevail and how might they relate to compassion?

Is it possible that our authoritarian, achievement-geared, fear-inducing, clock-watching schools have helped set us up for the illness of our choice? Were we discouraged from expressing honest anger, sorrow, frustration? Were we urged to compete, strive, fear tardiness and deadlines? (p. 283)
Marilyn Ferguson *The Aquarian Conspiracy* 1980

Many potential aspects of the educator burnout package will be reviewed in later sections of this dissertation as previously noted. However, one compelling aspect of the educator persona that can predispose educators to burnout, and which has been disputed for its actual necessity, is important to be addressed in this section. This is the issue of educator’s embodying and touting the attitudes and actions of self-denial and sacrifice as attributes of an educator. Banner sees educators’ “sacrifice of personal interest, for the benefit of their students” as one of the “moral requirements of teaching” (p. 38).

However, the problem with this is that this tendency may make educators willing to accept the work overload and day-to-day demands associated with consequent burnout (Mullins, 1993).

Although Jersild (1967) in *When Teachers Face Themselves* acknowledges that it is a common belief that “what we need in education is more self-denial” and has heard from educators that he has interviewed that “only by denying oneself...one can serve others” (p. 131), he, like myself, is saddened by this. Jersild found that some of these educators even believed that “the really devoted teacher gives much and takes nothing.” Thereby, many educators are even proud to “tolerate acute discomfort” and are able to “absorb the bitter anger of others without getting angry themselves” (p. 132).

Greenberg (1969), in *Teaching with Feeling: Compassion and Self-Awareness in the Classroom Today*, disagrees with this level of self-denial of educator feelings. He perceives the educator’s suppression of emotions to be a precursor of the physical aspects of burnout, fatigue and physical ill health. “At best the teacher who is straining to keep in anger is tense, irritable, and impatient; at worst the anger slips out in sarcasm or explodes in a rage of accumulated fury” (p. 60). Greenberg relates this self-denial to a development of the whole package of physical manifestations that are associated with educator burnout. “A boost of adrenaline” and “physical tension develop spontaneously, automatically, and without any control” on the part of the teacher, as their “bodies prepare for the ‘fight or flight’ reaction.” These negative physiological reactions to anger may relate to educator burnout and educators leaving their field.

As Jersild sees this self-denial as amounting to “self-rejection and a denial of compassion” (p. 130), it implies that educator self-compassion is lacking as a result of

self-denial. Furthermore, Jersild states that “sacrifice of self is not compassion” (p. 132) which implies that both self-denial and self-sacrifice, as is also noted in Greenberg’s citing above, can be harmful to educators and educational settings. Therefore, Banner’s positive view of educator self-denial and sacrifice is disproved by Jersild and Greenberg, showing that these non-compassionate educator attitudes are not beneficial to educational settings because the negation of the educator’s personal emotions, desires and ideals brings about depersonalization with regards to students and the educational setting, as well as brings about the negative physiological reactions discussed above. Consequently, self-sacrifice is counter-productive to the educator. As Bryson (2004) says “...anything that only gives out without receiving in, runs out, dries up, or depletes itself” (p. 63).

One other aspect of the educator burnout package that relates to the above problem is the educator /student or adult /child relationship. Montessori (1996) expressed her comprehension of the difficulty that is inherent in an educator trying “to satisfy the needs of a child by adapting himself to the latter’s rhythms and psychic outlook” (p. 190). She sees this has created conflict between many educators and students resulting in “consequences reaching out almost to infinity, like the waves that are propagated when a stone is thrown into the surface of a tranquil lake. A disturbance is started that spreads out in a circle in all directions” (Ibid p. 183) thereby adding to the manifestations of educator burnout. A lack of compassion for both the educator and the student for the inherent difficulties in this relationship may be a part of the educator burnout package.

SYMPTOMS AND SOURCES OF EDUCATOR BURNOUT

Unproductive levels of stress might be harmful to teachers and can affect their teaching [and] personal lives... Therefore, internal

characteristics may determine physical and emotional responses exhibited by individuals as a result of stressors.

Adams, 1999

The symptoms of educator burnout that have been noted by many psychological studies involve various aspects of stress and work-related difficulties. Educator stress seems to be a strong predictor of educator burnout. Renshaw (1997) discovered burnout symptoms to include “stress, irritability, fatigue, unfounded dread of work and a decrease in level of performance.” Wood and McCarthy (2000) noted similar symptoms, such as “anxiety and frustration, impaired performance, and ruptured interpersonal relationships at work and home.”

Weisberg (1999) found that educator burnout is a product of living with a “chronic state of cumulative pressure or stress at work” (Golembiewski, Munzenrider, & Carter, 1983). As “stress comes from the perception of a teacher that the resources available to deal with the stress are not adequate” it appears that educators felt, and were, ill-prepared to handle their external and internal sources of stress. Consequently, when stressors outweigh the personal and professional available resources to deal with those stressors, burnout occurs. Thus, when stress became overwhelming, those educators who were ill-prepared to handle the stressors over time developed the symptoms of burnout (http://wik.ed.uiuc.edu/index.php/Teacher_burnout),

Questionnaires have been formulated so that educators can become aware of symptoms that might predispose them to burnout or indicate that they are already burned out. For example, Renshaw (1997) asks these potential burnout questions, “Do you dread teaching in general? Do you dread a particular student who earlier was simply a challenge? Are you accomplishing as much as you should with your students?” An article

entitled *Teacher Burnout* (http://wik.ed.uiuc.edu/index.php/Teacher_burnout) addressed similar educator issues including, “Are you regularly experiencing fatigue and low energy levels at your job?” and “Have you become more cynical or bitter about your job?” Warning signs of burnout were noted by Vobril (1990) that included noticing whether or not fatigue was suffered regularly, irritability and cynicism was experienced, and joy was no longer experienced (Cited in Asner, 1994). All of the above relate to Maslach’s theory of *the three dimensions of burnout* (which is reviewed below) and her MBI (noted above).

DIMENSIONS OF BURNOUT IN EDUCATORS

This study focuses on the most popular current approach to educator burnout, Maslach’s Three Dimensions of Burnout, from which many other psychologists working writing on burnout have branched out. These dimensions of burnout indicate additional aspects of the educator burnout package. To realize a more complete understanding of the subject of educator burnout, this study has extended each of Maslach’s dimensions and will specifically include the sources and manifestations of educator burnout; this will honor other researchers’ educator burnout findings as well as the common usage of the term (Renshaw, 1997; Taris et al., 2001; Wood & McCarthy, 2002).

Maslach’s first dimension of burnout is *emotional exhaustion, physical exhaustion, pain and ill health*. Her second dimension, depersonalization, has later been modified to *depersonalization and alienation*. Personal accomplishment, her third dimension, has been amended to *devalued personal accomplishment* which adds the negative connotation. The distinction between these categories is oftentimes slim, therefore, in addition to recognizing the worth of the dimensions of burnout, the

interconnectedness of the dimensions becomes necessary as burnout characteristically often involved all of the dimensions.

EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION, PHYSICAL EXHAUSTION, PAIN, ILL HEALTH

This study includes physical exhaustion and ill health as an extension of the emotional exhaustion and pain dimension. As Dr. Maria Montessori (1966) has said in *The Secret of Childhood*, “Illnesses may always have something psychological about them since man’s physical and psychic lives are so intimately connected” (p. 180).

Therefore, this study is applying Montessori’s holistic understanding to the psychological subject of educator burnout.

EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION AND PAIN

Maslach’s MBI general survey, which is used internationally for adjudicating the degree of burnout, utilizes three general scales. The first is emotional exhaustion. This measures “feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work” (www.ccp.com). Taris et al. (2001) amended this to additionally include being “depleted of one’s emotional resources” (p. 304). This first dimension of burnout was also amended by Wood & McCarthy (2002) to further include being “highly vulnerable to stressors.”

Being highly vulnerable to stressors might include the sense of greatly increased pressure. One major area of pressure in education is that of performance, which leads to performance anxiety. Lee (2002) observed that “the mutual stress of a teacher and a student is performance anxiety” (p. 156). Educator pressure has been noted to build to such a point “where teachers have taken their own lives apparently because the pressures have proved too much” (Moore, 2002).

Another major educator pressure indicative of emotional exhaustion is the pressure to be perfect. Interestingly, a recent study found that educators who feel emotionally exhausted at the end of every school day feel the highest pressure from the parents (Parker, 2008). Sears (1996) notices that mothers are also experiencing emotional exhaustion, especially due to worry and cultural distress (which will be discussed in statement of the problem), and find that they too “are running on empty when circumstances draw too heavily from their emotional tanks” (p. 106/107). Parents that are emotionally exhausted may become ill-prepared to deal with their children and inappropriately put the pressure of their children’s well-being on their educators by demanding perfectionism, unaware of the fact that these educators may also be emotionally exhausted.

The United Kingdom, who is strongly exhibiting these educator problems, has created a Teacher Support Line for educators who are experiencing burnout and are calling out for help. The top issues raised by these educators are stress, anxiety and depression, all aspects of emotional exhaustion. Work overload was found to be a major contributing factor in these issues. A spokesperson from the Teacher Support Line elaborated on this. “You have teachers frequently talking about working 50 to 60 hour weeks, week in, week out, and working a lot at home and at weekends. They find it hard to wind down and relax and recuperate. People can't do that continually without there being an effect” (Moore, 2002).

The external sources of emotional exhaustion seem to have an internal component or root, what this study is calling educator pain, with which the educator has never dealt. Even prior to the onset of the external problematic situations that are apparently creating

emotional exhaustion, the seeds of emotional pain may have been present within the educator. Jersild (1967) while working with educators empathetically recognizes this emotional pain as long held emotional burden, a cry of pain and a plea for help (p. 11).

By the time we are old enough to be teachers - or even to enter training for teaching - most of us have been schooled for years in suppressing and repressing our hostility. But the residue of grievances and resentments may still be there. Although we may be blind to it, we are stuck with it, and blindly driven by it, unless or until we can face some of its meanings. (p. 120)

Jersild *When Teachers Face Themselves*

Fimian's study (1990) of the emotional manifestations of stress, which cause burnout, were discovered to be the pain of feeling "insecure, vulnerable, unable to cope, depressed, and anxious." Jersild noted that anxiety in educators was closely linked a residue of hostility and guilt from past conflicts and that "much that goes on in education is a means of evading anxiety of this kind" (p. 9, 25). When educators do not have effective means of dealing with their deep emotional pain associated with anxiety and depression, their situation "does not improve," their daily reactions are often noted as less than compassionate, and they "then get physical symptoms and start going off sick" (Moore 2002).

PHYSICAL EXHAUSTION AND ILL HEALTH

...a sense of both physical and mental exhaustion exacerbated by the belief that expectations for teachers are constantly in flux, or in conflict with previously held beliefs, has been cited by numerous researchers as influencing teacher burnout (Bullough & Baughmann, 1997; Brown & Ralph, 1998; Hinton & Rotheiler, 1998; Esteve, 2000; Troman & Woods, 2001).

Teri Woods & Chris McCarthy 2002

Pervasive physical exhaustion in educators, noted by the above researchers, resulted in the further educator problem of getting "sick more easily and frequently"

(Potter, 1991). Greenberg (1969) says that educator physical self-reports mainly express their physical problems of “headaches, sickness of various kinds, and of course the proverbial ulcers (p. 60)”. Besides the physical fatigue usually attributed to physical exhaustion, Fimian (1990) also noted gastronomical and cardiovascular manifestations. Guglielmi & Tatrow’s (1998) research on *Occupational stress, burn-out, and health in teachers*, resulted in findings which concurred with Fimian’s study: “Gallbladders [and] cardiovascular problems were more significant in burnout group of teachers” that in other occupations experiencing burnout. Out of the 83 studies they performed, approximately “91% frequency of somatic complaints could predict burnout,” therefore implying that the educator’s self-reports should not be ignored, as they may lead to more severe problems. Renshaw (1997) disturbingly notes in *Symptoms and causes of teacher burnout* that “stress and fatigue if not handled soon, manifest themselves as heart disease and death.”

DEPERSONALIZATION

The second general scale of Maslach’s MBI survey represents the dimension of depersonalization. This measures “an unfeeling and impersonal response toward recipients of one's service, care, treatment, or instruction” (www.ccp.com).

Depersonalization, as Taris et al. (2001) perceives it, has a more negative connotation, marked by the additional characteristics of having an “overly detached and indifferent attitude” with regards to one’s co-workers as well as the people one serves (p. 304).

However, Wood & McCarthy (2002) adds the concept of distancing oneself from the people one is in contact with in the working environment to make the definition of

depersonalization more complete. They compare educators to professionals in other helping professions. Because teaching involves little interaction with peers, educators are more apt to feel disconnected and thereby run a greater risk of depersonalization.

One negative attitude that researchers have often associated with depersonalization is educator cynicism towards students and educational settings. Other negative attitudes and actions that go hand-in-hand with the educator pain of cynicism are resentment, heartlessness or uncaring behaviors towards children (Pierce and Malloy, 1990; Farber, 1998; Wood & McCarthy, 2002; Parker 2008). When considering the depersonalization aspect of educator mother burnout, Sears's (1996) comment is quite enlightening. She discovered that resentment buildup can fuel burnout "faster and more thoroughly than physical overexertion" (pp. 104-107). The cynical, resentful, and uncaring attitudes of depersonalization are non-compassionate educator attitudes. Therefore, depersonalization marks reduced, or lack of, educator compassion.

ALIENATION

Educators, for the most part, are idealistic regarding the type and amount of positive affect they can have on students today, and are often gravely disappointed at how severely the educational system stultifies their ambitions. Bullough & Baughman's (1997) study shows that educators are at risk when they "see their work as futile and inconsistent with the ideals or goals they had set as beginning teachers" (Wood & McCarthy, 2002). Chance, an assistant dean of teacher education, identifies this problem and warns "it's so important to make sure these teachers, who seem to want to make a genuine difference in young lives, don't get driven away by the hardships of the system"

(Surpuriya & Jordan, 1997). When the heart and soul of an educator is denied by their educational setting, educator alienation can set in.

Alienation is seen in educators as they become powerless in the decision-making of their career, which then leads to an abandonment of their ideals and a lifeless acceptance of the perceived meaninglessness of their careers (LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991; Farber, 1998). Even in 1967, Jersild observed that “teachers...by their own testimony...see so much that is empty and meaningless in what they are compelled to teach” (p. 92). This comes about, says Storr (1988), when one suppresses their ideals in order to comply with an external reality. “The pressure for conformity and the need to adopt an approach with which the teacher does not identify” says Mullins (1993 /p. 533) can force the educator to stay behind a façade in the classroom which can be the cause of deep loneliness (Jersild 1967; Greenberg, 1969). One façade educators’ may hide behind is pseudo-self-esteem, (previously mentioned in the section on educator self-esteem) “a pretense at a self-confidence and self-respect we do not actually feel” (Branden, 1997).

However, hiding behind a façade may be a short-lived coping mechanism, collapsing over time being replaced by a sense of meaninglessness. In Storr’s (1988) book, *Solitude: A Return to the Self*, he explains that when adaptation and the abandonment of the possibility of fulfillment become the only choice, individuality disappears and “life becomes meaningless or futile” (p. 72). This type of apathetic depersonalization also plays a part in the third dimension of personal accomplishment, because it is an "extreme type of role-specific alienation with a focus on feelings of meaninglessness, especially as this applies to one's ability to successfully reach students" (Wood, McCarthy 2000).

DEVALUED PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT

We are perishing for a lack of fulfillment of our greater needs...we are cut off from the great sources of our inward nourishment and renewal. (p. 21)
D.H. Lawrence (Cited by Brach *Radical Acceptance* 2003)

The MBI survey's third general scale is *personal accomplishment*. This measures the dimension of "feelings of competence and successful achievement in one's work" (www.ccp.com). Schwab and Iwanicki (1982) actually saw this as more of a "a sense of failure with one's personal accomplishment" (cited in Adams, 1999), whereas Taris et al. (2001) considered this instead to be a "lack of personal accomplishment on one's work" (p. 304). Pierce and Malloy (1990) added a personal dimension to this aspect of burnout, the "tendency to evaluate oneself negatively" (Harden, 1999). Wood & McCarthy (2002) then further refined this dimension to "reduced personal accomplishment, in which one devalues one's work with others." This study combines these views and has thereby decided to call this dimension of burnout, *devalued personal accomplishment*.

The greatest source of discouragement is the conviction that one is unable to do something...a feeling of incompetence discourages effort even before one is put to the test. (p. 169)
Maria Montessori *The Secret of Childhood* 1966

Educator ill-preparedness may be a cause of educators' devaluing their personal accomplishment. They may even subconsciously realize that they do not feel fully prepared before entering the field of education. Jersild (1967) said that an educator may be "tempted...to regard the knowledge he has gained, and the theories he has brought forth, as final and conclusive - yet he can never escape from uneasy doubts" (p. 23).

Even when educators consider that they have mastered the intellectual and theoretical studies of their educational training, once these educators actually begin

teaching they may end up devaluing their supposed knowledge. This can occur because they are then confronted with the fact that of “their inability to integrate” their education training because it does not correspond with, and even may oppose, “the feelings, opinions, and ideas which they themselves developed out of their actual contact with children” (Greenberg, 1969 p. 110). Due to this lack of personal integration, educators may feel as if they have “reached few personal goals” (Parker, 2008), thus experiencing this third dimension of burnout, a devaluing their personal accomplishments; their educator training was an insufficient preparation to being a successful educator. Additionally, if educators have not prepared themselves to deal with their internal stressors of low self-esteem and insecurity, as earlier discussed in the section on *educator self esteem*, the ill-effects of these particular stressors may exacerbate educators’ personal sense of incompetence (Adams, 1999; Brach, 2003; Branden, 1997).

EDUCATOR BURNOUT CONCLUSION

As can be deduced from the above cited references, the psychological construct of burnout, which has now been predominantly applied to this widespread condition of educators, both recognizes and values the educator pain energy areas related to mental, emotional and physical difficulties. The field of education has been primarily intellectual and achievement based, and for the most part has not acknowledged the holistic components of education. Denying the holistic nature of educators and students deny the holistic components that contribute to educator burnout. Although traditionally the educational system has not been holistically based, burnout being a holistic concept now provides the opportunity for the field of education to embrace a more holistic approach

both to its educators and to the entire field of education. This can open the door for the possibility of the holistic training and development of compassionate educators, beginning with self-compassion as a means for mitigating the problems associated with all of the dimensions of educator burnout.

EDUCATORS LEAVING THEIR EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

The third great difficulty currently affecting educators and educational settings is educator attrition. While Skirble (2008) notes there are “3.5 million teachers on the job in public school classrooms across the United States...the problem facing American education is keeping new teachers...in the classroom.” The United Federation of Teachers (2005) in their report entitled *Record number of certified teachers quitting* stated that “the school system is on track to exceed the record-setting 3,500 teacher resignations of the previous school year.”

Croasmun, Hampton & Herrmann (1999) reports that this problem began in the 1970's noting that at the time “25% of all people with teaching certificates” either never began teaching or they left the field “within a few years” (Charters; 1970; Mark and Anderson, 1978; Murnane, 1981). The research performed for this study has found an educator attrition rate increase, with a reported current low of 35% to a high of over 60% of educators across the nation leaving their educator career within the first five years of teaching (Potter, 1991; Fried, 1995; Surpuriya & Jordan, 1997; Collins, 2001; Martin, 2005; Emerick, 2006). Some experts have discovered that the attrition among young teachers has been found to be so great “that it outweighs retirement as a cause of teacher shortages” (Archer, 1999). Collins (2001) ascertained from a nationwide study, that “10%

of new teachers walk into the job and walk out again before they've had time to memorize the seating chart".

Scott Emerick (2006), in *Teaching Matters Most*, reports an elevated attrition level for educators teaching in high-poverty school districts. These schools are "consistently losing more than 25 percent of teachers every year" and some schools, notes Potter (1991), sometimes have five new principals in four years. The once highly scholastic, high-achievement secondary school that I graduated from in 1967 (Sheepshead Bay High School in Brooklyn, N.Y.) has now become what is called an *Impact School* (a school so dangerous that it needed special security assistance) and "from 2000 to 2005...had a new principal every year" (<http://www.insideschools.org/fs>). Given these astonishing figures, Emerick firmly states that "any comment downplaying the significance of the problem does a severe disservice to schools" and that "any claim that teacher [and principal] turnover currently stands at a necessary or acceptable level is simply wrong."

Though all researchers of the problems of educators and their educational settings agree that the educator attrition rate is severely on the rise, many have a difference of opinion as to the cause of the high turnover of educators. Nearly all researchers blame a source external to the educator as responsible for educators' finalizing their decision to quit. The various and most common threats to educator retention that this research has disclosed (most of which has been reviewed in the previous background sections) casts the blame of educators leaving their educational settings on one or more of the possible combination of educator problems: high degree of stress, burnout, low pay, oppressive workload, mental and physical ill health, lack of support and a sense of powerlessness in

a legislative and administrative bureaucracy which adds pressure and endless paperwork, and having to carry out government programs (such as *No Child Left Behind*) which forces educators to focus on standardized government testing rather than on what is meaningful to the educator (Renshaw, 1997; Surpuriya and Jordan, 1997; Guglielmi, R.S. & Tatrow, 1998; Croasmun et al., 1999; Weisberg, 1999; Harris, 2001; Aitken, 2002; Nagel, 2003; Cohen, 2004; United Federation of Teachers, 2005; Martin, 2005; Phillips, 2007). Consequently, it could be said that those educators who have been ill-prepared to deal with the physical, mental and emotional symptoms and manifestations of the external and internal sources of stress and burnout seem to be the educators that are most likely to leave their educational setting.

Many of the above studies discuss the negative affects of educator attrition. They primarily point to the impact on the students' academic success and the financial costs to the educational system (Guglielmi, R.S. & Tatrow, 1998; Croasmun et al., 1999; Phillips, 2007). Emerick (2006) quotes the article *Teacher Attrition* with regards to the financial burden, noting that "even the most conservative estimates for teacher turnover come out at \$4.9 billion dollars per year." However, despite the huge negative affects those educators leaving their educational settings do have on those educational settings, to continue to solely look at the external affects of teacher attrition and not compassionately address the educators themselves might once again miss the basic internal reasons that this problem of attrition has been on the rise.

True, there are some studies that are calling for increased educator training recognizing that many of these educators began teaching, even though they were ill-prepared. Croasmun et al. (1999) considers that the high attrition rate of educators

teaching in high-poverty school districts to be due to educators being ill-prepared to work in these districts and suggests “specific teacher education programs tailored especially for urban teachers.” They propose that many new educators leave the teaching field because they “find that their teacher education programs ill-prepared them for the realities of teaching...and for the reality of the classroom” and consequently they have an “inability to cope with teaching problems.” Emerick (2006) says “the answers for addressing turnover include significant, comprehensive, and yes, costly investments to improve teacher preparation across the board in both traditional and alternative settings.”

All these educator preparations are seen to be strictly for the benefit of the government and the educational system and do not include the sincere care of the educator’s heart and soul; this can be disastrous for students and the educational setting as it can create further depersonalization. How can the educators be revived when they have become so alienated from their students and their educational environment? Are there educator advocates in the educational system that care enough to save educators from extreme stress, from burnout and from having to quit their job? Where lies the compassion for the educator whose work has become so meaningless and whose life has become so loveless that they are no longer willing or able to share their heart and soul?

If there is no one to compassionately offer these educators in pain a kind word, support or encouragement, then Chance, the educator trainer, urges the suffering educator “in this case, it is certainly better to fade away than to burn out” (Surpuriya and Jordan, 1997). Based on Gibran’s writing on *work*, it appears that he would agree that if an educator who was burning out and was becoming cynical, critical, and could no longer

bring their heart and soul to their work, if this educator could not bring love and spirit to his work, then it would be best for this educator “to leave his work.”

All work is empty save when there is love; ...And what is it to work with love? ...It is to charge all things you fashion with a breath of your own spirit... Work is loving made visible.

And if you cannot work with love but only with distaste, it is better that you should leave your work and sit at the gate of the temple and take alms of those who work with joy.

For if you bake with indifference, you bake a bitter bread that feeds but half a man’s hunger.

And if you grudge the crushing of the grapes, your grudge distils a poison in the wine. (p. 26)

Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet*, 1968

BUREAUCRATIC EXTERNAL SOURCES OF EDUCATOR PROBLEMS

Even prior to the recent bureaucratic edicts for kindergarten aged students on up, some of which will be reviewed below, it is common knowledge that there has always been some problems experienced by educators in their educational settings, especially in this century. This may have been due to a combination of their own educator pain that may have gotten triggered in educational settings, the limited amount of power that they had in the classroom, the potentially dictatorial teacher/student relationship, the non-holistic view of education, or any combination of problems that were inherent within the educational system and of which they were the effect. However, before government intervention, those educator problems might have had a lesser effect.

Although educators were still directed to accomplish certain curricula criteria, in earlier times they may have had more of an opportunity to carry out their career intentions. Perhaps they had more freedom to bring their hearts and souls into the classroom, and possibly *make a difference* that was more meaningful to them. Therefore,

the potential necessity for educator compassion might not have been as relevant at that time, as it might be today. Therefore, being ill-prepared to compassionately deal with educator pain energy might have been of less import earlier in the field of education.

As was shown in the previous section, it was not until the late 1960's that the educator problems this study has been reviewing truly got underway, and then greatly advanced over this last decade. Since this advancement, the educator burnout dimensions of depersonalization, alienation and devalued personal accomplishments (as has been cited in that section) have been reducing or killing any opportunity for educators to find meaning and purpose in their work, thereby increasing the effect of their potential educator pain energy. This now intensifies the current potential necessity for educators to prepare themselves to compassionately handle the pain and suffering that may be increasing within them and causing potential disastrous effects on themselves and their educational settings.

Because of the severity of these new problems for educators, I had chosen to further investigate educator problems, looking for a possibly deeper hidden core. Therefore, I consider it appropriate to address the results of this later investigation, which discovered a potential central external source of the educator and student problems previously discussed. As educator compassion seems to necessitate awareness of the root of a problem and the root of the suffering, this study will include an element of perhaps a more occluded and broader problem that may underlie the apparent surface problems previously discussed: the political and corporate management of today's public schools.

The 20th century, for all its scientific and technological amazements...was a century in which we watered down our own humanity - turning wisdom into information, community into consumerism, politics into manipulation, destiny into DNA -

making it increasingly difficult to find nourishment for the hungers of the heart...

Early in the century, eager to create factory workers who could produce material prosperity, we took teaching and learning - that ancient exchange between student and teacher and world in which human beings have always explored the depth of the soul - and started thinning it down into little more than the amassing of data and the mastering of technique. (p. v)

Parker Palmer (forward in Kessler *The Soul of Education*) 2000

The major educator challenges discussed throughout the background of the study seems to parallel the US central government involvement in local public schools. It originated with Title 1 of *The Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA, 1965), which authorized federal legislation and regulation of schools found to be in need of distributed funds for professional development (www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ESEA). This act was reauthorized and entitled the *Improving America's Schools Act* in 1994, which then "required states to adopt academic content and performance standards, and assessments aligned with them" (Menken, 2006).

The current reauthorization of ESEA in 2001, the passage of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB), saw sweeping educational *reforms* which brought about a massive change for everyone involved in the educational system and focused on "standardized testing that is now being felt on a daily basis in schools and classrooms across the United States"(Ibid). This controversial federal program, NCLB, pronounced *nickelbee* (Wikipedia), compels educator adherence to the giving and grading of government standardized testing for the supposed purpose of upholding the government's set academic standards. NCLB holds schools and states accountable for getting their students to learn and know the "basic skills needed in our increasingly competitive, global economy" (State Standards and Assessment Update, June 2008; Wikipedia).

Many educators are strongly opposed to this act and note a plethora of resulting deleterious effects on students, educators and the educational system. Education Reform.net lists series of books that present opposing views to programs that “use test scores as the sole basis of their analysis.” These include literature from prolific educational authors such as, John Holt, John Taylor Gatto and Alfie Kohn (<http://www.education-reform.net/bibliography.htm>).

NCLB is not a step in the right direction. It is a deeply damaging, mostly ill-intentioned law... every in-service session, every article, every memo from the central office that offers what amounts to an instruction manual for capitulation slides us further in the wrong direction until finally we become a nation at risk of abandoning public education altogether. Rather than scrambling to comply with its provisions, our obligation is to figure out how best to resist.

Alfie Kohn, 2004

*Test Today, Privatize Tomorrow:
Using Accountability to "Reform" Public Schools to Death*

Palmer (in Kessler, 2000) acknowledges that there are times that standards can be important in education, but since these imposed educational reforms he recognizes an unfortunate shift of the educator’s focus. “The standards soup is now so thin” says Palmer, “that we can see some of its sad consequences: teachers preparing students for tests rather than for their lives.” Zimmerman (2002) sees this new government system in a harsher light, as intentionally being highly restrictive, and thereby views national and state standardized tests as being “designed to narrow children's focus to math, reading, writing and science...not only restricting education to a few subjects, but within these subjects education is restricted to what's on the test.”

Despite whether the government intended this or not, the effects of NCLB, as Bond (2007) views it, are particularly harmful to educators, who no longer having the freedom to create their own lesson plans, and now responsible to the government

standards, spend much of the school day just *teaching to the test*. This now common educator term means the continual “temptation to tailor and restrict instruction to only that which will be tested” due to the tremendous “public pressure on students, teachers, principals, and school superintendents to raise scores on high-stakes tests.” Therefore, educator pain may increase as they sense that what students actually need to learn may be quite different from what they have to memorize. In spite of any inclination to creatively teach their student in ways that serve their particular learning styles, they feel restricted to do anything but *teach to the test*. To make matters worse, the meaninglessness of this teaching method may be exacerbated if the educators discover what Winter’s (2002) research suggests, that “high stakes testing may actually worsen student performance” (Hart, cited in Miller, 2006).

Whereas Zimmerman, Bond, Kohn, Winter, Palmer and many other educators warn of the numerous major ill-effects of NCLB, recently, as of June 9, 2008, the US Secretary of State, Spellings announced that new government regulations have been proposed to *strengthen* the NCLB policy (which had become the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2007*) throughout the United States, “focusing on improved accountability” (<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/intro/reauth/index.html>), which means the schools and the educators will undergo further increased pressure as they will be even more strongly accountable for the results of students’ test scores. Obviously aware of the need to address the huge educator problems that have been mounting, Spellings seemed to *throw the educators a crumb* promising that this act will create a “strong balance between preserving the fundamental accountability that is helping students improve, and responding to legitimate concerns raised by parents and educators.”

Rather than offering any compassion to the educators and students who are potentially suffering due to this policy, the only government response suggested was to increase tools and resources to “underperforming schools” and “giving educators more credit for student improvement.” Interestingly, rather than saying this was for the benefit of the child, the educators or the educational setting, Secretary Spellings implies that this act is for the United States position in the global economy, as she wants this act reauthorized because “students and families are counting on us to prepare our next generation to seize the opportunities of today's global economy, and they don't have time to wait” (<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2007/07/07122007a.html>).

Palmer Parker disagrees with Secretary Spelling and these single-focused political approaches to educating our children today. He views them as “...simplistic answers that attempt to change education from the outside in, such as establishing one-size-fits-all ‘standards’ to which students and teachers must measure up or be judged as failures” (Kessler, 2000 p. vi). In the name of keeping a strong foothold in the global economy, it seems that we may then be sacrificing our pool of innovative educators and the creative possibilities of our youth whose learning styles do not easily accommodate rote memorization and test taking and who may suffer from their education being limited.

Zimmerman (2002) also fervently opposes Spelling’s stated purpose of the *No Child Left Behind* government educational regulations being for the benefit of our youth. The true core idea of this legislative act, Zimmerman says, “...of forcing every child into a single mold through standardized testing and tests is the intellectual cloning of children.” If this is true, then it appears to be that this supposedly compassionate educational reform, of caring for the children and ensuring that no child would be left

behind, may actually be quite non-compassionate to both students and educators, thereby reducing or obliterating educator compassion in educational settings.

Consequently, the continual reauthorization of ESEA, giving the government total control over curricula and enforcement of their federal programs, seems to have begun the huge rise in educator and student stress, burnout and educator attrition. The serious problem of increasingly competitive pressures for student academic excellence by NCLB and the government, and educational administration of this act, has the same negative resulting problems that educators have been experiencing. Pushing students beyond their capability can place both educators and students in danger of experiencing extreme stress, burnout and a strong desire to leave their educational setting (Douglas, 2006). Educators get sandwiched between the pressures they receive to put pressure on the students from their administrators and parents and the backlash of the students who become overwhelmed by the pressure. There seems to be no compassion for the educators or the students in this current educational atmosphere, not even for the little ones. In an attempt to potentially leave no child behind, it appears that we be taking the childhood away from all children, leaving every child behind.

In the last decade, the earliest years of schooling have become less like a trip to "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" and more like SAT prep...recess, music, art and even social studies are being replaced by writing exercises and spelling quizzes [and] kids as young as 6 are tested, and tested again...to ensure they're making sufficient progress... In Buffalo, N.Y., the district sent a group of more than 600 low-performing first graders to mandatory summer school; even so, 42 percent of them have to repeat the grade.

Donald Douglas, 2006

First-Graders Face Intense Academic Pressure!

Trying to deal with these educator and educational setting problems locally is often quite difficult, especially if the external root of these problems may not even be

based in our country. This same situation facing educators and students seems to go beyond the United States government and its Department of Education. Upon investigating into educator burnout and into one of its major apparent sources, educator stress, it was interesting to note that this huge problem was found to be an international one (Mo, 1991; Mullins, 1993; Healy, 1997; Harris, 2001; Aitken, 2002; Maclea, 2005). Though it appeared that many of the external sources may be government related, “Teacher burnout is a world-wide phenomenon that draws the attention of educational psychologists and stimulates efforts in construct elaboration and measurement” notes Schwarzer (2007) in his study of burnout in Germany and Hong Kong. The specific educator stress leading to the specific educator burnout manifestations, such as work overload, standardized testing curricula, educator dissatisfaction and rising disciplinary problems related to burnout, were surprisingly found to be the same in many educational settings outside of the United States.

Various international studies indicate the problems of educators and the pressure of government standardized testing may actually be a global situation having a potentially political and economic base. Could it be that other countries running to keep up with the demands of a global economy as well? Lin & Zinghai (1995) reports the enormous pressure on Chinese students “to obtain high academic achievement” and notes that there are “economic and political factors contributing to the situation.” Bossy (2000) in his study on *Academic pressure and impact on Japanese students* recounts the overwhelming multi-dimensional (i.e., psychological, emotional, intellectual, and physical) pressures faced by Japanese students that are directly connected to “serious recurring problems of...school-related suicide.”

These problems in Japan are notably instigated by the parents of students (similar to the recent US findings by Parker, 2008) who, out of their cultural distress and economic fear become “a super-aggressive army of complainers” against their children’s educators (Lewis, 2008). How did the reputation of the educator get so demeaned internationally that parents can become rude and hateful to educators, and governments could strongly intervene in their country’s educational systems?

Zimmerman (2002) considers that, internationally, “national standardized tests and testing came from politicians and business leaders - who decided they did not want to pay for the real cost of education. In its place, they decided to blame teachers.” Per Zimmerman the government has rendered the educators powerless, which is one of the specific problems relating to educator burnout. Depreciation of the educators, *blaming the teacher*, by the government and the parents exacerbates the educator burnout problem and feeds educator emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and devalued personal accomplishment dimensions. It keeps parents and educators pitted against each other in terms of who is responsible for enforcing the government educational demands on the students.

When the public hears a speech by Dr. Diane Ravitch (2002), entitled *Strengthen Teacher Quality* at a White House Conference on Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers, claiming that America, like Japan, is facing “a daunting challenge in making sure that we have a sufficient supply of well-educated, well-prepared teachers for our children”, it indicates that educator compassion is once again absent the government and has been substituted for educator invalidation, which may be paving the way for parents to invalidate and blame educators as well. Zimmerman asserts that politicians, which he

says “are fully owned and operated by corporate contributions,” are blaming educators and may be punishing them by imposing “unrealistic standards on students.”

It may very well be true that educators are ill-prepared; however it may be that what they are ill-prepared for is dealing with the government and their seemingly oppressive programs. It may be wise for educators to once again note (as previously mentioned in the section on *educator self-esteem*) that Brach (2003) related blame, which is stress as external, to the pain energy of unworthiness and insecurity. This gives educators an opportunity to be compassionate to themselves and to those blaming them, realizing that at the core of the blame (that the government and parents are expressing) may be pain and suffering.

Not only are these educational policies global, but so are the pressures on educators (additionally cited in *Educator Burnout* section of this chapter). The effects of the aforementioned educator problems may be even more devastating outside of the United States. For example, a recent United Kingdom news article reveals that “more than twice as many teachers aged under 60 quit their jobs between 2000 and 2005 than in the previous five year [and] blamed excessive red tape in schools, poor discipline amongst pupils and “micromanagement” by the Government” (Woolcock, December 2007).

Another insidious aspect of these problems is that many of the international educational problems can be traced to corporate ties. “The time, energy, and money that are being devoted to preparing students for standardized tests have to come from somewhere”, says educator Alfie Kohn (2000). Kohn (2004) marries corporate ties to educational problems. “Perhaps the two most destructive forces in education these days

are the tendency to view children as ‘investments’ (whose ultimate beneficiary is business) and a market-driven credentialism in which discrete individuals struggle for competitive distinctions.” On June 18, 2008, I witnessed a TV commercial saying “Children who eat Kellogg’s wheat cereal improve their test scores by 20%,” which is an overt example of the marriage of corporations, in this case Kellogg’s, and the government, through standardized test scores.

Could it be that corporations not compassionately interested in the welfare of the whole child now have the power to use the student and educator body of schools for their vested interests? Is this the common denominator for these prominent educator problems? An example of this possibility is in Nevis, an island in the Caribbean West Indies, where the top of the Department of Education issued a call to students “to push themselves beyond their comfort zone and to work towards the incentives offered by the Caribbean Examination Council” (<http://www.nevisblog.com>). It is interesting to note that the ITB, the International Business Company, the incorporation of Nevis Offshore Companies involved with “highly confidential and efficient commercial and banking systems” wrote the above article under the name *Nevis I* (<http://www.fletcherkennedy.com/offshore-company/nevis>).

Zimmerman takes a similar stance to Kohn regarding governments having been taken over by mega-corporations who are using the education of children for their financial benefit:

What corporations are imposing on the education system through standardized tests is nothing less than forcing children into a corporate value system, whose only value is profit. It can be said, then, that "teaching to the test" is a way of maximizing corporate profits. This also benefits big business by channeling children away from the cultivation of

specialized skills, thus dumming down our population of children, so that they are more suited for menial work.

Mark Zimmerman, 2000

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS TO EDUCATOR PROBLEMS

Enforced compliance to government policies makes the magnitude of educator problems greater than ever before now requiring potent solutions that the government and educational system might not be able to offer or develop. If “Corporate America is more interested in creating a slave work force than it is in solving social problems” (Zimmerman, 2002), then it may be unrealistic to expect governments that may be intricately tied to corporate conglomerates to create compassionate solutions, because the slave-owner/ slave mentality does not include the aspects of compassion such as honor, respect and true caring about the other.

In light of all of my above information, it seems that more than ever, it is necessary for educators to find effective methods to prepare themselves to deal with these serious problems in education today and the debilitating effects that it has on them, such as extreme stress, all of the dimensions of burnout and the tendency to leave their educational setting. Therefore the question becomes, how can educators who feel severely undermined by their economically-driven government, administration, students and parents not only cope, but thrive in their educational settings?

Compassionate solutions to the grave educator problems might seem to oppose current government policies, as these policies relate more to the pressuring of accountability than to a heartfelt desire for understanding; therefore government solutions have been less than compassionate. The “standard solution” that government has mainly used for both educator and student problems, notes educator Fried (1995), is the

psychological tool of “behavior management” (p.294). Psychologists studying these problems, like Asner (1994), advocate educator problems be handled by “changing work habits...or taking medication...currently the drugs prescribed most for anxiety are Xanax and Ativan. Depression may be treated with...Prozac, Zoloft or Paxil.”

However, Covey (1989) views these as *band-aid solutions*. “The underlying chronic condition remains, and eventually new acute symptoms will appear. The more people are into quick fix and focus on the acute problems and pain, the more the very approach contributes to the underlying chronic condition” (p. 40). Surpuriya and Jordan (1997) agree noting that “programs that are in place to help both teachers and students aren't proving effective -- they may even undermine a teacher's authority.” Therefore, what may be needed are solutions that not only deal with the day-to-day triggers of educators perhaps falling prey to the current global political economic educational direction, but also helps educators to effectively deal with the pain energy that lives within them that these external problems may be activating.

Given that traditional solutions to these current problems have not solved, and may not be able to solve these problems, a broader, more holistic, approach to education and educators might be in order as it addresses areas *outside the traditional box*. Holistic approaches to education have been utilized by many educators who are a part of the Transformational Education movement. For instance, one psychological solution has been “preventative intervention” which calls for changes on “the organizational level” (changes to be made in the educational settings), and “the individual level” which can potentially “strengthen teachers' resources for resisting stress” (Wood & McCarthy, 2002). However, it must be noted here that an absence of a holistic view of the

individual and a predominant focus on the intellect, especially that of educators and students, may be why solutions like NCLB are being attempted.

Our educational system has focused on the intellect and ignored the body, emotions, and spirit. We pay the price every day in our culture with physical and emotional sickness... The ethical problems that we see in our corporations can be seen as a natural outgrowth of an educational system that focuses primarily on testing, competition, and individual achievement. (p. 156)

John Miller *Educating for Wisdom and Compassion* 2006

Though, as Miller says, “We have paid a price for stressing knowledge over the development of the whole person” (p. 26), Palmer (Ibid) notes that there is still a glimmer of hope for educational settings because some “teachers, administrator, parents, and citizens who care about education” have begun to put holistic solutions into action and are “working hard to reclaim the integrity of teaching and learning so that it can once again become a process in which the whole person is nourished.” And perhaps, if educators can additionally find adequate methods to apply Emerson’s instructional advice, both to themselves and to their students, “that the inward is more valuable than their outward estate,” (Cited in Miller, p. 92) the chances of alleviating the educator problems, the student problems and even that of the educational environment, might increase sufficiently. Optimistically, transformational educators such as the ones cited above, understand that as the basic needs of the educators and the students are met, the true academic success that the global economic political structure longs for might possibly be served as well.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

CORE EDUCATOR PROBLEM OF

EDUCATOR HOLISTIC ILL-PREPAREDNESS

INTRODUCTION

It is the function of the educator to examine deeply his own thoughts and feelings and to put aside those values which have given him security and comfort, for only then can he help his students to be self-aware and to understand their own urges and fears. (p. 38)

Krishnamurti *Education and the significance of life* 1953

This dissertation has addressed specific educator problems in educational settings, which are related to educator pain, in order to clarify and determine the specific areas that compassionate educators can be of potential benefit. The *Research Methods* and the *Background of the Study* created for this dissertation have uncovered numerous problems of students and children as well as uncovering the many problems inherent in the field of education today. However, this dissertation will be limited to viewing these difficulties only from the vantage point of educator problems. This then includes only the problems educators have to deal with: the problems of students and children, the problems inherent in the field of education and the problems educators have because of their own triggered educator pain. Can educator self-awareness help them to compassionately view and deal with the problems producing educator pain and suffering?

As the psychological studies and educator reports cited within the *Background of the Study* have shown, the three main apparent educator problems are holistic in nature as they affect the whole educator: educator stress [physical and psychological pain], educator burnout (emotional and physical exhaustion, pain and illness; depersonalization and alienation [psychological pain]); a devaluing of personal accomplishments [spiritual

pain]) and educators leaving their educational settings. And although educators have been ill-prepared to deal with the above problems, and solutions would be appreciated, as Guglielmi, R.S. & Tatrow (1998) report, studies are still attempting to “identify the sources of stress and dissatisfaction that may eventually lead to burn-out and to the decision to leave the field of education (e.g., Borg & Riding, 1991; Farber, 1984; Friedman, 1991; Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978; Mazur & Lynch, 1989, etc).”

SOURCES OF EDUCATOR PROBLEMS

EDUCATORS ILL-PREPARED

TO DEAL WITH THE CORPORATE / POLITICAL MACHINE

Since many of the attempts to create solutions to the above problems have failed, it may very well be that the popularized obvious educator problems are not the core problems; therefore, the sources of these known problems need further investigation. In an attempt to identify some of the sources of the above educator problems in the hopes of understanding and then helping to mitigate some of them, this study explored, revealed, and cited in the *Background of the Study* that at least some of these educator problems are possibly caused by corporate /political intervention in educational systems. As Zimmerman (2002) surmises, the corporate / political machine places “unrealistic standards on students” which then snowballs down into administrative pressure, educator pressure, student pressure and parent pressure which then increases educator and student pressure. Therefore, this study assumes that one underlying source of administrative pressure, which is causing problems educators are ill-prepared to deal with, may have been initiated by corporate /political intervention.

Zimmerman (2002) presumes that these stringent government standards are being imposed to punish the educators. However, because these standards severely punish the students as well, it seems more realistic to assume that Kohn (2004) has a deeper and more accurate understanding of this. He believes that the reason behind the pressure to enforce specific academic standards is the corporate / political machine's vested interest, even if it is at the expense of the educators and students. A self-serving system that is not also serving the interests of educators and students is not being compassionate to the needs of educators and students. Being in charge of an educational environment that is non-compassionate in this way seems likely to result in the above educator problems.

EDUCATORS ILL-PREPARED TO DEAL WITH CURRENT DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS

When teachers are asked to describe their fears, apprehensions and concerns relating to teaching, student discipline usually leads the list.
(p. 98)

Phillips and Lee *The changing role of the American teacher* 1980

A second potential source of the above stated educator problems, which was touched upon in the *Background of the Study* and will now be looked at more closely, is disciplinary problems. In *A Child's World: Infancy through Adolescence*, Papalia et al. (2006) defines discipline as "methods of modeling character and of teaching self-control and acceptable behavior." One of the roles of the educator has been to discipline their students, thereby taking on the role of a disciplinarian of children.

The educator's role of disciplinarian has been steadily challenged. Studies show that "incidents of unruly behavior" have been on the rise with "disrespect, disruptive behavior and defiance" indicated as among the top problems (Shaw, 2002). There are

many studies (such as Martin, Linfoot, & Stephenson, 1999 and Wheldall, 1991) showing that educators have themselves reported that student misbehavior is a major problem they face daily in educational settings (Lawrence and Green, 2005). The disciplinary issue that burdens both educators and students, Filey & House (1969) conclude, “leads to reduced job satisfaction and has an adverse effect on individual performance” of educators and students alike (Cited in Harden, 1999).

However, even as far back as 1976, much harsher disciplinary problems were reported by educators nationwide in high volumes: “47% of urban school teachers saw student violence as a major problem” (Dworkin, 1988). In December 2005, it was reported that “violence and aggression in the classroom” was a major concern for many educators. Potter (1991) confers that teachers report that “physical aggression and verbal abuse are a constant problem [which has] become the main focus of the school.”

However, Phillips and Lee (1980) realize that “...it is not so much the incidence of actual violence in schools that creates teacher stress, but the fear of violence, and its correlates, that sustain stress and in some schools gives it a chronic, endemic character.” Therefore, discipline problems concerning varying degrees of violence, educators’ fear of violence, and reactions to violence and fears, can be underlying causes of educator stress, burn-out and abandonment of their profession, if educators can not deal with these problems.

Being ill-prepared to deal with disciplinary problems includes educators feeling uncertain and awkward dealing with aggression and threats of violence towards them and others. The inherent educator problems of lack of confidence and overwhelming stress (noted in the *Background of the Study*) may become exacerbated when administrators, parents and students are potentially evaluating the educator’s responses and reactions to

disciplinary problems as they sense that “it is not only the actions of the teacher that affect these outcomes, but the way that these actions are evaluated by others, for example, pupils, other teachers and the school management” (Lawrence and Green, 2005).

The government, claiming to be supporting educators by assisting them to have the necessary means to deal with these growing disciplinary problems, has now strengthened disciplinary punishment policies for public schools by sanctioning educator violence. Hinchey (2004) in a periodical on *Corporal Punishment: legalities, realities and implications* states that corporal punishment is being upheld by the Supreme Court as constitutional. Additionally, “President George W. Bush promoted legislation that would protect educators who had beaten children from lawsuits.”

Axtman (2005) is very concerned by these methods of disciplinary government intervention, which include such policies as *Zero Tolerance in Schools* and *The Safe School Act* passed by States in the 1990's, as these severely strict disciplinary strategies and punishments are being applied to all public school students regardless of whether there have been any prior offenses. Barakat et al. in *Positive Discipline and Child Guidance* emphatically opposes corporal punishment as a disciplinary strategy as specialists “agree that using physical force, threats and put-downs can interfere with a child's healthy development” and suggests that the best disciplinarian can enforce order without coercion. The reliance on tough disciplinary measures indicate that educators may be ill prepared to enforce order without coercion, may be unprepared to deal the will of their students, and may have then accepted a traditional educator/student relationship even though that might not be in the highest interest of either the educator or the students.

The need for educators to resort to corporal punishment in their educational settings implies that educators are ill-prepared to compassionately deal with disciplinary problems.

CAUSES OF DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS

This study has found that disciplinary problems, though the cause of many of the educator problems, may still not be the root cause of educator problems. Therefore, this study has had to investigate this problem further. Montessori points to another problem that may provide a clue to the root of educator problems. "The fundamental problem in education is not an educational problem at all: it is a social one. It consists in the establishment of a new and better relationship between the two great sections of society - children and adults" (Standing, 1984). Potter (1991) looks at government pressure and cultural distress as the causes of disciplinary problems stating that "low-achieving students and troubled families" are major causes of these disciplinary problems. Therefore, this investigation then points to three potential causes of disciplinary problems within the educational setting: the traditional educator/student relationship, student stress and pressure caused by corporate /political intervention (discussed in length in *Background of the Study*), and the cultural distress affecting parents, students and even educators themselves.

TRADITIONAL EDUCATOR/STUDENT RELATIONSHIP AS A CAUSE OF DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS

The traditional educator/student relationship that the educator has been consciously and unconsciously trained to develop may contribute to, and be a main cause

of educator disciplinary problems. Maria Montessori (1966) showed in *The Secrets of Childhood* that she understood a core traditional educator fallacy. Educators take on the “personal responsibility” to be “the molders of the child” and imagine they can “accomplish this creative work exteriorly by the direction and suggestions they give to the child.” If this is true, then it would be fairly easy for the corporate/political machine to piggy-back on this traditional relationship of educators and stress educator accountability in NCLB, and now in June 2008 focus on improved accountability” (<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/intro/reauth/index.html>), demanding educators’ take personal responsibility to mold the students by forcing them to comply to government, administrative and educator directions for the sake of the students, even if the educators’ behavior hurts the educator/student relationship and increases disciplinary problems in the process. Therefore, corporate /political intervention potentially increases disciplinary problems.

Maria Montessori (1967) notes that power struggles can be inherent within disciplinary problems. She warns that “obedience ...consists, above all, in acting in accordance with the will of someone else” (p. 254). Compassionate disciplinary methods have not been taught and traditional educator/student relationships may not favor compassion towards children.

The child is considered a receptive being instead of as an active being...This error, when applied to the will, is even more serious, for the ordinary school not only denies the child every opportunity for using his will, but it directly obstructs and inhibits its expression. Every protest on the child's part is treated as rebellion, and one may truly say that the educator does everything possible to destroy the child's will. (p. 250)

Maria Montessori *The Absorbent Mind* 1967

Educators may utilize strict disciplinary measures because they have not understood the relationship between obedience and the will. However educator training may not have taken into consideration what Montessori has understood, that “the power to obey is the last phase in the development of the will, which in its turn has made obedience possible” (ibid p. 257). Based on this understanding of the development of the student’s will, educators’ disciplining students by pushing against the student’s will, such as with external government pressures, standardized testing, teaching to the test and overemphasizing the intellect, could greatly contribute to the backlash of student disciplinary problems with which the educator then has to deal. Montessori (1966) shows her empathy for this educator and student problem as she said that “...even though he may be convinced that he is filled with zeal, love, and a spirit of sacrifice on behalf of his child” the educator is actually “unconsciously [suppressing] the development of *the child's own personality*” thereby again making obedience impossible (p. 16).

Disciplining students so non-compassionately may indicate that educators are relying upon disciplinary techniques (consciously or unconsciously) that represent ways that they have learned to discipline themselves, or have been disciplined by others. Most have not been trained or discovered alternative techniques. This may also indicate educator difficulties with their own self-discipline which may weaken their position. Furthermore, power struggles between educators and their students address a deeper lack of preparedness, that of educators having insufficient means to deal with the pain that gets triggered within them in the face of aggression and abuse.

There are conflicting approaches of traditional and transformational educator/student relationships. For instance, a transformational disciplinary technique

was suggested by Portia Kennel during the *Seeds of Compassion* conference in Seattle, Washington 2008. “Help children learn to express and recognize their emotions [which will] help children manage negative emotions in appropriate ways.” Expressing negative emotions appropriately may be a first step for the students, but Brendtro, et al. (1990) in *Reclaiming youth at risk: Our hope for the future* sees the disciplinary problems as resulting from students who "are struggling to find artificial, distorted belongings through behavior such as attention seeking... [and that]...their unmet needs can be addressed by corrective relationships of trust and intimacy” (p. 23/47). Therefore, educators might have to first prepare themselves to be able to successfully create relationships of trust and intimacy with their students as Palmer (2007) speaks to the importance of relational trust:

Reported in *Education Week*: ...Schools whose staff reported low levels of trust had “virtually no chance of showing improvement in either reading or mathematics” (p. xvi)

If educators only know traditional disciplinary approaches, are only familiarized with the traditional view of the educator/student relationship, possess a personal lack of self-discipline, have not developed relational trust, and become overwhelmed when dealing with disciplinary problems, they are often ill-prepared to deal with disciplinary problems in educational settings.

CULTURAL DISTRESS AS A CAUSE OF DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS

Beginning of this century was trouble – using force, violence. Not a very healthy century...The later part of the 20th century...more crimes among students, trouble in the family. Then the reality: more than 67% of parents get separated after child birth. This clearly shows something lacking in this society, a certain sort of habit.

Dalai Lama *Seeds of Compassion* 2008

Another important cause of disciplinary problems that have formidable negative effects on educators and that educators are ill-prepared to deal with, is that of cultural distress. Zimmerman (1987) saw that “many problems in America’s schools today...are instead coming from a society that has drifted away from a clear set of values.” This is compounded by the fact that Shah (2002) points to, that “today, more students than ever come from a broken home.” Therefore, what has appeared to be a problem rooted in the educational system, or even a problem with the modern youth, seems to actually be stemming from all of us being a part of a culture in distress, the blatantly obvious symptoms of which are the rampant disciplinary problems in schools.

Societal changes are a major source of stress in the classroom. Be it the changing value systems, marital breakdown or unemployment, teachers are expected to cope. Yet they lack the appropriate knowledge and expertise.

Healy Targeting the causes of teachers’ stress 1997

As a result of cultural distress, various researchers have noted an overwhelming increase of educator responsibilities with regards to the roles they need to take with their students. As Phillips (2007) notes, as “more and more of these kids come from dual working families that have little time to provide the support children need...a far greater burden falls on teachers.” Educators may be ill prepared to deal with the “changing role of the American teacher” per Phillips and Lee (1980), as disciplinary problems are now a part of the “current and future sources of stress” for educators.

Educator stress and burnout mount, because, says Dworkin (1987), not only are educators having to increase the amount of educator accountability for “the transmission of knowledge” the educator has to now be accountable “for the socialization of the student as well.” Surpuriya and Jordan (1997) reported that educators have specifically

been “taking on the roles of counselor, mother, father, friend, secretary, doctor, preacher, and police officer.” The Dalai Lama (*Seeds of Compassion* 2008) further understood that what was once the job of the church and the family has now fallen on the shoulders of the educators.

Dr. Claran O’Boyle, professor of psychology, recognized the additional problem of the ill-preparedness of the educational system to assist educators in dealing with the effects of cultural distress on their students. O’Boyle explains that educators “are expected to manage the country’s social problems, but while expectations are escalating, there is no corresponding increase in resources” (Healy, 1997). This accounts for the lack of support reported as the main reason “why educators quit” (Asimov & Emam, 2007).

Compared with what the above authors have addressed, Nord (1995) has discovered deeper overall affects of cultural distress that more directly relate to the disciplinary problems with which the educators are daily confronted. Nord finds “scholars analyzing school violence speak of ‘spiritual emptiness’...the ‘spiritual darkness’ that afflicts the young” (Kessler, 2000). Educators’ responsibilities then also now include being prepared to deal with the spiritual emptiness of students, which perhaps then triggers their own spiritual emptiness as well. How can educators additionally prepare to deal with spiritual emptiness and darkness?

If educators receive little support and resources, it may be difficult for educators to deal with the problems of the students without educators proactively increasing their ability to fully confront these problems and build up their own internal resources. As the educator problems are often similar to those of the students, for instance, the educator problem of depersonalization and alienation which aligns with what Bennett (1984)

reports as the student's "basic psychological need...of belonging" which relates to the student's "spiritual hunger" (p. 4), it seems vital that educators care for the problems in themselves that may overlap with those that their students are experiencing.

...look at the children we teach. If we look at them realistically, we see that their lives, like the lives of the teachers, are touched by anxiety, hostility, loneliness, guilt, and many other conditions of distress. If we are to face these children as they are, we must face the conditions as realistically as we can. (p. 95)

Jersild *When Teachers Face Themselves* 1967

STATEMENT OF THE CORE EDUCATOR PROBLEM

EDUCATOR HOLISTIC ILL-PREPAREDNESS

In summary, educators have been found to be ill-prepared to deal with their educator problems. On the surface these problems seem to be educator stress, burnout and eventual leaving of their educational settings. On a deeper level, the underlying sources of these educator problems that educators have also been found to be ill-prepared to deal with are: the corporate / political machine and disciplinary problems. The roots of the disciplinary problems educators are ill-prepared to deal with has been found to be the traditional student/teacher relationship (which may lay the ground for the government's policies to take hold and exacerbate educator pressure) and cultural distress, which are therefore the roots of educator stress, educator burnout and educators leaving their educational settings.

But what is at the core of educators being ill-prepared to deal with their stress, their burnout symptoms, their compulsion to leave their educational settings, their problems with government policies, their difficulties with disciplinary problems, their unsatisfactory educator/student relationship and the affects of cultural distress? What core

educator problem which when solved could positively affect all of the above problems with which many educators are faced?

Modern day Americans have a spiritual problem [and though] we succeeded so brilliantly in matters of economics, science, and technology [we] have been less successful in matters of the heart and soul. (p. 380)

Nord, 1995; Cited in Kessler *The Soul of Education* 2000

The heuristic and theoretical inquiry into the core educator problem has resulted in the discovery of a specific problem which this study will call: holistic educator ill-preparedness, which refers to educators being ill-prepared emotionally, psychologically, spiritually and perhaps even physically for educational settings. As educators are receiving few external resources, this may be the time to build up their own inner ones. Many educators appear to be ill prepared to deal with their internal problems arising from, and potentially activated by, external stressful problems in their current educational settings, and then experience the previously stated holistic problems.

It is helpful to know that stress increases the probability that any disassociative strategies you may have developed as a child will be called into play in your adult life. (p. 47)

Napier *Getting Through the Day: Strategies for Adults Hurt as Children* 1993

Dworkin (1987) indicates that the educator's ability or inclination to take abuses or insults from students may be seriously reduced if that teacher is already feeling stressed and pressured by either intrinsic or extrinsic factors. This study therefore deduces that many educators are ill prepared to deal with stressors and with their personal reactions to their stressors. This is also evident in the resulting educator pain expressing itself in many ways, such as the apparent problems discussed in *The Background of the Study*: educator stress, educator burnout and educators leaving their educational setting.

For example, Fimian's study (1990) showing educators "insecure, vulnerable, unable to cope, depressed, and anxious" may be the result of educators' having insufficiently prepared themselves to be in the educational setting by not having dealt with earlier problematic education-related situations that can be triggered by current educational settings. This study therefore views these international educator problems which appear to arise out of educators being ill prepared to deal with current educational settings and disciplinary problems as potentially stemming from educator holistic ill-preparedness.

The best preparation for teaching, Maria Montessori emphasized many times, is a study of one's self. This may be the most profound advice she gave to us about teacher training...How many have actually undertaken an actual in-depth study of their own values, beliefs, strengths, weaknesses, habits and omissions? How many have tried to determine how their personal characteristics either inhibit or enhance their relationships with children? (p. 34)

Aline Wolf *Nurturing the Spirit* 1996

SUMMARY OF CORE EDUCATOR PROBLEM

My personal educator problem, which was the initial problem that this dissertation addressed heuristically, was thought to be my own burn-out as an educator. However, upon investigation, I realized that the underlying problem was that I was holistically ill-prepared. I had not been effectively dealing with problems relating to education and my reactions in educational settings, my educator pain energy. For example, my workaholic complex (here referred to as my *workaholic pain energy package*) and my perfectionist persona also helped to create my burnout.

As I was ill-equipped to deal with my educator workaholic and perfectionist qualities, this made me further ill-prepared to be free to sense how to serve compassionately. Because of my difficulty in integrating my own purposes and heartfelt

educational desires into the classroom setting (educator alienation), I began to compartmentalize myself from the classroom. As my personal connection became divorced from my experience as an educator, my joy and deep satisfaction began to get compromised. Stress began to mount.

The use of compassion as an educator, and in my educational setting, had been my staple that had proved to be very positive and potentially the main reason for my school's success. However, my ability to sustain being compassionate slowly fell away and I could not recover it. Despite an external strong interest in my school's continuation, my physical, mental, emotional and spiritual pain resulted in burnout and my inability to maintain my school's existence. The major narrative inquiry, *My Journey Towards Being a Compassionate Educator*, addresses all of my above problems in education and in becoming a compassionate educator and shows the holistic methods that I had used to prepare myself and how this led me to begin to solve these problems compassionately.

PROBLEM CONCLUSION

These personal educator problems of mine are in alignment with the findings of many studies of problems of educators in general. The main area of ill-preparedness for educators is in holistic training which could assist educators to deal with their own educator pain, the problems of students, cultural distress, and the inadequacies in the educational system. Therefore, this dissertation will view the primary problem as educators being holistically ill-prepared to educate.

The problems reviewed in the *Background of the Study* will be considered as secondary problems that can be mitigated through adequate solutions to the primary

problem of educators being ill-prepared. Holistic preparation of the teacher will also be examined for its possible applicability of extending this to include holistic activities in educational settings and their potential benefits when they are initiated by compassionate educators.

When educators begin the work of preparing themselves holistically by exploring the depths of their educator pain, self-compassion may be helpful in dealing with their own suffering. Straub (2000), who runs workshops helping service-oriented professionals (primarily educators) deal with their underlying pain, understands saying “I began this work because I could no longer be effective in my efforts to contribute to the world until I confronted my own suffering” and realized the necessity of increased self-awareness through being self-compassionate (p. 60). Therefore, this dissertation points to the cultivation of educator compassion, as a holistic educator preparation which includes self-compassion, as a potential solution to the educator problem of ill-preparedness.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Questions of purpose - what will give meaning to my own life - arise in students...What do I really want to do? (p.58)

Kessler *The Soul of Education* 2000

Kessler views *purpose* as a philosophic spiritual question present in educators and students alike. Is it true that a spiritual and philosophic direction lies within each student? L. Ron Hubbard (1970) believes it to be true and even says that a child “has established his purpose for life at the age of two years” (glossary)! This then becomes significant for the educator of the child who may be able to learn more about the purposes that their students already possess and can gear their teaching towards the accomplishment of their students’ purposes.

However, in order for educators to be able to know the purpose of their students, perhaps educators’ need to first be in touch with their own purposes as an educator, as well as what gives meaning to their own personal lives. If educators can connect with, be compassionate to, and follow the path of their own purposes, then there might be a better chance that they will be able to be compassionate to the purposes of their students and potentially help them to understand the meaning of their own lives. Presumably, educators who are in touch with both their own purposes, the purposes of their students and the purposes of their school they may be able to teach in ways that are more relevant to the everyone’s purposes. This suggests that the question of educators becoming familiarized with their own purposes may be an important one.

The general purpose of this study is to investigate the use of compassionate inquiry, self-awareness of the educator, as an agent for transforming educator pain energy. Can self-compassion be beneficial to educators in a way that sufficiently

addresses, deals with, and prevents the stated causes of educator stress, educator burn-out, and the abandonment of an educator career? Could it help alleviate other problems in educational settings that have been found to be disturbing to educators? As was discovered and stated in the above sections, the primary educator problem found is being holistically ill-prepared to deal with the various difficulties that either arise in, and/or affect, educational settings. Therefore, this study explores the cultivation of educator self-compassion and compassion for others (*greater compassion*) as a holistic educator preparation which can help to mitigate occurrences of the stated educator present and future problems in educational settings.

My heuristic inquiry into the underlying factors of my own educator pain brought forth my educator purpose: *to be free to sense how to serve compassionately and creatively*. My intuition and good judgment told me that being free to sense how to serve compassionately and creatively would be quite beneficial to me, other educators (including friends and family) and any educational settings with which I involve myself. I have experienced moments when I was free to serve compassionately and found that they brought me great satisfaction. Carrying out this purpose, I assume could increase the possibility for children and adults in my care to have healthier hearts and a more compassionate educational experience, thus increasing the potential for a more peaceful world, my stated social purpose.

I have found that not being free to sense how to serve compassionately and creatively is an underlying factor in my problems of educator stress and burnout. Consequently, a major personal purpose of this study is for me to discover ways to effectively be free to sense how to serve compassionately and creatively. Discovering this

will hopefully heal me of my current burnout and free me of potential future burnout as an educator and of the need to leave educational settings. Therefore, a purpose of the study is to find out what stands in the way of my being free, and also discover methods to effectively take care of those causes that have been inhibiting me from being free to sense how to be of service (to myself, to others and to the world at large).

As is fully explained in the section on *Research Methods*, this study uses heuristic, narrative and theoretical methods to accomplish the purposes of this study. The heuristic and narrative inquiries specifically use myself as the primary subject. It is important for me to seek holistic solutions so that I, as an educator (a student, a teacher, a parent, and a grandparent) can be holistically fit. That means that I desire to be physically, spiritually, mentally and emotionally available so as to be the best educator I am capable of being. To accomplish this, I seek to discover successful means for dealing with any triggers resulting from teaching or parenting, means that would help prevent me from any future burnout as well. I hope that the solutions I discover can also be applied by other teachers and parents successfully.

In order to achieve this purpose, I need to ask these relevant questions: What prevented me from being free to confront my problems in my educational setting? What prevented me from being free to sense how to serve compassionately? What prevented me from being able to sense creative solutions to the problems I was having? As I was unable to maintain compassion, why was my level of compassion inadequate? These will mainly be answered through heuristic and narrative means.

Once I learn those answers, my next inquiries include: How can I transform my educator pain energy and liberate myself? What would actually prevent pain energy from

inhibiting my teaching abilities, my comfort in the classroom, and my comfort with individual children, their parents and all of their pain energy? What could effectively help me to compassionately deal with educator problems negatively affecting my educational setting? If compassion is an answer to these questions, then what can I do to maintain compassion? Could the answers to the questions, these potentially workable means, be effective for other educators experiencing similar problems?

This last question speaks to a personal purpose - to expose myself to any gift that I may receive or could get enhanced through this study and then find workable ways that could be inspirations to other educators. Because of this last purpose, during both the heuristic and theoretical research, I will always have educating educators in mind. Consequently, this dissertation will hopefully bring to light ways in which to cultivate compassionate educators who, to some degree, could help heal their own educator problems, be more comfortable in their educational settings and holistically assist in the transformation of other educators.

The purpose of this study is then similar to what Rachel Kessler (2000) says in *The Soul of Education* of her educator path:

My life could have meaning insofar as I could reduce or eliminate suffering in this world. (p. 73)

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Given the startling increase of educator pain and suffering from educator burnout, perceiving and sharing its causes, results and potentially compassionate beneficial solutions can be of great importance to all people in the field of education. With this in mind, the primary groups that this study would be most important to are those involved in teacher training, school counselors, school administrators, those creating educator professional development seminars and workshops, and the students and clients of these professionals. Other groups that could find this research important would be educators who are highly stressed, educators on the verge of burnout, educators considering leaving their educational settings and all those educators who are holistically ill-prepared.

This study's main importance is two fold: it points to the potential realization that educators are in need of holistic preparation and it offers methods to cultivate self-compassion as a holistic educator preparation. These can then lead to the educator ability to be free to sense. Its importance in the fulfillment of my own educator purpose is that as an educator I have to prepare myself to be able to *sense* how to serve.

The preparation for the teacher is two fold: to be sensitive to the mystery and to be sensitive to the wonder of life revealing itself. (p. 35)

Buckenmeyer *The California Lectures of Maria Montessori 1915, 1997*

As Buckenmeyer demonstrates, Montessori realizes that finding effective means to be sensitive to the mysteries and wonder of life is an educator preparation in and of itself. However, this brings me to an even greater importance of this study; sensitivity alone may not be useful without a preparation that lies in the realization that it may require first sensing ourselves accurately and secondly transforming any pain energy that may arise from this sensing through being self-compassionate.

Aline Wolfe (1996) has a suggestion that was earlier considered: “The best preparation for teaching, Maria Montessori emphasized many times, is a study of one's self” (p. 34). Considering then that studying oneself may be important, finding effective means of studying oneself is equally important.

Studying oneself then leads to another importance of this study. It can be viewed as an application of Maslow's (1968) self-actualization theory to the field of education. Studying oneself increases the possibility of “realizing the potentialities of the person” (p. 153). The educator may be able to accomplish this through a compassionate study of the various parts of the educator as a potentially effective means for the cultivation *and actualization* of a compassionate educator preparation.

Another reason why this study is important is that the cultivation of compassion explores the potential of holistic compassion which necessitates a spiritual, physical, mental, emotional, and heart connections. This then puts it in the realm of a holistic preparation. It investigates such holistic educator preparedness, as personal commitment, a cultivation of self-awareness, empathy and spiritual connection. These may potentially increase educator openness to the mystery of life, which, as Buckmeyer cites, is important for educator preparation and can benefit the educator and their students alike.

Regarding my personal educator problems, my purposes and my educator pain energy, this study is important as I hope that all of my discoveries will result in my becoming a truly compassionate educator at a deeper and fuller level than I have ever before achieved, and that I now intuit is available for me to cultivate and realize. Can I help to transform the educational system through the conscious inclusion of compassion,

by helping to cultivate compassionate educators, and initiating this by my own cultivation of greater compassion?

My personal discovery of a workable compassionate practice intended to deal with the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual pain related to educator stress, burnout and the abandonment of educational settings is important as it can potentially be utilized by other educators faced with similar problems in their educational settings. Furthermore, I am engaged in this research in order to be able to gain new perceptions that I could then offer as a gift to educators, as Zukav (1989) says, to “help those on their journey.” This study is then potentially important to any educator, but it may be especially important to those educators whose path already includes an interest in a holistic lifestyle, compassion, and *conscious evolution*.

In conscious evolution, our spiritual experience expands to include resonance with the design of evolution. Our spiritual growth awakens our social potential, pressing us deeper inward to pick up that design and outward to express our creativity in the world through vocation. We work from within ourselves toward higher consciousness, greater freedom and more complex order to effect a change in the world, first and foremost through our personal evolution. (p. 70)

Barbara Marx Hubbard *Conscious Evolution* 1998

It appears to me that one way to consciously evolve is through holistic connection and compassion. This research then is important as it offers educators ways to help them to become freer to sense how to serve compassionately and creatively “in the world through vocation” (B. M. Hubbard, 1998). By gearing this study toward increasing educator awareness regarding holistic ill-preparedness as an educator, I researched and include a variety of holistic concepts, activities and exercises with the intention of preparing educators holistically and in assisting educators to consciously evolve.

If conscious educator evolution requires the transformation of educator pain energy, then this study is important for educators as a holistic preparation that is based on the cultivation of compassion could transform energy pain. If this transformation is brought about it could further the conscious evolution of educators by freeing them from their educator pain thus freeing educators to enjoy their profession and lessen their proclivity towards stress and burnout and create positive affects in their educational environments.

Another way that this research is important is that can help educators to be freer to sense how to serve is then by cultivating compassion and learning how to become a compassionate educator. Cultivating compassion includes cultivating self-compassion which points to educators becoming aware of their own pain energy and then taking appropriate steps to compassionately transform that pain energy. This study postulates that a cultivation of compassion and self-compassion are conscious evolutionary methods that educators can take which may greatly benefit them on a daily basis. By finding and receiving the deepest and most fulfilling compassion and the healing of their lives, educators may then reduce the causes, symptoms and results of their burn-out and free them to be more available to attain their goals as an educator.

Ultimately, however, a major importance of this study is how it can potentially benefit humanity through its children. As Montessori (1996) says in *The Secret of Childhood*, “whatever affects a child affects humanity, for it is in the delicate and secret recesses of his soul that a man's education is accomplished” (p. 4). Children who have educators who are holistically prepared, who are compassionate educators and who do not suffer from excessive stress, symptoms of burnout and educator pain energy, are quite

fortunate. These children can potentially benefit from their educator's increased sensing skills and ability to empathetically understand their current needs and help provide them to receive the best possible education.

On the other hand, educators who are in their educational setting while introverted and in emotional, psychological, spiritual and physical pain are probably not free to sense how to serve compassionately and creatively, and so can unintentionally and unconsciously hurt their students. Thich Nhat Hanh (2005) offers his wisdom within the Buddhist context of liberation; this can be applied to educators who are in pain. He says that if someone is "suffering themselves, they will not be able to listen. So only if you liberate yourself can you serve others."

Montessori (Ibid.) reminds educators that their mistakes "fall upon our children and make an indelible impression upon them. We shall die, but our children will suffer the consequences of our errors" (p. 4). That is why Maria Montessori then says that "The adult must find within himself the still unknown error that prevents him from *seeing the child* as he is."

Though Montessori offers no means of educator preparation, she makes blatantly obvious the importance of educators successfully preparing themselves: "If such a preparation is not made, if the attitudes relative to such a preparation are not acquired, he cannot go further" (p.15). Therefore, another main importance of this study is that it hopes to offer potentially successful means for educator preparation which will further Montessori's intentions, but for which she did not provide any direction. It also offers the potential of educator liberation for the sake of both educators and children, which Thich Nhat Hanh advocates.

This dissertation then addresses such preparation that include the possibility of educators learning how to increase their awareness of what personal problems might stand in their way of “*seeing the child as he is*” and liberating themselves from these problems and their suffering through self-compassion. Once educators can compassionately correct their own errors, it seems likely that they will be able to compassionately serve the true needs of the child.

My vision is that of an understanding and formulating a practice of compassion and self compassion for educators, as a holistic educator preparation. This is important because it could positively impact and reduce the suffering of the lives of educators, which could then positively impact and reduce the suffering of the lives of their students and the society in which the students could contribute to, and which could, thereby, positively impact and reduce the suffering of the human race. The importance of this study is then similar to what Rachael Kessler (2000) says in *The Soul of Education* of her educator path, as she too seems to have the passion and compassion to assist in freeing humanity of its suffering.

My life could have meaning insofar as I could reduce or eliminate suffering in this world. (p. 73)

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Loving friendliness, or lovingkindness, is a very powerful force to transform suffering... We must nurture the seeds of loving friendliness and help them unfold, both in ourselves and in others. (p. 65)

Venerable Henepola Gunaratana *Transforming Suffering* 2003

The instrumentation to be used for this study has been noted in the section on *Research Methods*. This section, *Scope of the Study*, is then an overview of the scope of the study as follows. The main research will address the possibility of cultivating compassionate educators as a means of transforming suffering and creating educator holistic preparedness.

The subject population of this study includes educators of children, and not children themselves. Additionally, it includes only those educators who are parents, grandparents or teachers of children/students who are of pre-school through high school age. Educational settings within the scope of this study include home schooling, tutoring, day care facilities, and both alternative and traditional schools. The educator population that may benefit most from this study will be those educators experiencing the above educator problems. For this reason, the population of troubled educators of children in pre-school through high school was theoretically investigated with reference to compassion in education and holistic preparatory exercises within the realm of transformational education.

Regarding educator benefits, this study's scope also includes the researching, finding and documenting of specific potential educator benefits, especially as they relate to the educator problems discovered in the *Background of the Study* and the *Statement of the Problem*. Special notice will be taken of such beneficial influences on educators as the possible mitigation of the educator problems of stress, burnout, and the desire to leave

the educational setting, as well as the educator's difficulty in dealing with pain and suffering - both of the educator and of others in their educational setting. Ultimately, this study will address compassion and what may be the key educator problem, that of educator holistic ill-preparedness.

This dissertation will limit the problems for which it will seek possible mitigation to those specifically affecting educators. It will not directly focus on the specific problems of students or the educational system, except for viewing them from the vantage point of educators. Though this research has brought forth many problems in educational settings related to students' pain, such as soullessness, alienation, lack of motivation, purposelessness, emotional difficulties, and other problems resulting from cultural distress, these are considered from the light of being potentially problematic for educators. Student and educational setting problems may need to be dealt with by educators if they are causing or stimulating educator pain. If this is the case, then this study may need to include assessing if and how student and educational setting problems increase educator problems and whether or not by being a compassionate educator the educator problems may be reduced.

More disturbing in its painful consequences, more destructive in its effects on the growing personality, and more harmful in the effect it has on one's dealings with others is anxiety of less direct and more hidden origin. This is the kind of anxiety generated by unresolved problems of the past, which, in ways not fully recognized by the person himself, leave him unable to face the conditions of his life in a forthright and realistic way because he is at odds with himself. (p. 24)

Jersild *When Teachers Face Themselves* 1967

I am the main subject for the heuristic and narrative inquiries. These parts of the study will include my heuristic and narrative inquiries into my own pain and suffering related to educator issues. The heuristic and narrative sections were investigated to assess

if the use of self-compassion could actually transform the energy of my educator pain and suffering. It will also be investigating if this could result in becoming freer to better sense my own needs, which could then lead to serving myself by proactively getting those needs met compassionately.

If it is found through the narrative and heuristic inquiries that self-compassion can actually transform the energy of my educator pain and suffering, then this result would be sufficient for it to be viable as an educator preparation. It is beyond the scope of this study to inquire into the actual benefits in an educational setting. However, I do agree with the Dalai Lama (1995) when he notes, “Of course, in the field of education there is no doubt that compassionate motivation is important and relevant” (p. 72).

The major part of this study is my *work of excellence*, my main narrative: *My Journey towards Being a Compassionate Educator*. This is an inquiry into experiences of my study of the literature on compassion as well as my experiences of other compassionate and non-compassionate educator influences in my life and includes a section on the evolution of this study of compassion and education, my heuristic research into self-compassion, and my attempt to discover potentially viable compassionate practices as instruments of transformation and educator holistic preparation.

During the entire narrative inquiry, any educator pain energy noted will be listed as items on an *Educator Pain Energy List*, in the hope of transforming the energy of these educator pain items in the future if not transformed when an item is discovered or triggered. The scope of this study does not include attempting to transform all of my educator pain energy, which I may discover during my heuristic and narrative inquiries, before completing this dissertation. However, I will attempt to transform the energy of

my most significant educator pain items. I aspire to take the time to transform a critical mass of the educator pain energy that gets uncovered during my heuristic and narrative inquiries, for my benefit and for the benefit of everyone in any of my current or future educational settings, because I value the warning of Ladner (2004), who says in *The Lost Art of Compassion*:

If we do not find a way of facing the difficult aspects of our own souls, a way of looking honestly at our suffering and its causes in order to develop a meaningful, mature compassion for ourselves, then regardless of what we do externally, a sense of emptiness or incompleteness will remain in our hearts. We will not become deeply compassionate toward others, and we will not find freedom from suffering in our own lives. (p. 51)

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study's limitations mainly relate to not taking into account the many differences among educators. The limitations then include the fact that this study does not address the gender, cultural background, educational background or previous difficulties of the educator. These differences might play a part in the types of problems and exposure to the concepts within this study.

Additionally, this study does not differentiate between neophytes and seasoned educators, or address the various differences due to types of schools educators are working in or subjects taught by the educators. Because of this lack of distinction, there may be many specific difficulties and situations that this study can not address. Furthermore, physical, emotional, mental or spiritual weaknesses and/or strengths may be different for each educator, so this study may not directly address all educators. All of the above may play a part as to how easy or difficult it may be to cultivate being a compassionate educator.

This study is also limited by my biases, experiences, social skills, DNA, habit patterns, learning style, critical thinking ability, methods of evaluation, astrological and numerological blueprint, consciousness and spiritual evolution level. For instance, my inconsistent self-discipline pain energy inhibited me from maintaining my daily practices of compassion and self-compassion, thereby preventing me from having a daily record that could possibly afford more accurate results for this study.

Additionally, my workaholic pain energy package, exacerbated by my perfectionist tendencies (astrologically having four major planets in Virgo) prevented me from creating a simple, concise dissertation in, what could be considered, a timely

fashion. I continually wanted to expand the dissertation topic and was *hard put* to have this dissertation completed at all. Additionally, my workaholic educator pain energy package with my perfectionist persona further limited my applications of the practice as I was compelled to do the theoretical research and not complete all of the heuristic research of transforming the energy all my educator pain and suffering items. Moreover, my *perfectionist* persona also made me feel that I had to transform all of my educator pain energy prior to writing the dissertation, or at least prior to completing this dissertation in order for me to deem this study as complete.

Due to my confusion about whether to transform all of my pain energy prior to the completion of this dissertation and the length of time this study has taken, I decided to not have all of my pain energy transformed through the practice of self-compassion prior to completion. Because of this, the part of this study that relates to this practice may not be fully accurate as its complete personal results may not be available. Because I have not taken any other educators through the process of this study, there is also a lack of corroborating evidence. Therefore, it is difficult for me to fully attest to the accurate results of the practices of self-compassion for other educators as I, the primary participant, had not applied them to all of my pain energy or to others pain energy.

This study will not decide whether compassionate educators are beneficial to the whole educational system or will raise tests scores. It will also not focus on the ways that compassionate educators may have beneficial influences on students, parents, other educators or the educational setting. However, all of the above are potential benefits from cultivating compassionate educators.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

HEURISTIC RESEARCH / HEURISTIC INQUIRY

For one split second we drop the load of our preoccupations and the super-solution, the super-answer is suddenly ours, in one great super-reconciliation of everything. (p. 39)

Brother David Steindle-Rast *A Listening Heart* 1988

DEFINITIONS OF HEURISTIC RESEARCH AND HEURISTIC INQUIRY

The main research method this study has utilized, for investigating the potential of the cultivation of a compassionate educator for educator transformation and as a viable holistic educator preparation, has been named both Heuristic Research and Heuristic Inquiry. Certain key definitions will contribute to the meaning of this research style. The term research has been defined as a “studious inquiry or examination...investigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts...”

(<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/research>). Cambridge University Press

2003 describes research as “a detailed study of a subject, especially in order to discover (new) information or reach a (new) understanding.”

Combining these definitions, this study will view research as a studious inquiry for the purpose of gaining new awareness through discovering new information or for reaching a new understanding. This dissertation will utilize three forms of research: scholarly theoretical, heuristic research/inquiry and narrative inquiry. The research in this dissertation relates to educators, educator training and compassion. A holistic approach to researching these areas would include various genres of research. Ken Wilbur describes three of these genres as:

...three eyes of knowing, the eye of flesh, which apprehends physical events; the eye of mind, which apprehends images, desires, concepts and ideas; and the eye of contemplation, which apprehends spiritual experiences and states, and that, is a simplified spectrum of consciousness, reaching from body to mind to spirit. (p. 141)

Wilbur *Simple Feeling of Being* 2004

Wilbur's *eye of contemplation* points to the research method of inquiry.

Contemplation has been used by religious sects such as Christian monks. As Benedictine Brother David Steindle-Rast (1988) explains, contemplation is "basically the attempt to expose oneself to the meaning of any given moment" (p. 29) and of "allowing meaning to take hold of us" (p. 26) in order to increase awareness and gain wisdom. This is implicit in the understanding of inquiry.

The term inquiry originated in the 15th century and has been defined in www.answers.com/topic/inquiry as "a close examination of a matter in a search for information or truth." Inquiry's connection to contemplation is given by Louis Pasteur who remarked, "To know how to wonder and question is the first step of the mind towards discovery" (<http://www.pasteur.hms.harvard.edu/zones/LouisPasteur>). For the purposes of this study, it is important to realize not only the philosophical, psychological and spiritual implications of inquiry, but to understand inquiry as an educational concept as well in order to be able to assess its potential benefit in an educational setting. Dewey used the term inquiry in relationship to education, stating it as a "learner-centered process" (<http://www.inquiry.uiuc.edu/inquiry/definition.php>). Additionally, Miller (2006), author of *Timeless Learning*, relates inquiry to education when engaging in *transaction learning* which asks students to "construct their own meaning and understandings:"

This is facilitated through inquiry learning and problem solving. Knowledge is viewed as more fluid and less fixed...Transformation learning acknowledges the inner life of the student and seeks to nurture that inner life. Education is seen as process where the student can transform himself or herself in positive ways as well as the world he or she encounters. (p. 102)

Inquiry is oftentimes not easily accepted or recognized as a valid research method. Dave Hiles (2002), in his paper on *Narrative and Heuristic Approaches to Transpersonal Research and Practice* speaks to those who question the reputability of inquiry as an authentic research method. “The very nature of the transpersonal paradigm requires an approach to inquiry that is necessarily somewhat in contrast to other areas of scientific inquiry. Transpersonal inquiry is no less scientific, or empirical, than any other area of inquiry, but the empirical data may be different, as they take the form of subjective experience, discernment and direct knowing, etc.” This, therefore, substantiates the use of inquiry as a legitimate research method for this dissertation.

Heuristics is derived etymologically, from the Greek *heuriskein* which means to discover (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/heuristic>). Given the fact that heuristics is “a form of phenomenological inquiry that brings to the fore the personal experience and insights of the researcher” (Dissertation Manual IUPS, Research Issues p. 1) a brief exploration of phenomenology is in order. Heuristics relates to phenomenology as it studies phenomena, “things as they appear in our experience, or the ways we experience things, thus the meanings things have in our experience.” It includes an “awareness of one's own experience (self-consciousness, in one sense), self-awareness (awareness-of-oneself), the self in different roles (as thinking, acting, etc.), embodied action (including kinesthetic awareness of one's movement), purpose or intention in

action (more or less explicit), [and an] awareness of other persons (in empathy)”
 (<http://www.plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology>).

For the purpose of this study, heuristic research will mean “an approach to human science research” which is marked by “a disciplined pursuit of essential meanings connected with everyday human experiences” and includes “a passionate and discerning personal involvement in problem solving, an effort to know the essence of some aspect of life through the internal pathways of the self” in the hopes of illuminating a field, in this case, the field of education (<http://www.jhp.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/25/3/39>).

Heuristic research can be applied to the field of education, specifically that of Transformational Education. Miller recognizes heuristic research as an educational process when engaging in “transformation learning [which] acknowledges the inner life of the student and seeks to nurture that inner life.” From this vantage point, he views the possibility of the entire field of education being an inquiry process in which “the student can transform himself or herself in positive ways as well as the world he or she encounters” (p.102). This study has primarily utilized the research method of heuristic inquiry by me, an educator, for the purpose of learning and gaining wisdom about how to positively affect educators, initially myself, and then other educators in general.

INTRODUCTION TO HEURISTIC RESEARCH / INQUIRY

...a process brings fluidity and the ability to change and grow as needed...One must percolate over time. It takes much experience to get to this place. I had both planned and experienced enough to work in a spontaneous and ‘tuned in’ level, which emanates from beyond internalized intellectual knowledge. (p. 12)

We must give up our usual approach to learning in the intellect and come into timelessness and freedom...by becoming centered in the present moment. (p. 15)

Louise Yocum *My Dance of Tao* 2007

In the article *Heuristic research as a vehicle for personal and professional development* Kim Etherington (2004) says, "...the choice of research topic often has personal significance for the researcher, whether conscious or unconscious" (Devereux, 1967 /Etherington p. 49). Those who choose heuristic inquiry may have had success in the process of "self examination" resulting in "significant personal learning and change" (Stiles, 1993 p. 604). Additionally, the types of people drawn to heuristic inquiry are those who get fulfillment from exploring the "essence of the person in experience" (Moustakas, 1990 p. 39). Given this, not every educator may be attracted to, and benefit from, this style of research. I felt the necessity to use heuristic research in order to find ways to better deal with my pain relating to my professional life of an educator and thus used it "as a vehicle for personal and professional development" (p. 48).

Pertaining to the study of compassion and education, I chose to engage in heuristic research and mainly utilized this method from 1989 to 2002. This was because personal inquiry had proven to be a viable method for past studies; one that had been deeply satisfying and enjoyable as well as producing profound results. My intention was to explore the possibility of whether or not my personal holistic discoveries could be applied to the field of education by implementing curricula for educational settings.

That research led to the creation of holistic curricula and my educational setting, *The Caring Adventure Educational Center*. This program incorporated potential components of compassion and holistic approaches to life that I had been studying heuristically. Specifically, the newly developed curricula and educational setting included a holistic approach to the student and lessons on some of what I found to be the components of compassion: awareness, caring, and empathy.

Once again I used heuristic research beginning in 2001 when, in the role of educator and administrator, I developed personal problems which I later found to be common to educators; these common problems are referenced in *The Background of the Study* and *The Statement of the Problem*. My problems of a physical, emotional and psychological nature, experienced as pain, included burn-out which lead to my eventually having to close down my school for an indefinite period of time. Since heuristic research is used on a “subject matter [having] social and universal significance” (Lee (2002) p. 104), I then utilized heuristic research as the chosen form of research to resolve these problems in the hopes of educator recovery and in potentially discovering a missing link in my holistic curricula and pedagogy which would cast light on the cause of my burnout as an educator.

Heuristic research, “a way of knowing which begins with a question or problem that is a personal challenge or puzzlement to the researcher” (Lee p. 104), was found once again to be very beneficial. The initial research led to my educator goal (which I became aware of as a result of the inquiry process): *to be free to sense how to serve* which expanded into *being free to sense how to serve compassionately and creatively*. My primary heuristic research questions were: How can I successfully prevent and deal with educator burn-out in myself and in other educators? What would I, as an educator, have to do in order *to be free to sense how to serve compassionately and creatively*? My secondary research question was: Can I create a practice that will successfully assist me *to be free to sense how to serve compassionately and creatively*?

The concept of *self-compassion* was discovered by me through engaging in this style of research. The further inquiry question became: Can a self-compassion practice

for educators prevent and deal with educator burn-out in myself and in other educators? Through heuristic research I developed a self-compassion practice which I hoped could accomplish both aims.

Heuristic research of self-compassion revealed that becoming self-compassionate required inquiry. Since the subject of inquiry is a major aspect of heuristic research, heuristic research then becomes an important subject for an educator to study, and engage in, in order to play a compassionate educator role. Additionally, as heuristic research is often very difficult for the researcher due to the possibility of emotional pain in the forms of confusion, pain and fear arising during the process, exercising self-compassion can then be useful during heuristic inquiry in dealing with these manifestations of pain.

This section on heuristic research can then be utilized by educators as a tool in the development of self-compassion and in the recognition that self-compassion may also positively affect the heuristic inquiry process. Therefore, heuristic research can be used as a self-compassionate educator holistic tool that can potentially benefit the educator. Once educators have become agile in heuristic inquiry, the educators can find ways to use inquiry with students in the classroom which may benefit their educational setting.

HEURISTIC METHODOLOGY

...knowledge that is used for a given means or a given purpose is strictly utilitarian. When you start to see this, you stop looking for the Truth in anything you know. Instead, you look for the Truth in what you *are*, because when you find out what you are, you find out what everything else is too. It's all One. You see there is nothing to know, and your focus of inquiry shifts from thought to being. (p. 70)

Adyashanti, *Emptiness Dancing* 2004

Heuristic research allows for inquiring into the depths and scope of oneself and discovering what has not heretofore been discovered, written about or analyzed through mental processes. The essence of heuristic research is that it is not solely a mental activity, but a holistic approach to personal inquiry. It is akin to the sense of awareness that Ferguson (1981) describes as *focusing*, referring to Gendlin's work of the same title, as a bodily "felt sense" moving "inward, drawing in information from the deeper, wiser self" that has a "whole brain knowing" (Etherington, p. 58), therefore incorporating both hemispheres. Therefore, it calls for holistic research, as heuristic inquiry does not depend strictly upon mental intelligence as other research methods do. Since compassion, the core element of this dissertation, is predominantly not a mental activity, and is a *felt sense*, the discoveries hoped to be made through researching this topic required the inclusion of a heuristic approach.

The transcendentalist, Henry David Thoreau so aptly states, "We reason from our hands to our head" (Bickman, 1999 p. 51). Consequently, a holistic view of heuristic inquiry has been honored by many authors since it includes a connection with our body's *innate intelligence* (Palmer, 1920), with what Daniel Goleman (2008) has called our *emotional intelligence*, and with our intuition, all of which can bring about a sense of wisdom that is beyond mere knowledge gained from a second-hand mental transmission of information. Heuristic research can also incorporate mysticism insofar as it includes out-of-body experiences, synchronicity and exceptional human experiences (Braud & Anderson, 1998; Etherington p. 50) and is aligned with elements that which, as Underhill said, "characterizes the mystic way" such as "a transformative approach to life rather than a theoretical 'playing' with ideas" (Cited in Sinetar, p.77).

Since heuristic inquiry is a holistic experience, of which cognitive processing is only one facet, this, or any, verbal explanation of this style of research can only convey that aspect. To fully understand heuristic inquiry requires engaging in it through experience. Therefore, it may be difficult to merely tell educators to understand the concepts of compassion in order to have a beneficial affect; they may need to perform their own heuristic inquiries.

Although heuristic research was officially originated in the field of Transpersonal Psychology, the field of education has also greatly recognized its value. Over one hundred years ago, transcendentalists, like Alcott, Emerson and Thoreau, found heuristic inquiry to relate to success in education. The form of heuristic research they advocated practicing was *contemplation*. “They saw *contemplation* as a way to the deepest forms of learning. Closely linked with the idea of soul and contemplation was the *mysterious* nature of things” (Miller, p. 100).

In modern times, Miller, who has coined the term *timeless learning*, strongly advocates heuristic inquiry as being beneficial in the field of education. Timeless learning utilizes an experience inherent in heuristic inquiry that he refers to as *flow*. “Flow occurs when a person becomes fully immersed in an experience” (p. 9). Miller cites Csikszentmihalyi with reference to flow being optimal for learning who states “The state of awareness that arises in *flow* helps the individual in acquiring new perspectives and skills” (p. 10). Therefore, this heuristic aspect of flow can also be applied as a potential benefit in an educational setting and may even be related to the concept of compassion.

Furthermore, Greenberg (1969), an educator of educators, views heuristic research as vital for educators:

There is much that is meaningless along the academic road, from the kindergarten to the doctor's degree. Much of what goes on consists of scholarly motions, lacking the vital spark of personal concern. The search for meaning is not a search for an abstract body of knowledge, or even for a concrete body of knowledge. It is a distinctly personal search. The one who makes it raises intimate personal questions: what really counts, for me? ...What, in my existence as a person, in my relations with others, in my work as a teacher, is of real concern to me, perhaps of ultimate concern to me (p. 4)? It is not just a scholarly enterprise, although the pursuit of learning is an important aspect of it... the real encounter with the problem must take place in the privacy of each person's own life. (p. 7)

The term Heuristic Research is defined by the originators of this research method, Douglass & Moustakas (1985), as “a search for the discovery of meaning and essence in significant human experience.” They say “it requires a subjective process of reflecting, exploring, sifting, and elucidating the nature of the phenomenon under investigation” (p. 40). Through the personal participation of the researcher (which could include educators and students), new awarenesses can be revealed. The way in which to *reflect, explore and sift* through the researcher’s experiences, and reach new discoveries, Moustakas (2001) says, is to “recognize whatever exists in my consciousness as a fundamental awareness – to receive it, accept it, support it and dwell inside it” (p. 263).

To assist the researcher and the process of inquiry, Moustakas (1990) organized essential tools and processes that the researcher could utilize, such as *identifying the focus of inquiry, self-dialog, and intuition*. Additionally, he labeled stages of heuristic inquiry, such as *engagement, immersion, incubation and creative synthesis* that the researcher undergoes in the hopes of attaining the desired research results (pp.15-27).

I applied these methods of heuristic inquiry after I experienced educator burnout. In order to courageously discover what I had been ignoring that might have caused my burnout, I committed myself to *engage* in the inquiry of what my current purpose was as

an educator. When I became aware of this purpose (stated above), I *identified with this focus of inquiry*, and embodied it. My resulting inquiry questions (stated above) led to an *immersion* with parts of myself that the questions activated, being attentive to what they could bring to the surface through a process of *self-dialog*.

The depth and breadth of this process necessitated a period of *incubation* during which time I fully retired from the field of education, disengaged socially, and, with intense focus, submerged myself into holistic self-searching, honoring all questions and answers. I assumed what Zen Buddhist Shunryu Suuzuki (1970) calls *the beginner's mind*, a mind "free of the habits of the expert, ready to accept, to doubt, and open to all the possibilities. It is the kind of mind which can see things as they are." (p.14).

As Thoreau knew, "It is only when we forget our learning that we begin to know" (Cited in Bickman, 1999, p. 2). I tried to relinquish as many prior viewpoints as possible, which I had been derived from previous holistic inquiries, scholarly research and practice which I had at one time believed to be *true* or *right*. This was done in order for the unknown to have a space in which to be revealed.

I created a retreat-like atmosphere where I would encounter the least amount of disturbances. "That solitude promotes insight as well as change has been recognized by great religious leaders who have usually retreated from the world before returning to it to share what has been revealed to them" (Storr, p. 33). Once I developed a new practice (see *All Practice Versions* in *Appendix*) as a result of moving through the above stages, I used this practice as fodder for a further heuristic inquiry cycle which initiated another round of deep engagement with this new practice.

Through *intuition* and mysteries beyond my comprehension, I arrived at answers that I had been totally unaware of through all of the years of what I had thought were a successful educator career and meditation. I *creatively synthesized* my revelations and new understandings by creating educator preparation procedures. These were created with the possibility of being offered in educator training programs and professional educator development courses, to assist other educators in the realm of compassion and self-compassion so as to be able to benefit themselves those in their educational settings.

Additionally, I utilized narrative inquiry to unearth all of my relationships to compassion and education that were available to me. By fully exposing me to myself in these areas, and divulging my pain and less desirable parts of myself in writing to my peers, I went into a deeper sense of heuristic inquiry with what was revealed in the hope of becoming a more authentic educator. A more in-depth explication of my process of heuristic inquiry is located within the narrative portion of this dissertation.

NARRATIVE INQUIRY RESEARCH

...excavate your life story as a means to self-understanding and self-care. As you uncover the joy and suffering in your personal story, you'll see how it parallels the beauty and heartbreak of the world...the insight from your own story is crucial for engaging with the larger story of the human family and the earth. (p. 4)

Straub *Rhythm of Compassion* 2000

DEFINITION OF NARRATIVE INQUIRY

Narratives have been conventionally used “as a way to give contour to experience and life, conceptualize and preserve memories, or hand down experience, tradition, and values to future generations” (<http://www.clarku.edu/faculty/mbamberg/narrativeINQ/>). The context of narratives has been expanded to include the research method known as *Narrative Inquiry*.

Narrative inquiry is the process of gathering information for the purpose of research through storytelling. The researcher then writes a narrative of the experience.
(<http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/research/observe/com3a2.cfm>)

Dave Hiles (2002), in his paper on *Narrative and Heuristic Approaches to Transpersonal Research and Practice* addressed both heuristic inquiry and narrative inquiry “as particularly relevant to researching authentic accounts of human experience.” Additionally, through Hiles’ investigation of inquiry, he discovered that “The view that is emerging is that narrative constitutes the primary process by which human experience is made meaningful” (Hiles, 2002). This is then relevant as this study is speaking to human experiences: the human experiences of compassion, the human experiences of pain and suffering associated with problems in educating, being educated and educational settings, and the human experiences of the potential transformation of pain and suffering. Due to its relevance to human experience as shown above, a re-experiencing and an authentic

telling of the author's stories of education, pain and compassion is seen to be potentially valuable as a research method for this study.

. . . I am creating a story that portrays the qualities, meanings, and essences of universally unique experiences. (p. 13)

Moustakas *Heuristic research: design, methodology and applications* 1990

One of the potentially positive results of making a narrative account is an increase of awareness, which can be twofold. Primarily, as has been shown above, it can produce an increase of self-awareness. Secondly, it can bring about an increased awareness of what our world is comprised of. This is because our increased awareness leads towards "making sense of our experience of the world around us, our place in it, and offering ways to share that with others" (Hiles, 2002).

Narrative inquiry seems to complement an investigation of education for educators. Making sense of what is going on in the current educational setting by recognizing how this relates to the educator's overall story may be beneficial as many key educator problems may be sitting deeply within the story of the educator's life. Therefore it could be deduced that narratives may be significant to this study as it seems important to educators and the field of education for these stories to be revealed and further examined.

NARRATIVE INQUIRY AND COMPASSION

Narrative inquiry was chosen as an appropriate research method for this study because of its relationship to aspects of compassion inherent within this study. As Hiles and Moustakas tout narratives as a special way to relate to our experience, Brach (2003) more specifically shows, in *Radical Acceptance*, how compassion uniquely relates way to

this same process. “Compassion honors our experience ... [and] makes our acceptance wholehearted and complete.” Thus, both narrative inquiry and compassion appreciate the importance of our personal experience. Through the honoring of our narrative experience, compassion can lend itself to narrative inquiry as “a tender and sympathetic way to [relate to] what we perceive” (p. 28).

Adding a compassionate element to narrative inquiry may make the process of recollection and the telling of our educator story less difficult to accomplish, because of the potential and inevitable pain and suffering inherent in those stories. Applying compassion toward ourselves as educators can bring forth into the narrative inquiry process, the compassionate aspects of being non-judgmental and kind. Though relating to our past experiences may be challenging, being compassionate to oneself while immersed in a narrative inquiry can be a powerful tool to gracefully deal with the painful parts of our story. Venerable Henepola Gunaratana, in his essay from *Transforming Suffering*, has compassionate advice that can be applied to the narrative process. “Accept yourself just as you are. Make peace with your shortcomings; embrace even your weaknesses” (p. 67).

As compassion can be cultivated through narratives, it may be able to be utilized for educator preparation by having educators review their own early childhood and school experiences and remember what it felt like to be a child (Kessler, chapter on Joy, pp. 76-78). Exploring what brought them joy and pain in their early years, educators can make a compassionate connection with themselves as children. This can then result in educators becoming more in touch with the pulse of the young children they then work with today.

With regards to heuristic research being utilized as an educational technique, Miller (2006) advocates “techniques such as journal writing, narrative, and autobiography” for the purpose of reflecting on our lives. He advises educators not to “succumb to... conventional research methodology” (p. 12). Educators finding meaning in these personal educational experiences, be they as children, students, parents or teachers may be able to help them to be compassionate to their students having similar experiences.

INSTRUMENTATION

A tape recorder, Ipac [mini computer], paper and pen, voice activation program *Dragon Naturally*, and a laptop computer were variously utilized throughout the narrative inquiries.

SETTINGS AND DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The above instruments were utilized during situations that fit their particular need. Nature walks, sitting in nature, car rides, bathing, and pre and post sleeping, were the most productive settings found for narrative writing. I set aside chunks of time for my favored choice, nature walks. Both being in nature and physically moving helped the flow of my process. However, the amount of time this setting could be enjoyed for creating narratives was limited by location, distance and lack of physical perseverance. The recorder was used while walking, and an Ipac while sitting in nature. Recordings were also made during car rides. Paper and pen note taking was used during moments that the recorder or Ipac were either not accessible or inappropriate (specifically during

the very productive bath-time or bed-time). I later transcribed the recordings, uploaded the Ipac word processing, and copied my notes onto my laptop computer, then copied and pasted the narrative information into their appropriate documents. All of these narrative records were accurately dated so that proper sequencing could be ensured. Additional data collection procedures specific to the various uses of the narrative methods will be included below within the explanation of that method.

Miller Mair (1989) says that narrative inquiry has to do with “not just what is told and how it is told” but “it is the very act of telling, the speaking itself, which seems to matter” (p. 1-12). Because telling the story was important, I needed to not only write my narrative experiences I had to verbalize them as well, as if telling these experiences to another. I utilized *Dragon Naturally*, which *typed* my spoken words directly onto the narrative document. I used this program to tell my narrative journey towards being a compassionate educator, from my home. I often supplemented this program by additionally recording my story on my Ipac to provide me with additional storytelling accuracy. The *Dragon Naturally* program and my Ipac recorder minimized the possible distractions that instrumentation could become during my narrative process experience. They offered the additional benefits of freeing my hands of any cumbersome instruments. This allowed my whole body to be involved in the process; because of my cultural New York Jewish influence, making expressive gestures helped me to tell my story.

I also submitted each section to my mentor Dennis. He made no corrections, and only occasional comments. Exposing my inner hidden world to him through each narrative section brought me relief. My personal story was then freed and became a part of my educational setting and the world.

METHODS OF NARRATIVE INQUIRY

Field notes, interviews, journals, letters, autobiographies, and orally told stories are all methods of narrative inquiry.

<http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/research/observe/com3a2.cfm>

I used narrative research for this study in three different ways: as a journaling tool, creating a narrative account of a particular area that was associated with pain and suffering in an educational setting, and to create a thesis narrative piece as my personal study of compassion and education entitled: *My Journey towards Being a Compassionate Educator*.

NARRATIVE JOURNALING

A journal is commonly known to be “a tool for self-discovery, an aid to concentration, a mirror for the soul, a place to generate and capture ideas, a safety valve for the emotions, a training ground for the writer, and a good friend and confidant” (Klug, 2002, p. 1). However, in *Learning Journals*, Jennifer Moon (1999) furthered the use of term journal to now include journal writing that relates to education; hence, her coined term, *learning journal*. For Moon, this type of journal writing is one taken over a period of time, never written in "one go," with the writer's specific educational goal that “learning should be enhanced” (p. 4).

Mark Smith (1999, 2006) *Keeping a learning journal* says, “...educators are not engineers applying their skills to carry out a plan or drawing, they are artists who are able to improvise and devise new ways of looking at things.” Utilizing narrative inquiry as a creative expression tool of an educator may help to develop the identity of the artist within the educator which can then enhance his benefits as an educator. This artistry is

said to be elevated through narrative inquiry, producing aspects of compassion which can be utilized in an educational setting. Donald Schön (1987) the educator who created the concept of *the reflective practitioner* concurs with Smith. “Artistry is an exercise of intelligence, a kind of knowing. Through engaging with our experiences we are able to develop maxims about... group work or working with an individual; in other words, we learn to appreciate, to be aware and to understand, what we have experienced” (p. 13).

The initial way that I used narrative research was by doing daily journaling was as a dated record of my heuristic journey from the onset of my personal investigation of my particular burnout as an educator. My journaling recorded the evolution of my dissertation process. It elucidated my recognition of the value of self-compassion and the development of my self-compassionate practice, as well as the creation of other developmental processes and procedures for educators (some are included in the *Appendix*). I then recorded my inquiry into the possibility of whether compassion, in all of its forms, could not only benefit other educators.

This huge journal account was utilized, as well as quoted, in the *work of excellence* narrative, *My Journey towards Being a Compassionate Educator*. My experience mirrored what is stated in the article on Narrative Inquiry from the Center of Action Research in Professional Practice. I found it pertinent to apply this procedure: “The final construction of this research account, particularly the last section... of this thesis [is] reflecting back over the research journey [and] collecting together the different strands of learning” (<http://www.bath.ac.uk/carpp/publications>).

EDUCATOR PAIN NARRATIVES

...take full responsibility for our stories, most especially the parts that are causing pain or unhappiness. (p. 17)

Straub *The Rhythm of Compassion* 2000

This second way that I used narratives, and which other educators can use this, is the writing of narratives that relate to specific educator situations that have a painful nature to them. However, as it is a viable way of using narrative inquiry, an understanding of the value and benefits of this research method for this study will be reviewed in this section on research methods.

The method of finding educator pain and suffering and writing about it as narrative inquiry has many benefits. Fuchs (2005), Hiles (2002), Hillman (1983), Metzger (2002) and Spence (1982) agree that narrative inquiry has healing effects. Fuchs says, "Storytelling...is itself a healing process." Hiles concurs with Fuchs regarding the healing potential of narrative inquiry. "Psychologically, myths have important healing powers. Myths can bring into awareness repressed, unconscious motives, longings, and fears, or can reveal new goals, new ethical insights and possibilities" (Hillman, 1983). Donald Spence is of a similar opinion and expresses no doubt in the fact that "a well-constructed story possesses a kind of narrative truth that is real and immediate and carries an important significance for the process of therapeutic change" (p. 21). Metzger says that stories heal us because "we become whole through them." Wholeness is an aspect of this study as it relates to educator integrity and interconnectedness with students.

This type of research then allows for the exploration of compassionate educator healing, cultivating educator wholeness. If, "in the process of writing, of discovering our story, we restore those parts of ourselves that have been scattered, hidden, suppressed,

denied,” (p. 71) then potentially narrative inquiry could bring about the wholeness that could benefit both the cultivation of a compassionate educator and the establishment of an educator’s presence that may result from wholeness.

Therefore it may be concluded that if narrative inquiry has healing benefits, then educators who engage in the telling of the stories that relate to situations in their educational settings that are painful and are associated with suffering, could experience healing benefits in relationship to their educational setting. Furthermore, a healed educator would most likely be more beneficial to an educational setting than one immersed in pain and suffering. This relationship of healing, wholeness and education can, then, be important for educator trainings.

In addition to narrative inquiry of this kind being a potential agent in therapeutic change, it can also be an agent of the specific type of change known as transformation. Thich Nhat Hanh (2004) realizes this and explains, “When you get the insight about the root of your suffering you get a transformation - liberation. Before that, you already get relief. It’s like the baby. When you found what was wrong with the baby you can transform the situation very easily.”

Going deeply into the story of educator pain and suffering, can uncover the parts of those stories that bring about the necessary insights to transform their educational difficulties, thereby transforming the educator. Addressing the problems noted in this study, by getting in touch with their own relative problems through narrative inquiry, can allow educators to newly see their story in the light of these problems. If an educator has transformed their personal pain connected with the problems in their educational setting,

the educator can then more easily resonate with others experiencing these problems and be freer to be compassionate to them.

Another potential benefit of educator pain narratives that specifically applies to this study has been taught by Merna Ann Hecht. She indicates a particular way that compassion and narratives interrelate which may imply an additional benefit to educational settings. Hecht teaches that “poetry and storytelling link compassion and empathy with imagination.” While engaging in the writing of our stories and poetry, she says, “we come to recognize the common ground of our shared humanity and begin to broaden our understandings of other perspectives and experiences.” Therefore, through narrative inquiry into their pain and suffering coupled with poetry writing, educators’ compassion, as well as their ability to understand their students, could increase (<http://www.wiki.seedsofcompassion.org/workshops/PoetryStory>).

Additionally, these narratives relating to educator pain and suffering may not only be beneficial to the educator who tells the story, but there can be an added bonus when they are then shared with students and teachers who we have similar pain and suffering associated with education. Alice Walker (1990), shares an important understanding that may be applied to educators and the optimal compassionate methods they can use in educational settings. “Stories differ from advice in that, once you get them, they become a fabric of your whole soul. That is why they heal you.” Rather than giving advice to those students and other educators who are experiencing pain and suffering, a more compassionate and more fruitful tactic may be to share a bit of the educator’s personal story. This may be important in the cultivation of compassionate educators.

NARRATIVE AREAS

Amy Tsui (2007), in her article *Complexities of Identity Formation: a Narrative Inquiry of an EFL Teacher* says “stories provide a narrative thread that teachers draw on to make sense of their experience and themselves.” Through the use of flashbacks Tsui had a teacher in Hong Kong sort out his teaching experiences by identifying his major conflicts and painful struggles both as a learner and as an educator to help him “reconstruct” his learner and educator identities. Beijaard et al. (2004) also studied the relationship of the painful problems of educators and the possibilities of narrative inquiry to rehabilitate them. “Through storytelling, teachers engage in narrative ‘theorizing’ and, based on that, teachers may further discover and shape their professional identity resulting in new or different stories” (p. 121).

I studied the effects of narrative inquiry and educational-based conflicts, traumas and painful problems as well. Like the above two researchers, I wanted to deal with the variety of problems that I as an educator had experienced. I discovered that the initial procedure was to create a narrative inquiry into areas of my life burdened with pain and suffering, as an educator and a learner: painful education-related experiences as a parent, a teacher, a student and a child. This narrative inquiry style was chosen to help me to begin the process of confronting my educational difficulties so that I could re-create my identity as an educator for the sake of all who will be in any of my educational settings.

Narrative inquiry could be applied to many different areas of educator pain and suffering. Some broad examples are areas relating to a difficult situation in educational settings, a chronic physical symptom, a traumatic experience, a disturbing time period in an educational setting, an educational topic that is uncomfortable, a policy the educator is

in disagreement with, a habit pattern, a child or adult who has been difficult to work with, a sense of failure, etc. Choosing a narrative topic that has too broad an area or has too great a scope may be unwieldy for this narrative inquiry form. For instance, burnout has been found to be a major problem for educators (See *Background of the Study*); however this can be too broad a narrative topic. If an educator is in burnout I discovered that the burnout experience can be broken down into individual areas, each of which can receive their own narrative inquiry. A list can be created of the aspects of the educator's burnout and the specific aspect of the burnout that seems to be the most painful can be the first chosen for the narrative inquiry process.

In addition to sensing the pain connected with educational experiences as a means for discovering a topic for narrative inquiry, individual educator pain narratives can be created from inspecting each educator identity: daughter/son, mother/father, student, teacher, administrator, etc. For myself, this meant investigating my identities as the mother of each of my children, being the daughter of my father, being the daughter of my mother, being an elementary school student, being a university student, being the founder and administrator of a school, etc. Within each of these identities topics were revealed that required their own individual narrative inquiries. For instance, two important educator pain areas I discovered were *perfectionist performance anxiety* that I possessed as both a student and a teacher, and the more obscured educator pain energy package of *workaholism*. Both of these educator pain areas warranted their own narrative inquiry, which proved to be highly beneficial in the understanding of my identity as an educator.

Discovering our own areas of pain and suffering and deeply exploring them through narrative inquiry may greatly benefit our compassion in settings where we could

be of service. As Gina Wong-Wylie (2006) found, “The experiences of intense human suffering and finding a voice greatly humble [us] as a person and as a professional.” After completing his own pain narratives, a man who works in a service profession, states that he is “proud to have a deeper understanding for the human condition, and brings this insight into his work with clients, helping them to find the way.”

An additional data collection procedure used for this narrative method, different from the other two methods which require an extended duration of time, is to do this in one or two sittings. It is shorter because it was found that the data collected as a result of any of these educator pain narratives will not be an end in themselves, but will be used to investigate specific painful areas and/or educator identities that were revealed during the telling or writing of the narrative. This data can then be put into a list and dealt with compassionately at a future time. The *Appendix* includes a transformational practice within the *All Practice Versions*. This practice is one way to compassionately address the pain and suffering items culled from the educator pain and suffering narrative inquiries.

Educator pain and suffering narratives were found to be quite useful, but I did find them to have two inherent problems. The first is that utilizing educator pain narratives single-handedly was found to be insufficient for the achievement of the full transformation that I hoped to make. Though the educator pain was greatly reduced through the narrative inquiry, it still existed within my educator identity. I realized that these narratives were actually packages of educator pain. It was important to tell these stories, but the telling of these particular stories was not the whole process; it turned out to be an initial step in a greater process.

As the narrative story unfolds specific educator pain and specific educator identities /personas needing compassion get revealed. However, for the purpose of completion of the narrative, it is only necessary to write down those personas or educator pain and then continue with the narrative inquiry. I found that once completing this inquiry, I then created a list of *educator pain energy* items that were noted within the narrative package. My next step usually was the application of my practice of self-compassion to these items. I found this could greatly increase the healing and transformational benefits.

The narrative research was important all on its own. However, there became a secondary purpose for engaging in educator pain narratives. The secondary intention of the narrative inquiry then became the finding of the pain energy to be transformed and the educator identities/personas that needed compassion.

The second problem I discovered to be inherent in educator pain narrative inquiry was that entering a painful educator area directly could be very overwhelming and therefore requires preparation. An activity that may help prepare for the challenges of educator pain narrative inquiry is to *take refuge in your own self*. Thich Nhat Hanh (2004) in his lecture entitled *Taking refuge in the island of ourselves* invites us to go to the depth of ourselves and utilize this as a place of refuge.

[You] can take refuge in the island of self.
 The Buddha is in the island as well.
 If you know how to go home to the island of self inside of you,
 And take refuge in the island of self,
 You will feel safe.

Writing narratives relating to our painful past takes courage. Educators are living their painful stories, but they may have distanced themselves from their past pain in order

to deal with lives on a daily basis. To be able to re-connect with their story may require finding a way for educators to take refuge in themselves once again. Before engaging in educator pain narratives, I applied my Mindfulness Set-Up Practice or a short form of the Practice of Self-Compassion which I have found to greatly benefit narrative inquiry that is heavily laden with pain and suffering. This was a viable way for me to take refuge. This practice can produce the physical relaxation, spiritual support and refuge necessary to confront a large area of past pain or trauma as a preparation for narrative inquiry.

I also discovered that it can be easier to be present with my own story if I assumed refuge in a *self-compassionate* identity prior to engaging in narrative inquiry. *Being self-compassion* allowed me to be compassionate to my own pain and suffering during this process. All of these preparatory practices are located within *All Practice Versions* in the *Appendix*.

WORK OF EXCELLENCE NARRATIVE:

MY JOURNEY TOWARDS BEING A COMPASSIONATE EDUCATOR

In telling a story, I participate in the act of constructing myself, I participate in the act of constructing my own world. In participating in such an act, we reveal tacit knowledge about our selves, and tacit knowledge of the world we participate in.

Hiles *Narrative and Heuristic Approaches to Transpersonal Research and Practice* 2002

This third way that I used narratives, and can be used by other educators, is through the creation of a major narrative piece specifically related to a thesis study, which in this case are the study of compassion and education and the cultivation of being a compassionate educator. In order to reveal my *tacit knowledge* about compassion and education, I decided to use this method of the narrative process. This method encouraged

me to fully participate in the construction of my personal connections with my world of compassion and lack of compassion in a variety of my educational settings and to tell the story of how this assisted in my ongoing cultivation of becoming a compassionate educator. A scholarly investigation of the subject of narrative inquiry preceded this main narrative research and was then able to be utilized as an adjunct to this narrative research.

As this study is attempting to find ways of solving the problems in education, including a narrative study which could reveal the mysteries of my stories of the problems I encountered in educational settings seemed to be significant, if not necessary, as a research tool to retrieve latent useful information about this subject. Gurdjieff (1949) validated this with his teachings on self-remembering. His view of revealing the mysteries by remembering one's past as if awakening from the *waking sleep*, can be likened to educators re-awakening from their waking sleep and inner mysteries connected to the problems of education and compassion in their lives revealed (Lee, p. 117).

Josselson & Lieblich (2001) discuss using a method of autobiographical narrative research and point to additional data collection procedures; I will utilize these for my self-inquiry into the areas that compassion and education positively or negatively affected my life. "Created through...her individual experience and judgment," I made an inquiry-based list of those areas that I sensed had the most meaning for me with regards to compassion, compassion and education, and my pain and suffering connected to education and then developed successive chapter titles within this inquiry. I then created "descriptive... narratives" of each of these areas in story-telling form, mindful of the importance of developing mini-narratives that are "offered in the natural language of the

teller” (p.280). Additionally, Polkinghorne (1988) warns that “Facts only partly determine the particular scheme to be used in their organization” (p. 181).

The use of *flow*, as was mentioned in the heuristic research section above, could allow for intuitive knowing to flow in the form of poetic descriptive phrases which could then make this research even more meaningful. Educator Amy Tsui (2007) utilized an additional data collecting procedure in Hong Kong that I will utilize as well for my narrative inquiry in California. I will apply Tsui’s procedure by sorting out my own narrative educational experiences as Tsui did, “chronologically from [the earliest] childhood learning experience to [her] last year of teaching before [she] left for further studies.”

Regarding this study, there are three specific intentions that I had for creating this narrative inquiry. My first intention was to unearth my story consciously which would hopefully assist me in learning about my true relationship to this study. I utilized narrative inquiry to carry out this intention because unearthing my story was not something that could be done by only reviewing other literature on the subject. As Winter (1988) expressed, “We do not ‘store’ experience as data, like a computer: we ‘story’ it” (p. 231). Straub (2000) had a similar understanding. “As in archeology, digging for a story is a many-layered intuitive process more than a linear one” (p. 11). Therefore, I could not just compile and analyze data to arrive at a full understanding of my relationship to compassion and education. Afraid that I may have been unconsciously acting out the depths of this story in a way that had not been, and would continue to not be, beneficial (and had been, and would potentially continue to be, harmful) to an

educational setting, it became obvious to me that engaging in narrative inquiry to unearth my compassion and educator story was crucial.

...healing the soul begins with a commitment to telling the truth. If we tell our story just the way it is, without exaggeration or understatement, we discover who we are and what matters to us. (p. 13)

Straub *The Rhythm of Compassion* 2000

My second intention for creating this narrative inquiry was to discover if I committed to fully telling my unadulterated truth through this “process of revealing tacit knowledge through the participatory experience of indwelling” (Hiles, 2002) whether or not this would change my relationship to the areas of education explored through this type of narrative inquiry. A major incentive to revealing more tacit knowledge was the return of my holistic health. I decided to monitor my physical, psychological and emotional health during the narrative inquiry in the hopes that this process would potentially further the healing of my educator burnout which I sensed was vital in order to return to educational settings.

My third intention was to transform my educator identity through the use of this method of narrative inquiry. Hiles (2002) value of “the authentic in human experience” acquired via narrative inquiry had a two-fold meaning for me: first because of its use of the creative process and second because of its resultant positive affects on others. With regards to the creative process, Hiles says that becoming authentic could be achieved through a “creative synthesis” of various creative forms of expression including writing, poetry, dance and song. If this is true, then perhaps an additional benefit of creatively reconstructing, participating in, experiencing and telling the story of my life’s relationship to compassion and education, may include a re-birth of my identity as an educator. With regard to the second meaning, Hiles’ had a certainty that “we can learn

more about the nature of human reality through the authentic expression of others, and through the direct first-hand accounts of others' lived experience” which meant that students could have an enhanced learning experience from being privy to an educator’s personal story. Therefore, a narrative inquiry could be highly beneficial in the re-creation of a more authentic educator identity and in the authentic teaching of that educator.

Both Buddhism and psychology encompass the value of achieving a state of being whereby one’s actions are not only for their own sake, but for the sake of all others as well. Whether it means being a *Bodhisattva* of Tibetan Buddhism (Rimpoche, 2005) or an *actualizer* of Maslow (1971), being free to take on an educator identity motivated by wholehearted compassion is my ideal and inspiration for this narrative inquiry. I hope that through this method I could achieve a personal transformation sufficient enough to increase my ability to be an authentically compassionate educator, who by my presence and the sharing of my story could be of service to a variety of students and educators.

One of the wonderful and difficult things about narrative research for educators is that of exposing themselves by confronting, writing and sharing their own stories. This bearing of my soul, first to myself and then to my readers, may bring me a step closer to actualizing my goal of standing firmly on the ground of compassion while being able to be nakedly open to any perspective educator or child I might be confronted by in the future. If, through this process I can make visible progress in becoming more compassionate to those educators that I am considering counseling or educating, then this method of narrative inquiry will be seen as immediately beneficial.

CONCLUSION OF NARRATIVE INQUIRY RESEARCH

Ultimately, what we have to offer is not a technique, not a theory, but who we are. (p. 24) Kramer *Therapeutic Mastery* 2000

Narrative research can potentially be used to bring the educator's essence to the foreground as it can expose how educational settings meets the educator's story and how that story meets the educational settings. Information about the many problems in educational settings today, along side the stacks of periodicals, newspaper articles and reports of the attempted solutions, does not fully address the specific connection that one has experienced personally. Due to being taught to recite back our scholarly transmission, we may never have taken the time to get in touch with how our story relates to this transmission, thereby never developing our personal educator identity.

Creating narrative inquiries can be self-compassionate actions as they can unconditionally honor my relevant experiences. Additionally, they can tenderly reveal, within a safe context, my needs, attributes and deficiencies in the field of education that may have been unbeknownst to me and offer new ways to care for myself as an educator. Furthermore, deepening my understanding of the meanings of compassion in my own life could further free me from my pain, thereby greatly increasing my ability to be able to sense greater ramifications of this study.

My narrative research and fresh recognition of my personal stories may birth new and significantly valuable information for this study. Within a lifetime of experience is first-hand knowledge, imbedded and unorganized. Acknowledging and integrating the connections that we have experienced in our lives in relationship to a study has the possibility of now organizing this chaotic information and producing something profoundly new, a type of integration, that we could not have known without engaging in our own narrative account.

SCHOLARLY / THEORETICAL RESEARCH

The traditional research method is often referred to as scholarly or theoretical research. It is the educational style based on “the conveyance of ideas, patterns and creations from one person to another for knowing retention” (Hubbard, 27 April, 1971). I utilized the traditional research method to gain information from the literature already produced on the topics relevant to the studies of compassion and education. My scholarly research literature included books, newspaper articles, periodicals, tape recordings, DVDs, lectures, workshops, electronic university searches and internet searches. A review of the contributions of the major authors relevant to this study is included in the appropriate sections of the main narrative.

...the traditional way of learning in schools has been to acquire factual knowledge and a few skills (transmission). In some cases learning has moved beyond this to include analysis and problem solving (transaction). However, in both these cases the subject (the learner) remains separate from the material to be learned or analyzed. (p. 75)

Miller *Educating for Wisdom and Compassion* 2006

The scholarly research method is based on the learning style of transmission. The transmission model of teaching is based on two roles: “the teacher's role is to prepare and transmit information to learners. The learners' role is to receive, store, and act upon this information.” This can imply a “mindless rote process” and also produce a positive understanding of a subject. However, fundamental problems of the transmission model also need to be kept in mind, its lack of initiating “ability, sensitivity, and inclination” (Tishman, et al. 1992). With regard to the scholarly research method, written material also acts as the teacher; the learner’s role remains the same. Additionally, “this orientation [transmission] tends to see learners as passive as they absorb information

from the teacher and text book (Miller, p. 3).” Furthermore, “transmission learning involves a one-way movement of information from teacher to text to student. There is little or no opportunity for reflection or inquiry” (Miller, p. 102).

During my research of this study, there were specific instances where the traditional method of a transmission of knowledge was found to be fitting. These were when I wanted: to do a review of the literature to find a common ground with others in the field of education, to understand the current problems of my peers in the field of the education, investigate the solutions to problems in education- with an eye on any that included the subject of compassion, to further my understanding of the principles behind my thesis statement, verify and support the claims of my heuristic findings and to present all of the above in this dissertation form. Since, as Miller (2006) states, “acquiring knowledge is at the heart of the transmission orientation (p. 3)” this scholarly research method was used to gain the above sought after knowledge.

LIMITATIONS AND RESOLUTION OF RESEARCH METHODS

LIMITATIONS OF SCHOLARLY RESEARCH

Some men love knowledge and discernment as the best and most excellent of all things. Behold, then knowledge and discernment come to be loved more than that which is discerned. (p. 111)

Huxley *The perennial philosophy* 1970

A main limitation of scholarly research, in L Ron Hubbard's opinion, is that it is sheer *significance* and does not include the *mass* of the subject being studied. "By *mass* we mean the actual physical objects, the things of life. The *significance* of a subject is the meaning or ideas or theory of it. Education attempted in the absence of the *mass* in which the technology will be involved is hard on a student" (<http://www.Ironhubbardstudytech>).

L. Ron Hubbard includes this concept in the study technology that he created for his *Student Hat* course in 1971. Hubbard encourages the proper *balance of mass and significance* so that the student will be able to physically be as ease and also so that the student can apply the information studied to real-life situations. Therefore, in addition to scholarly research, which is mainly connected to the significance of a study, research of a more personal nature including physical and practical connections with the study are necessary.

"Reading books or listening to someone talk does not give you mass." (Hubbard *Learning How to Learn*, p.70). If balancing mass and significance is so important, then educators discovering ways of giving student researchers the mass of the subject that the student needs in order for the student to receive optimal benefits in an educational setting would be an act of compassion as it would show care by acknowledging and tending to their difficulties. Balancing mass and significance is a concept that could increase the benefits of scholarly research.

Creating actual examples of the data in a study, for instance through the demonstration of a concept by modeling it with clay, is a way that Hubbard advocates students to obtain mass and gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of any subject. The *Chambers 20th Century Dictionary* (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chambers>) includes the definition of *demonstrate* as "to teach, expound or exhibit by practical means." Including the practical means of study, a demonstrations of concepts, may then be helpful in the understanding of a subject. To make a better use of the scholarly research of a subject, students can more fully involve themselves through the demonstration of any *significance* (abstract concept) within that study. The creation of pictures and diagrams then describes the significance, thereby providing more mass on the subject.

In Hubbard's bulletin (25 June, 1971R), called *Barriers to Study*, the first barrier to study he includes is the absence of mass because of its potential negative effects on students and educational settings. "Education in the absence of the mass in which the technology will be involved is very hard on the student." He names resultant physiological and mental reactions such as feeling "squashed," "bent," "spiny," "eyes...hurt," "stomach feeling funny," "bored," "headaches," "illness," feeling "exasperated" and "suicide" when there is insufficient mass experienced by the student connected with any study.

For the benefit of educational settings, it is therefore important to understand this limitation of scholarly transmission, which is the traditional teaching method in public, and most private, schools. Educators may then benefit educational settings, if they are compassionate to the difficulties that could arise out of not helping to bring a balance of mass and significance into educational settings. Scholarly research without the inclusion

of other methods for the student to make the subject personally relevant to the student can be harmful to educational settings. Including variations of heuristic and narrative techniques that can prevent additional pain and suffering, is a further way to cultivate compassionate educators.

An example of my personal negative effects from an imbalance of mass and significance during my scholarly research was when I was struggling with understanding the concepts within the concept of heuristic research during the writing of this dissertation. Experiencing the physical and mental difficulties that were arising, I did a self-compassionate inquiry and discovered this imbalance. I then compassionately applied the study tool of balancing mass and significance by demonstrating the concept of heuristic inquiry. Diagramming the heuristic concept seemed to dispel my physical and mental difficulties which had arisen from the absence of mass during this study. Using self-compassion and applying knowledge that directly deals with student difficulties showed the benefits of being a self-compassionate educator.

The use of heuristic research and narrative inquiry can also give the necessary balance to what could be the overly significant scholarly research method as they can also be considered demonstrations of significance. If the scholarly research is done first in a study, then the later heuristic research may act as a demonstration of the significance. If the heuristic research is done first, as in the case of this study, then it demonstrated the significance of many of the scholarly concepts to which it relates. Therefore, since scholarly research usually only includes significance, it has limited benefits as a research method when used independent of relevant aspects of study technology and other

research methods that recognize the value and importance of making the study relevant and personal to the student.

In addition to scholarly research creating potential difficulties when it is used independently, another major limitation of scholarly research is that the learning styles connected with this type of transmission of information may not be suitable for all students. “The learning styles theory is based on research demonstrating that, as the result of heredity, upbringing, and current environmental demands, different individuals have a tendency to both perceive and process information differently.” Traditional scholarly and theoretical research methods are based on learners having specific learning styles, without regard for the learners and the learning styles that this research method may not be appropriate for (<http://www.funderstanding.com/learningstyles>).

One way of viewing learning styles includes *concrete verse abstract perceivers* and *active verses reflective processors*. “Traditional schooling tends to favor abstract perceiving and reflective processing.” Furthermore, learning styles relate to brain functioning, *left brain* and *right brain* hemisphere dominance. Left brain dominance relates to a more analytical orientation marked by “linear processing,” preferring “formal study design” and “responds to logic” (<http://www.mathpower.com/brain.htm>).

The traditional school system and the scholarly research method are geared towards abstract, reflective, left brain learners. Heuristic research is then more forgiving to concrete, active, right brain learners.

Therefore, those students whose learning styles do not fall into the style of traditional scholarship that only utilize traditional methods of teaching, research and assessment of what has been learned, may have difficulties in those educational settings

and may need compassion from their educators in order for them to be able to work through their difficulties. Educators who are willing to help students discover their own learning styles and how they can apply this to their educational setting are compassionate educators, because they are taking the time to care about their student's strengths and weaknesses and how these will affect their mutual educational setting. Compassionate educators have the opportunity and responsibility to explore the learning styles of their students and create a beneficial educational setting that includes the learning styles of all of the students.

My natural learning style strongly conflicts with both theoretical research and theoretical writing. Although when pushed I am capable of doing theoretical research and writing, and even recognizes its benefits, it is physically, psychologically and emotionally painful for me to engage in theoretical research and writing. i.e.: I become confused and anxious; my entire chest cavity tenses; I become fatigued requiring extra sleep; my brain hurts requiring treatment and medication. I need to heavily depend on self-compassion and other study techniques to be able to do this work successfully.

Through heuristic research, I began to realize that my natural thinking process was right-brain oriented, which meant that I was not naturally geared toward critical, analytical and linear thinking which was required for the writing of the dissertation and which is the standard operating procedure of the current doctorate standard. My natural approach was to be passionately connected with acting from my heart and my gut, and not passively absorbing and storing information.

My way of thinking, I discovered, was more fluid, experiential, circular, varied and creative. Learning styles and expression of the results of a study that are most

suitable for me are ones that allow for practical and creative engagement with the study. I naturally desired to express the results of my heuristic research, in a right brain fashion - the writing of new curricula, poetry writing and artwork. Heuristic and narrative research methods best fit my right-brain hemisphere dominant learning style; therefore it has been the primary research method for this study.

The masculine energies of Fire and Air move outward. They are interested in seeing the impact their energy makes in the outer world. Air yearns to understand things, to gain information about the world and then relay that information to others. Fire thrives on putting forth energy, shining brightly and leading the way. (p. 19)

Rider *The elements of who we are* 2004

Rider speaks of all people embodying specific masculine and feminine prime elements. The elements connected to learning, writing and teaching are the masculine elements, *air* and *fire*. Academicians and their settings tend to be air elements. She says that fire elements have great difficulty with conceptual learning and thinking, comparing and contrasting, etc. As my masculine element is *fire*, I would be best suited for heuristic and narrative inquiry and would naturally struggle with scholarly and theoretical research. This has even acted as a learning disability when I had been engaging in earlier traditional research and in traditional educational settings.

All universities, air elements in nature, even ones that includes a program of transformational education, require a learning style and brain function which is less natural for me, and which has often caused difficulties in my past studies. Enrolling in such as program meant finding ways to deal with the arising triggered pain energy and the present pain coursing through my head when I needed to engage in the necessary theoretical studies in order for my research to receive validity on the doctoral level.

Giving myself compassion through my practice (see *All Practice Versions* in *Appendix*) I became able to recognize, accept and even appreciate what I had labeled as a *learning disability*. This freed me to more positively engage in the necessary scholarly research, but now in a gentle, caring way that allowed for greater success. I began to realize the merits of the scholarly research method which I had not been integrating into the full research process. Being a self-compassionate educator was highly beneficial to my being able to succeed in this scholarly educational setting.

LIMITATIONS OF HEURISTIC RESEARCH

There are a number of limitations to the heuristic research method as well. One limitation is the obvious one of its personal biases and unsubstantiated self-report. Fuchs (2005) says that “heuristic research is not objective or empirical as traditional research requires, but a highly subjective process” (p. 13). Because heuristic research is subjective, the researchers may “influence the research process.” Researchers are then encouraged to “name their assumptions so that the work might be evaluated in the light of understanding the researcher’s bias” (Richardson, 2000 p. 49). Therefore it is important that researchers bring their own biases to light. For instance I have a bias that being in a peaceful state makes a compassionate educator more successful. All of my research may be based on this, as if it were a universal fact, and might prohibit obtaining the necessary facts to produce accurate study results. Therefore, to truly be a viable educator preparation, heuristic research must expose my relevant biases.

Out of this limitation arises another limitation of this research method, that of not recognizing when this research method needs to be substantiated with scholarly research

in order to obtain a fuller, more objective, picture of the study. Heuristic researchers can become so involved with intuitive activity and self-dialog, that they can lose sight of when there might be a need for research outside of ones own realm to increase their personal understanding. By being intently connected with the “full explication of one’s own experience” heuristic researchers can be out of touch with what is happening outside of their inner research (Moustakas, 1990, p. 37). Removing oneself from the world and “immersing” oneself in one’s own process does not necessarily produce broad results.

Regarding my own balance of mass and significance, a limitation of the heuristic research method showed itself. All of the study approaches I voluntarily engaged in were predominantly involved with the *mass* side of this research balance and did not include either a study of the *significance* related to how my creations fit into the field of education, knowledge of any other authors who were engaging in similar programs, or a study as to what was going on in the field of education today. Therefore, heuristic research can over-value the mass of the subject and can under-value its significances. Having a balanced study would then require involving oneself with the significance of the study as well, which can be achieved through the addition of scholarly research.

I involved myself with heuristic research throughout the many facets of the course of this study. This can be observed by my creation of curricula, a school a practice of self-compassion, several chapters in several books, various workshops and many educator preparatory activities all in which created further heuristic research to determine the success of my programs. Though I recognize the necessity of this research method, and am grateful that I had the opportunity to utilize this research method as it laid the foundation for the creation of all that this study will have to offer and contribute, I did

come to realize that my contribution would be less valuable had I not engaged in scholarly research as well.

Another limitation of heuristic inquiry is that it does not address ideas and concepts outside of the researcher's internal world. Choosing the heuristic path allowed me to be compassionate to myself by allowing me free access to my natural learning style. However, choosing the heuristic method did not challenge me to discover what I did not know outside of myself, that I was eventually happy to have researched and learned. Adding a sufficient element of scholarly research broadened my understanding of whom my peers are and their current problems. This was needed in order to understand what my potential contribution of educator compassion could be today.

Consequently, heuristic inquiry is limited as it may not necessarily take into account other realities, especially those with viewpoint unlike those of the researcher. Without having gained the knowledge of which of my personal problems were similar and different from other educators, I could not truly know what my study needed to include which would give it the broad acceptance I hoped for. The added scholarly information gave additional meaning to my heuristic results as it put it into perspective with regards to a greater world view. Additionally, by putting me in touch with my peers, it added an extra dimension of interconnectedness with my field of education which was not occurring during the entire length period of time that I engaged in heuristic study.

If I had not included scholarly research, the results of my study would have therefore suffered. Consequently, scholarly research was needed to substantiate and further clarify my own heuristic research in terms of its relevancy, especially in the field of education. Furthermore, I actually found it to be more compassionate to myself to

include both of these research methods as the combination of them both strengthened me and offered greater possibilities of creating a compassionate presence that could include embracing the true problems of my peers.

LIMITATIONS OF NARRATIVE RESEARCH

Though many consider the narrative inquiry research approach to be an *easy way out*, in fact it may be the most difficult path and not easily available for many. It is dependent upon steadfastness to one's own true process which may require previous spiritual or psychological training. As Straub (2000) says, "To transform suffering in our stories into a meaningful experience requires a courageous heart and a keen spiritual alertness" (p. 59).

There are three limitations of narrative research that I have noted: varying learning styles, inquirer focus and the verbal aspect of narrative inquiry. With regard to the first limitation, as has been previously stated, students have various learning styles which may closely relate to the choosing of the research method(s) that works best for each student. For right-brain thinkers, narrative inquiry can be a very appropriate research method as the narrative section of this dissertation has shown, specifically regarding students who are creatively and emotionally oriented (Schön, 1987; Klug, 2002,). However, for left-brain, more abstract thinkers, this research method will not necessarily serve their needs. Utilizing narrative inquiry in order to get similar projected research results of personal change and thereby a fuller comprehension of the subject may not be the method that works best for abstract thinkers.

Diane Wood (2000), who reviewed Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) book on narrative inquiry, takes issue with considering that students can not become personally involved with a study through theoretical research. "By suggesting that narrative celebrates the personal while theory tends to obscure it, the authors discount the experiences of those who turn to theory in order to think through the pain of their lives and imagine better alternatives. For them, theory, quite a personal matter, becomes an integral part of their own autobiographies." Therefore, it must be noted that the intention of narrative inquiry may be best served through theoretical research for certain types of students. It might actually be more compassionate and more beneficial to some students to not engage in a traditional style of narrative inquiry.

Wood also poses many questions that all narrative inquirers may need to consider if their inquiry is to truly function as scholastic (meaning to act as schooling) research, such as: "How does this form of inquiry wring meaning from social situations to gesture toward deeper and richer ways of understanding and being? How can narrative inquirers, faced with a myriad of stories and their intersections, make useful sense of them?" (Ibid) This second potential limitation of inquirer focus may be able to be counteracted by the narrative inquirer taking responsibility to personally assess the validity of their research (with reference to questions such as the above) and to ensure that their narrative account is continually targeting their study or, in this case, a thesis statement.

The third limitation is that of the actual telling of the narrative story. Does the process of narrative inquiry necessitate storytelling to produce its optimal results? If this is the case, perhaps it is important to determine in what ways the research results might be limited if the inquiry did not actually include a verbal telling of the story and was

instead solely a written account (<http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/research/observe>). I will try to mitigate this limitation by using Dragon Naturally, a voice activated tool, for some of my narrative inquiry to allow me to have a verbal, as well as a written account. However, this may not substitute for the potential benefits of sharing one's story face-to-face. If a student is very uneasy with sharing their intimate story with another in this way, then it might not be compassionate, and therefore not be beneficial, for this student to utilize the narrative method of research.

RESOLUTION OF HEURISTIC, NARRATIVE AND THEORETICAL / SCHOLARLY RESEARCH METHODS

After reviewing the research limitations, it has been found that theoretical research being based upon intellectual data collection and analysis may be insufficient to gain the wisdom needed for a study if it is not accompanied by a personal and visceral connection to the subject as well. Additionally, it has been found that heuristic research alone one may not be able to provide the knowledge needed for the study and needs theoretical research, as objective facts need to be included for an overall understanding, of the subject. Furthermore, narrative inquiry, though it could provide immeasurable intuitive and structural cohesiveness, has strong personal bias possibilities which may lead the inquirer astray if the theoretical research has not sufficiently been explored.

The main research limitation is then a lack of a holistic research approach. If all of the above research methods are utilized then the potential of each of these research methods have a stronger opportunity of being met. Thus it can be understood that if only one of these research methods are utilized, the potential fullness of the results of a study could be compromised. It should also be noted that different subjects lend themselves best to particular research methods. Therefore, each student needs to discover their own balance of research methods that will best suit them and their particular study.

Due to the limited benefits of each of these above research methods, I chose a multi-method approach so that I could enjoy the benefits, while minimizing the limitations, of each of the above three research methods: heuristic, narrative and theoretical. A convergence of the subjective and objective seemed to give an account that could be more useful and therefore potentially more beneficial for me and for other

members of educational settings as well. Since I advocate a holistic approach to education, and view compassion holistically, holistic research has also been imperative.

An additional reason that I chose a holistic methodological approach, and not just a heuristic one that I felt most comfortable with, was because though heuristic research as an independent research method may be sufficient for a dissertation in psychology this might be less true for a degree in education. A dissertation for a degree in education, seemed to necessitate the additional utilization of theoretical scholarly research because it includes critical thinking and logic; thus, including this method seemed apropos to my field of study. I assumed that a holistic research methodological approach could be more credible, and therefore be more easily acceptable, by members of the field of education.

Credibility and acceptance is important when there is an intention to serve others. It could result in an increase of confidence in relationship with my peers in the field, with other student educators, and with administrators who validate a more scholarly professional stance. Consequently, the combination of these three research methods can have the positive result of creating potential educator presence and enable me to better *walk my talk*. For example, due to the inclusion of theoretical research, resulting benefits include a greater interconnectedness with other educators and the realization that parents are a part of the oneness of educators.

The holistic path of research that I took was as follows. I initially used heuristic inquiry honoring my concrete, active, right brain orientation which I discovered during this study. Then I immersed myself into theoretical scholarly research to activate my left brain processes – another avenue of human potential which married logic and intuition. After the initial writing of this dissertation, I then engaged in narrative inquiry since I had

created a sufficient right/left brain balance which acted as a solid foundation for including both theoretical and heuristic entries to support my narrative inquiries.

It required both heuristic and theoretical research to begin the writing of this dissertation. However, I had to admit to myself that the writing of this dissertation required me to engage in more left brain activity than I was comfortable with. Creating my narrative inquiry, once the foundation of this dissertation was set, allowed me to return my balance of mass and significance and my right brain /left brain functions.

The method sequence was important for me. If I had done the theoretical scholarly research first, as other researchers have done, I might have been unduly influenced by the theoretical results. This might have caused me, even unconsciously, to attempt to prove heuristically that which I had learned theoretically. Having taken the opportunity to first do heuristic research, it stood alone and was not influenced by the theoretical data. Additionally, this sequence allowed me to be better able to comprehend the scholarly research that followed because I then had a personal frame of reference.

The dance of these three methods continued throughout the research of this study as theory called for experience which called for one's story which called for the personal to once again become universal. Once the dance was complete, I was then better able to embody the results of the study, allowing me to complete the writing of this dissertation. Balancing my perceptions from my story, my intuition, my insights from my heuristic practice, and my receipt of the transmission of worldly facts were needed to create a better semblance of what the truth of this study might be. A holistic approach to research methodology turned out to be both compassionate and beneficial to me in this educational setting.

CHAPTER 4

MY JOURNEY TOWARDS

BEING A COMPASSIONATE EDUCATOR

NARRATIVE INTRODUCTION

Research clearly shows that the best predictor of how children will turn out is how parents and other caregivers have made sense of their lives. Making sense means that when you look back at your own childhood experiences, look at the good parts, look at the bad parts, get in touch with what the feelings were, the feelings in your body, emotions you may have had, and to move forward and say, I understand how I had to adapt to what had happened, I understand that maybe it was not what I wanted to have happened, this was very frightening for me, it was very disappointing for me, maybe they did the best they could or maybe they didn't, but here I am now. How can I understand how this past has shaped me in all the different ways? That way of looking from the inside outward actually allows [educators] to make sense of their lives and free themselves up to be fully present for... children.

Daniel Siegel *Dalai Lama's Seeds of Compassion Conference 2008*

NARRATIVE INQUIRY AS CONSCIOUS EVOLUTION

In the *Research Methods* section I defined research as *a studious inquiry for the purpose of gaining new awareness through discovering new information or for reaching a new understanding*. In this vein I am engaging in this narrative research to discover new personal and general insights about compassion, about its relationship to educators and education, and particularly to have these insights assist my ongoing cultivation of being a compassionate educator. As I consider what James and Friedman (1998) warns, that “an incomplete past may doom the future,” an additional yearning arises - to

consciously evolve in order to be free to truly experience and take positive actions in my present and future by healing my past (p. 9).

Consciously evolving then points to consciously unearthing the stories of my life and through new awarenesses help to end the negative affects that parts of my past still may have on my experience of the present. Specific to this study, I am interested in finding out what part compassion has played in the realm of education in my life. I engage in this narrative inquiry in the hopes that this will in some way assist me to become free of the major pain energy that may be standing in the way of my truly being compassionate. This can, thereby, further the achievement of my educator goal (similar to Siegel [2008] above): to be free to sense how to serve myself and others compassionately and creatively.

Personal transformation may be akin to conscious evolution when an individual is consciously attempting to make a positive change that transforms that individual. My conscious evolution intention, as a candidate for a PhD in *Transformational Education*, is to transform my educator identity to one that is motivated by wholehearted compassion. I hope that this narrative inquiry will be a successful transformational education technique that can fulfill this end for myself and will prove to be transformative for other educators as well.

NARRATIVE INQUIRY AS DISSERTATION RESEARCH

Regarding its application to this dissertation, I am embarking on this narrative inquiry of grounding my life-long experiences of education and compassion, healing and transforming pain energy related to those experiences, in order to gain significantly

valuable information. Addressing my personal past educator problems of stress, burnout and the abandonment of my educational setting in the context of narrative inquiry will place me in the direct company of my educator peers and their problems. In order to make this possible, this personal inquiry is being executed after my researching the overall educator problems that I have noted in depth in the sections of the *Problem Formulation*. This will be my *work of excellence* for the benefit of myself as an educator, as an educator of educators and for the field of transformational education.

Additionally, this inquiry will hopefully broaden my scope as a compassionate educator and thus prepare me to discover a deeper meaning of all its aspects. During this inquiry I will be keeping in mind relevant topics, such as *educator preparation*, *interconnectedness*, *awareness* and *presence*, to understand more about what I have been ignorant of, and to recognize what I still need to learn about these topics. I hope to discover where each topic of compassion and education arose within me, was challenged and was developed. This has the potential of giving me a better grasp of understanding what how to become a compassionate educator. Continually having my own experience juxtaposed to theoretical research done throughout this narrative inquiry will help to keep my own experience relevant and give it more meaning.

Another way this narrative inquiry may benefit the study is by keeping in mind some of the questions I posed in the *Introduction*. The relevant inquiry questions might be: What prevented me from being free to confront my problems in my educational setting? What prevented me from eventually being free to sense how to serve compassionately? As I was unable to maintain compassion, why was my level of compassion inadequate?

REVEALING TRUTH THROUGH NARRATIVE INQUIRY

As I pondered these questions, a new one arose: How can I learn the answers to these questions just by engaging in narrative inquiry? Moustakas (2001) suggests this can occur when participating in the experience of indwelling. Perhaps through committing to fully telling my unadulterated truth in the indwelling state, while adhering to Hiles' (2002) insistence upon "revealing tacit knowledge" and Straub's (2000) instructions to do so "without exaggeration or understatement," I may be able to gain useful insights into these questions.

Writing and sharing very personal stories relating to my educator pain and compassion will necessitate a strong confront. Revealing my nakedness in this fashion is very difficult as it is an extremely intimate activity. I feel exceptionally apprehensive and embarrassed at the thought of bearing my soul – even to myself – especially sharing the intimate details of some of my major 'flaws,' personal dramas, self-reflections and spiritual connections (which may be considered somewhat *woo-woo*) publicly; this includes my peers, my mentors and the members of IUPS who will be reviewing this. Fortunately, when I recall one of my educator goals, that of *standing firmly on the ground of compassion while being able to be nakedly open to any perspective educator or child I might be confronted by in the future*, I become more courageous. Remembering this professional goal helps me to be nakedly open as this might pave the way for me to be more compassionate to those educators that I may be counseling or educating in the future and could prove to be most beneficial!

UTILIZING HEURISTIC RESEARCH SOLUTIONS

To assist me in this endeavor, I apply many of the procedures and processes I developed during my heuristic research. Before each narrative inquiry session I use the *Life Care Acts Procedure* because it has as one of its stated purposes the preparation for the writing of a narrative. The Life Care Acts Procedure includes the *Mindfulness Set-Up Practice* which recreates a self-compassionate identity through mindful intentions and physical and spiritual connections. As is stated in the *Research Methods*, I utilize my *Practice of Self-Compassion* during this narrative inquiry as I discovered, during earlier narrative inquiries, as it was easier for me to be present with my story when I took refuge in a self-compassionate identity prior to engaging in narrative inquiry. This method of practicing compassion helps me to be compassionate to my own pain and suffering during the narrative process.

I also include heuristic inquiries that I had recorded in journal form. These marked my moments of confusion, reflections, inquiry, resolution and transformation. They then were able to further enrich the personal aspect of my journey towards being a compassionate educator.

NARRATIVE INQUIRY AND THE EDUCATOR REALM

Once I have prepared myself by assuming this self-compassionate state, I will be seeking to discover the places within my educator realm where educator pain and compassion meet. As the *Introduction* to the dissertation states, *...the educator realm includes these roles: teachers, parents, tutors, mentors, children, students, learners and anyone else that assumed the role, or to whom the learner assigned the role, of educator,*

and that *educator pain energy includes pain and suffering connected to anyone in this real*. I will inquire into these many roles in the educator realm of my life to discover where educator pain and compassion have met within me. The four main areas in the educator realm I will specifically be addressing through this narrative research are: being parented, being a student, being a parent and being a teacher. In each appropriate area, I will also do any needed investigative journaling and interview relevant subjects to increase the degree of meaning I can derive from each narrative.

These four educator realm areas will be divided into three sections, each of which will contain a variety of mini-narratives that will be chronological. As “several narratives can organize the same facts into stories and thereby give the facts different significance and meaning” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 181), I will be creating individual narratives, each of which will fit within either a time period or a social or vocational group that I belonged to at different periods in my life. Therefore, there will be some narrative overlap; I may speak of a person from one vantage point in one mini-narrative, yet feel and express an entirely different point of view about the same person in a later mini-narrative. A combination of viewpoints will hopefully give a more accurate account and offer the opportunity for me to embrace a greater scope of the *big picture*.

SECTIONS OF THE NARRATIVE INQUIRY

In the first section of this narrative research, Part 1, I will tell the story of *My First Meetings with Educator Pain and Compassion*. This will include this life’s initial development of educator pain and my receipt of compassion and non-compassion as specific ways of dealing with pain and suffering. I will inquire into some of the stories of

my being parented and of my being a student (from elementary through high school). These will relate to the educator pain that was created or triggered within these educational settings. The thread to these stories will be my introduction to, and exploration of, compassion and non-compassion. This will include interviewing people to get relevant information.

In the second section, Part 2, *Reaching for Higher Education*, I will inquire into myself as a university student and into my experiences with the many educational institutions I attended. The meat of this section, however, will be my submersion into the fields of conscious evolution and holism. This will include a review of the literature of my spiritual, psychological and educational trainings in order to discover and recount the various aspects of compassion that I learned in these fields. Additionally, I will investigate the spiritual, psychological and educator practices from these fields that I applied to myself as an attempt to transform my pain energy so that I could further cultivate compassion. This will help me understand the missing links within each of these areas that prevented me from more fully actualizing my potential as an educator and lead others to explore these subjects' relationship to compassion.

In this narrative review of the literature I will be exploring how my experience and understanding of compassion and education were shaped through my applications of the practices and philosophies of the main authors that I studied. These same authors are cited in the theoretical chapters of this dissertation and will be further cited throughout this narrative as well. This narrative research aims at my discovery of the scope of my experiences of compassion and education via my immersion into the systems those authors represent. I will inquire into what parts of their practices and philosophies I

accepted and what I rejected. This will be based upon whether or not any of these practices successfully helped me to transform pain energy as well as whether or not any assisted me to further my understanding and my cultivation of compassion.

The third section of this narrative, Part 3, is *Cultivating Compassion: Hits and Misses*. Many who have been my best teachers of compassion are no longer alive. In gratitude, I would like to carry on their compassionate legacy and will therefore include our shared stories in this section. These compassionate educators, who I still spiritually access for furthering my understanding and increasing my compassionate abilities, are: Daddy, Leni, Cal and Silk. The legacy of my fifth teacher of compassion, Tara, will be included in the previous section.

I will also be inquiring into and telling the stories of some of my experiences of assuming the parenting role, *my motherly compassion*. Then I will tell the stories of cultivating compassion through my experiences of being an educational director and administrator, an educator of students, teachers and parents - my successes and my burnout. I will consider these experiences in the light of how they have, *and have not*, lead me to more effectively handle pain that gets triggered in an educational setting. Examples will relate to children's and students' behaviors, limitations, differences and needs and how these have positively and negatively affected me personally and professionally. I will be seeking answers to how to I can minimize compromising my physical, mental and psychological health and could be a more successful educator.

This third section will conclude with an evolution of my heuristic doctorate research. It will come to realize the various twists and turns I made in thesis topics to wind up with investigating self-compassion and eventually decide to use my practice

versions of compassion as a holistic preparation for educators. I will include a summary of my discoveries into ways to effectively transform pain energy in order to free me to achieve my potential as an educator and a positive role model. I will then share the culmination of this heuristic research - my practices of self-compassion – and how I have been able, and have been unable, to use this in my daily life.

CREATIVE EXPRESSION

The style of this narrative inquiry will be fairly informal, will allow for *flow*, and will take on a creative nature. Applying what Etherington (2004) says of narrative inquiry, I am encouraged to “...focus on metaphor, imagery and symbolic language.” I will apply this suggestion to each of the narrative sections as well as to the overall approach of this narrative. As I am seeking to create a more consciously evolved educator identity, I remember that Hiles (2002) has found that one can become more authentic in their area of study through a *creative synthesis* of various creative forms of expression including writing, poetry, dance and song. Therefore, I will explore various creative modes that this work can synthesize.

Throughout my heuristic research, my educator pain and suffering narrative inquiry, as well as during my scholarly research, I had found that including creative expression in the form of artwork had become extremely valuable, if not necessary for me at times in order to better comprehend what I was researching. These art form expressions utilized art materials such as paint, clay, colored pencils and oil pastels. The main creative expression forms that have been used thus far in this study include paintings, drawings, sculpture, diagramming, poetry, song, dramatic arts and photo art.

Some emanated from visualizations, but most resulted from creatively expressing what I was sensing, feeling or intuiting.

Sometimes these expressions were acting as *mass* to balance the *signifance* I was often overwhelmed by, as Hubbard (1974) stated when he sensed the need to overcome pure significance as a barrier to study. I utilized creative expression during other times in this study in order to enrich the meaning of mental concepts that I had difficulty embodying. And when there were no adequate words to truly describe an experience I was sensing or had conceptualized, it was a symbolical aesthetic concrete expression of that experience or concept that actually exposed its meaning to me. Now I am choosing to add creative expressions to the appropriate mini-narratives or create new visual expressions for these narrative topics.

To enhance my visual creative synthesis during this narrative inquiry, I have decided to align myself with the additional creative modalities that Wong-Wylie and Hecht used in their narrative inquiries. In Wong-Wylie's (2006) transformative story to motherhood, which I consider to be a version of an educator narrative, the creative synthesis that she chose included poetry, past journal entries, and reflections. In Hecht's workshop on *Poetry Stories*, she shares that "poetry and storytelling link compassion and empathy with imagination [as] we come to recognize the common ground of our shared humanity and begin to broaden our understandings of other perspectives and experiences."

Both of these women have inspired me to add the creative form of poetry and poetic descriptive phrases to perhaps enhance this research on compassion by making it even more meaningful for myself personally, as well as for my fuller understanding of the overall plight that is common to many educators worldwide. I included various authors' poetry, my past poems, and engaged in poetic creation for each major section.

NOTING EDUCATOR PAIN ENERGY

Narrative inquiry is said to have transformative and healing benefits (Fuchs, 2005; Hiles 2002; Hillman, 1983; Metzger, 2002 and Spence, 1982. And though I will happily acknowledge if this in fact does occur, I will not expect this. I have decided that while engaging in this narrative inquiry, if my educator pain energy is so strong as to be interfering with the writing of this narrative to cease writing. The most compassionate action I can take may be to do take a break and apply my *Transformation Practice* as first-aid before continuing the narrative. Although I hope this will generally not be the case, I want to provide the opportunity for needed healing and transformation to take place through the use of this practice.

NARRATIVE GOALS

My task is to inspect my personal stories involving the pain connected to my own education, to how I have educated others, and to my cultivation of compassion, including its dissipation and its blossoming renewal. I inquire into and tell these stories in the hopes of consciously evolving and being of truer service. Through the action of narrative inquiry I wish to be able to better *walk my talk* as an educator. By respecting the depth and magic of what my personal stories could bring, I am looking forward to experiencing an elevation of the quality and quantity of my educator presence. Then both my story and my presence may be a contribution that can be shared in, and with, the world.

As I begin to sense a greater truth of the relationship of compassion and education I will be better able to actualize my calling as a child advocate through being an educator

advocate. This research then marks my taking a compassionate conscious evolutionary step for myself, for educators, for mankind and for planet Earth. As Montessori (1966) has extolled in *The Secret of Childhood*, "...in the child are to be found the makings of the man. It is in the child also that the future welfare of the race is to be found...the newborn child...bears within himself a power to create a better world than that in which we live ourselves" (p. 25). Through this narrative inquiry I will become more intimate with myself as a child, bringing me closer to my goal of being a child advocate as I learn to share the one heart of childhood.

NARRATIVE PROLOGUE

Can telling my life, whence young to old
Transform the colors of my rainbow?

From gray to silver, brown to gold
Find the paintbrush that speaks me whole!

I wondered how merely by writing this narrative I could transform and heal. After reading so many articles about narrative inquiry, it still remained a mystery as to how inquiring into my past and retrieving old recounted stories of my personal experiences could possibly produce the quantity and quality of transformation and healing that I so desired. I had been using my *Transformation Practice of Self-Compassion* to help transform pain energy that I found in my narrative inquiries during the heuristic portion of this study, so I knew that by addressing the pain in my stories that at least a portion of the pain could be transformed. However, I was suspicious of whether a transformation could reliably take place through narrative inquiry without a directed practice.

Why should *this* telling of the major stories of my life be different than all of times I have previously recounted the same stories? So many of my bitter-sweet tales, like those of my departed Daddy, Tara, Leni and Silk, have already been laboriously told and retold again in the hopes that I would eventually snatch my tail while chasing after my healing. But the barely bearable pain energy connected to these dramas got stored in the recesses of my mind. And though the razor-sharp agonizing portion of these events seemed to have released during the telling over time, I sensed there was a greater healing available; a conscious evolution that this current narrative could hopefully bring about.

But where was the pathway to be found? What would I have to do differently during the inquiry and the telling of these stories to generate a lasting breakthrough? I let

these questions churn throughout my whole being for a few days while contemplating the writing of this narrative. What I discovered came from ever-present spiritual connections whose stories will be told newly in this narrative inquiry. The guidance of these dearest beings, that are not physically manifested, may be of immeasurable support to me.

...

While exploring possible narrative pathways towards conscious evolution, I celebrated Leni's birthday a day early, July 24, 2008, with a mutual friend (a separate narrative of Leni will be included in the first narrative section). This date marked Leni's second birthday celebration without her physical presence. When we read an article Leni had written a few months before her death, I felt Leni's amazing energy and found myself receiving a special gift from her (from *beyond the veil*) about the importance of maintaining compassionate presence even when my poor heart was shrinking and my life felt like I was caved-in. Her inspiration brought needed insight to my story-telling questions by compassionately giving these sometimes harsh accounts a sacred element.

When the ancients, the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Romans, had some new endeavor, they had a council and reviewed the old stories. They knew it wouldn't be a complete repeat, but there would be some elements of the stories that would help them; there was a metaphysical aspect involved. They believed the inner companions, the spirit guides, would come to them and aid them in the new endeavor. What that might mean psychologically, is the parts of ourselves that are wise and are connected with significance could be a bit more available to us.

Stocker B. *Sacred Stories We Live By* 1997

Immediately upon awakening the following day, July 25, Leni's actual birthday, I unexpectedly felt happier than I had for quite some time. I perked up in bed excitedly experiencing the high of this special day and the deep reconnection I had made with Leni on the previous day through the reading of her insightful writing. Surprisingly, when

blissfully filled with Leni, I felt a wave of tender Tara energy surround me as her spirit emanated through the White Tara poster on the wall in front of me and then flowed towards me as it entered my heart; I had forgotten these wondrous sensations of her presence, which I had not experienced for many years. Within moments, Silk's presence moved through me as well. I began to wonder if the paintbrush of my narrative inquiry could emanate from what I had just recently labeled as having *one foot in the real universe and one foot in the fantasy (also referred to as spiritual) universe* where these beings resided.

On the evening of Leni's birthday I found myself deeply missing Leni, who had been traveling alongside of me since the onset of my dissertation study until her untimely death, so my emotional tone dropped and I began to again feel the oppression of life and the apprehension of beginning this new narrative journey of potential transformation alone. Feeling a bit raw, I shared an evening celebration of Leni's birthday with another mutual friend at Ki's health food restaurant. In keeping with the 20 year old tradition the three of us had enjoyed, we *pulled* tarot cards from our favorite deck and accompanying book, the *Tarot of the Spirit* by psychologist Eakins (1992). The two cards I picked *for Leni* turned out to obviously be intended for me *from Leni*. They addressed both my sense of oppression and apprehension and gave direct insight into my desired pathway.

The first card I chose was the *One of Fire – Force*. I was amazed by the relevant wisdom it presented to me. Its words of the necessity of including both masculine and feminine spiritual energetic connections both illuminated my transformational path and embraced the challenges I have yet to meet. Sections of the associated reading spoke to me with great clarity and resonated with my narrative and dissertation endeavors:

You feel a sense of transformative high energy; inner blocks are falling away, freeing you to move into newness; you have the will to change... you have a newly discovered source of power... if there is an undercurrent of depression, it is because the future remains unknown at this time...you will soon find someone or something to connect with... Understand that you are about to undertake a new... spiritual quest... The challenge...is to understand how to achieve the best focus... At the One of Fire you are meeting the yang energy pattern within yourself... the primal male element...The only way you will find what you are looking for, and thereby direct your vast and potent inner force, is by exploring the cosmic sea: your inner depths... It is time for introspection... you are not yet able to see the new path with clarity...in order to learn to *see*, you must become a student of the I... At the One of Fire, to open your deep Self, you need to access your feminine or yin side...which is fluid and free-flowing [and] will give you the permission, space and freedom to open to new possibility... a balance of male and female energies within will allow you to expand and grow with flexibility, creativity and clarity (p. 73 -75).

The second card we chose, *Key V: the Hierophant*, further paved the way for a successful narrative inquiry path. It clarified my educational need to be both a spiritual teacher and a spiritual student. This card additionally suggested that I connect with the sacred masculine and feminine connections to help me to find and listen for my inner answers. This could then provide both the personal and universal meaning to which I greatly aspire. This card's main messages for me were:

Connect with your higher self; listen for messages surfacing within; become both student and teacher...the most important thing at this time is to attune yourself spiritually; to find the answers, seek out your god or goddess; you will find that your inner guides are waiting to serve you; quiet yourself internally and you will be able to hear the answers... The Hierophant is the inner teacher... When you tune into the messages of the Hierophant, you are...hearing the 'words' of your higher consciousness or higher self... The Hierophant is personal consciousness linked to universal conscious energy (p. 275 - 278).

Miraculously, Leni once again conveyed her intuition to me through a spiritual connection on her birthday. By choosing these cards and their tarot explanations, I began to understand what I could do differently to allow this narrative inquiry to bring me

transformation and healing. Being in and balancing the sacred masculine and feminine aspects, and being with and listening to my *higher self*, provide the opportunity for me to allow the transformation to be birthed from my connection with the spirit world and from the Hierophant speaking through me (as me) when I do my narrative inquiry. This validated the *one foot in the real universe and one foot in the fantasy universe* philosophy I had most recently begun to consciously apply.

The first step to take on this path was the creation of an inner spiritual community that I could connect with one of the preliminaries for each narrative inquiry session. This step rang as similar to a preliminary step in the Tibetan *Daily Meditation of Holy White Tara: the Wish Fulfilling Jewel* which is a part of the White Tara initiation I received in 1985. The Tibetan Rinpoche instructed us to “imagine spiritual presences such as Buddha and Tara to appear in front of us” and ask for their blessings, support and direction. Then, as a part of the creation of the Refuge Shrine, we were to take refuge in our mother, who we were to visualize on our left, and our father, who we were to visualize on our right. Additionally, this meditation has a Refuge Thought that involves taking refuge in “the most excellent community,” in Sanskrit known as a *sangha*, which can also include gods, goddesses, angels and prophets that can surround you.

Creating my own inner spiritual community, my inner *sangha* that I can surround myself with, offers me a refuge that I can rely on during this narrative inquiry. I chose to include my dearest relationships with those who have passed to *the other side*. Although there are many I have not included, and may connect with additionally during a particular narrative, there are only six potential spiritual presences that I will be consciously calling forth for guidance, support, and for the sharing of their special gifts on a regular basis.

I have called this sacred group *My Sacred Sangha* and have included this aesthetically formatted entry of this in the *Appendix*; a copy of this will stay next to my computer throughout the writing of this narrative. These can represent universal spiritual archetypes. My sacred connections are comprised of six presences, three feminine and three masculine, and their gifted qualities. I have discovered a variety of ways to order my accessing of these presences. For instance, for spiritual gender balance: Silk - my slow and deep earth connection, Daddy - my gentle wisdom connection, Leni - my intuitive constant guide, Cal - my knight/ warrior connection and also Mum (my mother-in-law) whose strength and faith I can use to empower me, Tara - my compassion heart connection, and my Mystery Man - my spiritual lover connection. Another option, page 2 of this document, includes experiencing these as spiritual chakra connections (<http://www.threeheartscompany.com/chakra.html>), visualizing their traditional colors and feeling these sacred connections within my physical chakras. The Throat Chakra, which symbolizes self-expression and communication, most directly relates to this aspect of the dissertation, yet had no spiritual conduit! Communing with this area in need of major assistance in my “expressing truth through the power of the spoken word” I recognized another spiritual connection that has been subconsciously with me: Robert – my holistic expression angel.

All of the qualities of these essences can act as tools to assist me in contacting my narrative stories with a fresh approach. They offer me a slow and deep earth connection, a god-like gentle wisdom, an intuitive *third-eye* opening, courage and bravery, a loving and caring heart, comfort in communication, and an aesthetic, sensual and mysterious flow. These sacred connections can help me to not get overwhelmed by my pain energy,

to explore missing links in my life, to open to available transformation and to discover the inherent meanings I long for.

To transform the suffering in our stories into a meaningful experience requires a courageous heart and a keen spiritual alertness. This alertness steers us away from our endless addiction to our suffering. An alert spirit and a courageous heart help us avoid creating our entire identity from our wounds... [which could] rob us of meaning and trap us in the dead end of narcissism. To stay clear of these pitfalls we need to respect our pain while avoiding self-indulgence (p. 59).

Straub *The Rhythm of Compassion* 2000

Consciously including and maintaining access to both the physical and spiritual realms during this inquiry has the potential to create the desired shift by now strongly changing the ways that I tell and interact with my own stories. Physical presence grounds me in reality while spiritual presence gives me access to a transcendent realm. My spiritual entourage can assist me in discovering innovative ways of chronicling and dealing with the real world. The narrative inquiries can now be an invocation - invoking the depths and potential for transformation within each story. No longer will the re-telling of my stories be a compulsive recounting of a difficult memory. By the expansion of my experience into other realms, I can embody these old events newly in *present time*, as Hubbard (1963) defined as “a response to the continuous rhythm of the physical universe...hereness in *nowness*” and not get stuck in the past.

To further enhance my connection with both universes and the narrative inquiry, I realize the importance of engaging in another tool, my *Practice of Self-Compassion*. I commit to taking this on as a part of a daily preparation that I will do prior to each narrative session, as well as during all narrative writing. My practice will initially be of service by linking me with my vow: *I will liberate myself, consciously evolving, transforming pain energy being self-compassion*. Pronouncing this vow should not only

help keep me focused on my purpose, but also remind me of the astonishing possibilities that compassion can have when telling my stories.

Following this practice, I will consciously make connections with all parts of myself to birth wholeness, which will include interconnectedness with my beloved spiritual community. This involves my assuming the role of *being compassion* and of *being self-compassion* before and during each inquiry. When my wounds seem great during my storytelling, I can compassionately give myself the needed empathy for my suffering. Then, by being self-compassion, with an eye on compassion and education, I can imagine going beyond all previous efforts to deal with my pain and now be better able to humbly touch the essence of the inherent meaning each story is offering - feeling me to taste more of the Oneness and then sense how to serve more compassionately and creatively.

It is exciting, yet scary, to have chosen to do this narrative inquiry and commit to using these potentially wonderful tools, while surrendering to their magical influence to transform my pain energy through this narrative process. I am challenging myself to manifest my dream of consciously evolving and being of higher and greater service to myself and the field of education than I have ever been before. May these stories unfold as un-dreamed of hues of a rainbow for the sake of myself and all educators!

Part 1

My First Meetings with Educator Pain and Compassion

Growing Educator Pain:

Overwhelmed by Closed-Heartedness - Lifted by Compassion

The overall tone of the adult-child interactions needs to be emotionally caring, loving and soothing, as well as intellectually clear and stimulating...unwelcoming, heavyhearted messages are extremely damaging to the growth, learning, striving, and creativity of children who look to adults as models for support...these painful messages... lessen children's ability to respond and can seriously stunt their overall development...the messages sent and care given by adults must be more pleasant than painful, and more love-based than fear based. (p. 57)

Mc Kee, J. Ed. D. *Sending Potent, Positive Messages to Children*
Included in Carrol *The Indigo Children* 1999

Being Parented

My Ancestral Palette

(See *Appendix* for creative expression of Part 1)

My being parented scenario, borne from my entire Jewish cultural ancestry, steeped in more than 6,000 years of familial and spiritual folklore, emanates from a superstar: the number one Jewish persona – God the Father, archetype of the Judeo-Christian tradition – my first spiritual connection.

This patriarch is the backdrop for my Jewish historical palette. The gold spiritual brilliance, the blue male dominance, the green expansive intelligence, and the brown pain energy of persecution and suffering are all common to my maternal *and* paternal ancestors.

The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no

means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.

Exodus 34:6-7 New American Standard Bible 1996

Almighty *Hashem* has tightly wrapped us Jews, His *chosen people*, in His orange scrolled laws, so that we may bond together to be His saviors of humanity. When we disobey his wisdom, He chooses to be either the *compassionate and forgiving father* as we see the error of our ways and purify ourselves, or be the *authoritative educator* who casts upon us the red lashes of punishment. His morphed personas are meant to enrich (though often destroy) our obedience to our spiritual connection and social commitment.

What have been transmitted, for generations, are not only the sins of the fathers, but the pain energy of the fathers which was the initial factor in those sins being committed. The culture and iniquities we Jews have been handing down to our children include the pain energy of shameful guilt, justified blame, and blatant arrogance accompanied by a tinted window of wisdom. We inadvertently become the peaceful Nazis whose moral self-righteousness creates our peril: Anti-Semitism.

Through my parents' traditional observance and my contemplation of God, I have been educated to perform exemplary personal good deeds, strive for intellectual excellence, generate social advancement and acquire material wealth. My Jewish family perseveres, though often plodding along our painful path, as we consider ourselves to be the bearers of the tarnished Holy Grail of the Light! (August 16, 2008)

My First Meeting with Educator Pain: First Mothered by Mom

Oh, that life had been different, Mom...
 That there wasn't so much suffering
 That we had been close and loving
 That our hearts were gladly touching
 Ah, to have been tenderly read to in your arms!

But that was not our fate
 It was way too late
 You'd been so mistreated
 Our bond had been defeated

Can I forgive?
 Can I forget?

Mom's Family

Our imperfect parents had imperfect parents of their own. Fears, insecurities and desires get passed along for generations. (p. 14)

Tara Brach *Radical Acceptance* 2003

My parents were both born in New York, but to their parents - and to all of my ancestors - Europe had been their only homeland. Mom's parents, my Grandma and Grandpa, were cousins and came from a long line of Polish Jews. Upon interviewing Mom and many of her family members I discovered that my maternal grandparents were both born in the late 1880's, in Pajeczno, Poland - then occupied by Russia. It is so strange to come to realize that the majority of my DNA is Polish. My American upbringing maintained only some of my Jewish culture, but none of my Polish origins. When, as a child, Polish jokes were in vogue, they never had any personal impact on my assumed non-Polish persona. But the actual truth is... I AM POLISH!

Back in Poland, in 1914, when Grandpa's two daughters, my aunts, were 5 and 7 years old, he packed up all of his belongings and courageously left his family behind. Grandpa consciously was about to change the lives of his family forever. Inspired to take better care of this family, he took a train to Germany where he then embarked upon a ship to avoid the conscription because he did not want to go into the Russian Army and he hoped he would find his fortune in America as he was then a poor shoemaker. He

anticipated creating a new home for his family within the year, but due to WW1 policy (and perhaps also because of his suspected infidelity) the chasm grew between them, and he did not send for his wife and daughters until 1920, six long, years later.

During this extended separation, Grandpa and Grandma's lives were poles apart – not only physically, but socially. Grandpa opened up and ran a shoe store in a Jewish / Italian / Negro neighborhood in the foreign land of Brooklyn, N.Y. No one in my family seems to have been privy to Grandpa's activities as a married man living a single life in a brand new country. However, photos have been found of him looking quite dapper – insinuating that he was living the high life - away in a Catskill Mountain Jewish resort.

Grandma's story is less of a mystery. The eldest of her three sisters, she now moved her family into her mother's welcoming home. My maternal great grandmother had just lost my great grandfather and wanted her two granddaughters and all three of her daughters, (one of which I was named after, Leah, who was later killed in the holocaust) to live and work together as a family. My aunts' remember this as a unique time of receiving and sharing great love and affection as the spiritual feminine was created through this style of extended motherhood.

Going back several thousand years...the Dravidians founded a matriarchal society and revered a creating Mother Goddess... A mother was therefore greatly revered, for through her creating and nurturing of the child she represented an earthly reflection of the Mother Goddess. (p. 23)

Salter *Mothering with Soul* 1998

In the small *gentile* Polish village of Gawlow, this matriarchal family happily ran their own general store for years. Rumor had it that it was a part of the black market. The life they created was, uncommon to traditional Jewish culture, a workable matriarchal arrangement that caught the beginning of the wave of the feminist movement!

Having been educated, as I was, to think about parenting, I thought it was the job of a parent to make children behave. You see, once you define yourself as an authority... you then see it as your responsibility to make people that you label a "child"...behave in a certain way. (p. 3)

Marshall Rosenberg *Parenting the Nonviolent Communication Way* 2005

Once my grandparents were re-united in Brooklyn, their whole lives once again became radically different. The acquired independence of the women of his family infuriated Grandpa. The patriarchal structure and the gender roles were being challenged like shockwaves; this time period being the onset of its Western modern destruction. Chaos arose in the home, accompanied by an exacerbation of their, already deeply ingrained, feelings of Jewish pain and suffering. The ways Grandpa had unfortunately learned from his parents to deal with his pain, being both the persecutor and victim, were non-compassionate to both himself and his immediate family. His habit patterns included throwing his pain as anger at his family, screaming and beating them, withdrawing (sleeping alone across the street in the back of his store) and refusing to speak (for years he didn't interact with one of his daughters living in his own home). He self-righteously (painfully) made his family behave as he saw fit, never realizing the effects of his actions.

...we must always remember that the child's sensitiveness is greater than anything we can imagine. It is we who obstruct the child, and so become responsible for anomalies that last a lifetime. Always must our treatment be as gentle as possible, avoiding violence, for we easily fail to realize how violent and hard we are being. (p. 136)

Maria Montessori *The Absorbent Mind* 1967

Within the next two years first Mom and then her brother were born. Difficult as it was to now have to squash four children and two adults in a small two bedroom apartment, Grandpa's pain energy increased and he reacted by tightly pulling in the reigns on everyone. While appearing to be a charming, friendly gentleman in his social

and professional circles, it was then that Grandpa's familial reputation for being a tyrant came into being.

In its simplest form anger with a child is irritation at a child's resistance, but it soon becomes mingled with pride and develops into a kind of tyranny when confronted by the child's feeble attempts to express himself. Tyranny defies discussions... Adults claim the right to judge and even to offend a child. At their own convenience they direct or even suppress a child's needs, and his protests are regarded as a dangerous and intolerable lack of submission...And to make the picture more complete, they refuse to admit that they are exercising any tyranny. (p. 152)

Maria Montessori *Secret of Childhood* 1966

Fearful of losing his culturally instilled male domination to his independent females and his rebellious son, he felt compelled to privately exert his Jewish patriarchic presence and wield control by doling out severe punishments. These included letting himself lose his temper, leading to physical and emotional abuse over any slight infraction or question of his strict directives. He treated his orders as if they were laws from the Bible (the Jewish *Torah*) for it was customary for him, as God the Father of his family, to have the right to demand obedience and elevate his rules to sacred law. Unfortunately, he did not enact the compassionate, forgiving aspects of the Jewish God who could have listened to his family members' needs and pain. On the contrary, his educational method of correcting wrongness was violence. He beat my Mom with a strap when she was a teenager for arriving home late from a party (that all of her friends were still enjoying), just 15 minutes later than he had ordered. When she tried to get any sympathy and understanding, there was none available - even from her then downtrodden mother who was afraid of interfering with her intimidating husband's demands. Mom was taught that valuing her feelings was indulgent. Her life was so depressing during

puberty and her teen years that Mom considered suicide; fortunately she had friends to help her through these dismal times.

With regards to becoming educated, although this is known as a high value to the Jewish people, many families considered only males worthy of getting an education. Grandpa refused to allow Grandma to go to night school, though eventually she went anyways as she was hell-bent on getting US citizenship. As for Mom, Grandpa forbade her to go to college even though it was what she desperately wanted. She was permitted to work until she got married. Grandpa, un-customarily, “never thought much of education,” Mom says. He was concerned that if his daughters were educated that it would deter them from meeting someone to marry (his highest goal for his daughters) “because there were not enough men around who were educated.” Grandpa considered this to be factual because an educated woman in their apartment building, a public school teacher, wound up being “an old maid.”

As Grandpa’s daughters and son resented his authoritarian parental approach on all matters, it makes sense that Grandpa is remembered as being unable to show affection, or any other openly benevolent signs of compassion (such as empathy, appreciation, caring or respect) for anyone in his family in ways that mattered to them while his children were growing up in his household. Grandma was also no longer affectionate to anyone, except for the grandchildren, because, Mom sensed, after years of unhappiness in her American family due to Grandpa’s cold and commanding attitude, Grandma’s “affection had been dried up for the children.” When her son-in-law died early, she told her granddaughter she wished it had been her instead of her husband. Unhappily, Mom

had little or no exposure to compassion or closeness from her parents, though Grandma still spoke to her two elder daughters every day until she died.

Mom now surprisingly recalls a few positive moments with Grandpa, which showed his sensitivity. It is baffling to her that on Saturday nights he would listen to the opera, which Mom views as a highly cultural activity and which would be unlikely for a man she thought of as uncultured to engage in. She also relayed to me, for the first time in my life, that although she remembered him as unaffectionate, Mom now recalls times as a child when Grandpa would put her on his lap, “not in an abusive way.” The only time, however, that she remembers him ever being “nice to her” was when she was engaged to be married. Grandpa showed sincere cheer and happiness when she got a letter from my father in the Army. A sense of softness came through Mom’s voice as she recently was reminded of Grandpa demonstrating genuine affection towards me during the first six months of my life before my Grandpa died (which I sense remembering).

There was one especially tender moment that Mom newly shared with me about her father. It was of her spending time with Grandpa in the hospital when he was dying (due to a stroke resulting from diabetes and “not taking care of himself”). Grandpa squeezed Mom’s hand! This shocked Grandma as there had been no holding, hugging or loving displayed like that by anyone in their home. Mom felt special and thought this might be because she had been their “passionate love child” after their long separation.

After years of complaining to me about the cruelty of her father, now reflecting on her childhood with Grandpa, she says that “if you did what he wanted everything was fine.” She is now aware of becoming “able to rise above what was happening” in her family. Perhaps that is so to some degree! But she also was a carrier of not only her pain

energy, but the ineffectual and non-compassionate disciplinary patterns that her parents implemented to deal with their own pain energy and to educate their children.

Grandpa’s Jewish Patriarchic archetypal pain and suffering, his cultural, financial, “miserly” stereo-typed habits, his pattern of self-centeredness, his violent uncontrolled outbursts, his abusive methods of discipline and his ignorance of the magic of compassion, inadvertently and unfortunately created intense suffering for others and himself. This was transmitted not only to every member of his own family, but also to my birth family and consequently to my immediate family as well, unconsciously having been passed down to me through his daughter, by my Mom. The educator pain I experienced through being parented by my Mom was more intense, and spanned a greater amount of time, than I have encountered with any one else throughout my life.

My Birth-Bearer

For some of us the earliest painful memory is around the circumstance of our birth. (p. 19)

Gail Straub *The Rhythm of compassion* 2000

“AHHHHHHHH...OO-OO-OO-OO...OWWWWWWWWWWWWW!!!

The first lesson Mom had the great misfortune of teaching me was how painful it can be to give birth and to be born. This was my initial educator pain energy! My buttocks presenting position in her uterus was objectionable to Mom's obstetrician so he drove his whole hand inside her vagina, abruptly turned me around – dislocating my left hip, and then forcefully pulled me out of Mom’s traumatized body; her doctor, (as had been the case with her parents) ignored her as she was screaming involuntarily in agony. What a violently painful entry into this world!

I have heard repeatedly by Mom, even in public, that giving birth to me was the most painful thing that had ever happened to her in her life. Did she express this because she wanted compassion, in the form of sympathy? Where was my compassion for getting my hip dislocated and needing to wear a brace for the first six months of my life? It must have been hidden by my guilt! It has been so very difficult to hear of the unbearable suffering that my birth, though unintentionally, had caused my Mom.

The Closed-Hearted Disciplinarian: My Way!

Mommy! Why don't you love me?
 You crush my needs; hurt my feelings,
 You're so rough and curt and blaring
 Why can't you listen to my woes -
 Be a mommy who's sweet and caring?

...

If you are a parent you should be able to listen compassionately to your child... Without compassionate listening there will be no communication. Without the capacity of listening we are not able to understand... without understanding love is not possible. Understanding is the ground of love.

Thich Nhat Hanh *Compassionate Line* 2004

Mom told me that she wants her gravestone to read: *I Did It My Way!* Yes, this is how she has lived her life and brought me up. Her way of educating and disciplining was mostly non-compassionate, reactive and on her terms; this resulted in my feeling unloved by her. For most of her life, Mom was unable to listen compassionately to me. As a child, any expression of my desires, feelings or needs (in response to her demands) was met with screaming, slapping or an outburst of hysterical crying. She carried down Grandpa's habit patterns of not dealing with his emotional pain and throwing it at his family in anger, as well as those of withdrawing and refusing to speak (once locking herself in her room after a quarrel, for hours, threatening to commit suicide). Mom's unwitting non-

compassionate ways broke my heart over and over again. She was the one person from whom I most needed comfort, understanding, appreciation and caring: I craved, but never received, compassion throughout my childhood and young adult years from my *Mommy!*

...authority figures often think it is their job to teach us right from wrong, appropriate from inappropriate. Sadly, what we learn is to disassociate from our feelings and needs, and express ourselves in judgmental terms...
(p. 33)

Kelly Bryson *Don't Be Nice, Be Real* 2004

It was not that I minded Mom telling me what she thought was right or what she felt I should do (I would have actually appreciated much more of that kind of motherly input throughout those years), but it was that she was unwilling to hear, feel, or process what her viewpoint brought up in me. No questioning or discussion of any kind would change her claim. And if I wiggled myself into discussion, asserting what I had thought was a valid point as well or explain that if I did what she ordered me to do I would feel horrible, she would feel those expressions of my truth as antagonism towards her.

Then, at once, the morphing of Mom would begin! Her slight body grew to great, fiery proportions. She froze on the spot and dug her heels even more firmly into that solid ground. From this unshakeable stance, and with an oppressive presence, she moved into attack mode and used her clever mind to find just the right, sharp jab that would *make me wrong*. Her reactive criticisms of me acted as such severe blows to my heart, that they knocked this child's positive self-esteem over in overwhelm.

Taking the wind of my precious creations out of my sail of personal development could only last for just so long. Eventually I learned from her how to verbally fight back which then escalated the intensity of the conflict. This next level of triggering that we experienced, transformed Mom into, what I as a child saw as, a monster. Her face would

swell up; her eyes would bulge; her right hand rising behind her ready to pitch her fast curve-ball at me once again: Wham! Bam! Slam! War with Mom!

Finally, when I was about 13 years old, I summoned up the courage to staunchly stand up for myself. As Mom was ready to slap me once again because she did not like something I said to her, I dug *my* feet into the ground, created *my* own solid presence, looked squarely into her grey-blue eyes, raised my left hand up exuding a powerful, fiery energy and kept it poised alongside of my ear until she put her hand back down. Though I never slapped her, she surrendered. A non-verbal truce was made; the physical war was over. My movement from dependence to autonomy led to this self-determined action, a sign of self-compassion and ancestral transmission leading towards interdependence.

The Workaholic

Do you get more excited about your work than about family or anything else?

Have your long hours hurt your family or other relationships?

Do you get impatient with people who have other priorities besides work?

From: *How Do I Know If I'm a Workaholic?*

www.workaholics-anonymous.org

Is my home an extension of my workplace?

When I am with family or friends, is my mind preoccupied with my work?

Do I value admiration over love?

Do I schedule my day so tightly that I am always racing?

From: An inventory of Attitudes & Beliefs about Workaholism

www.workaholics-anonymous.org

Affirmative answers to many of the questions from the above lists identify Mom as having the addictive persona of a *workaholic*. Mom was, and still is at 86, the perpetual busy bee; she prides herself with an excellent ability to multi-task and is compelled to “do something all the time,” which makes her happy. The more tasks she is working on, the more productive she feels. When she gets sidetracked, she becomes

frustrated and self-negating because she did not accomplish what she set out to do. Perhaps she is the kind of workaholic that should actually be called a *product-aholic*, since her addiction seems to revolve around working towards the achievement of some intellectual endeavor, attending a cultural event, beautifying herself, or engaging in various activities leading to, what she deems as, recognized valuable products. She is admired by all for how active she is, which may perpetuate her addiction.

In the early years of my life Mom always had projects she was working on, usually art-related; Daddy would complain that she burned the midnight oil, keeping him awake, to get them done correctly. When I was 7 ½ years old she began working in offices and found little time for the family except for making dinner. For four years I enjoyed the freedom that her absence provided and became quite independent. I did not realize what I was missing out on mothering on until later in my life.

Becoming a self-determined woman's libber, Mom opened her own travel agency in my 11th year; that is when her workaholism became full blown. Work was her life's blood. Mom paid little attention to her mother or sisters when they called - laying the phone down – staying focused on her work. Her two daughters' and husband's needs got in the way of her production, greatly increasing her personal stress and her erratic temper.

Do I work long hours without stopping?

Can't sit and relax?

Do I know how do to nothing and just be?

From: An inventory of Attitudes & Beliefs about Workaholism

www.workaholics-anonymous.org

Through her successful actions and strong presence Mom taught me that I could create a profitable business. Through acting out her ADD tendencies while engaging her highly creative mind, I learned from Mom how to be in control, to take on more projects

than I could handle, to not waste time by cleaning the house, to let papers pile up, to save everything, that new endeavors were senior to uncompleted ones, as well as that stopping and *just being* should be avoided as it was unproductive and uncomfortable. Having a more sensitive energy system than Mom, I needed more rest than was necessary for her.

Through the sacred act of pausing, we develop the capacity to stop hiding, to stop running away from our experience. We begin to trust in our natural intelligence, in our naturally wise heart, in our capacity to open to whatever arises. (p. 53)

Brach *Radical Acceptance* 2003

Mom abandoned observing *Shabbat*, the holy day of rest, having the strong impetus to *do* - but not the impetus to *stop and just be*. Oy! Vey! Perhaps it was too painful for Mom to confront being in *just this moment!* She had no self-compassion tools to gently help her to experience the transformative benefits of stopping her impulse to reject or hide from her pain and just be. This I would have to teach myself.

Maternal Holistic Education

Mothering... is essentially a spiritual activity, a woman's intimate connection with her child - one that only a mother can have. It is a career of the heart... Mothering nourishes the feeling life, enhances and releases qualities that can be described as spiritual - such as joyfulness, tenderness, patience and so on, which may otherwise remain deep within the soul, buried and unused. (p. viii)

Salter *Mothering with Soul* 1998

What I missed most from my relationship with Mom were spiritual and heart connections. Spirituality was sparked in me at a very young age and I recognized this as the root of my life. Although I was brought up initially in a semi-religious Jewish household, which assisted my spiritual development, Mom defined herself more as an atheist. It was difficult for me to understand how she could not relate to any of my spiritual questions or insights. As I began to sense the link between spirituality and the

experience of an open heart, I felt hurt that Mom still invalidated me for talking about feelings and did not want to deeply share these connections. I wanted her to meet me in the place of *Namaste!* However, it took compassionate insight for me to accept our inherent spiritual and emotional differences and work towards a higher level of *Namaste*:

I honor the place in you
which is of Love, of Truth, of Light and of Peace,
When you are in that place in you,
and I am in that place in me,
we are One.

Chris Tinney *Namaste Yoga*
<http://mlmgorilla.com/namaste>

An extension of spirituality is creativity and the arts. Since Mom has always had such a love for culture and all of its artistic expressions, she inspired this appreciation in me and I am thankful that she brought this gift into my life. My heart also feels pain, however, for not having been given any classes in these fields and for not sharing more with her in these creative activities. If I have any educational regrets, one would be having not received training and encouragement to practice and excel, in theater, dance, gymnastics, fine arts, and piano as a young child. I wish Mom's mothering had included seeing to this during my early years, as these loves of mine were much more challenging to perform or master when I became an adult and tried to meet these needs for myself.

You did a good job of teaching me to be responsible in the world
But you never taught me how to take care of myself.
Perhaps... you never learned how to truly take care of yourself.

Mom's workaholicism stood in the way of my domestic and hygienic education. I had very little holistic preparation. In these areas of life she did not find particular value, did not consider them to have viable products and therefore, she did not find it necessary to spend her time practicing or teaching these life-skills to her children. Mom attempts to

get her own home fully straightened out (a problem I continually face myself). As Mom has beautiful fine art, sculptures and unique collections, she still holds an aesthetic vision she is working towards in the face of her very deep programming.

An Educator Wish List
What I would have liked to have been fulfilled by Mom

I understand Mom was unable to, but my inner child wishes Mom had taught me:

- * the function and best methods of personal hygiene
- * how to sew: mend, use a sewing machine, make my own clothes
- * how to cook: bake bread, roast a chicken, make soup, create desserts
- * how to efficiently clean the house: clean toilets, dust, mop, clean an oven
- * how to be humble, honest, respectful and demure
- * how to garden, learn about nature
- * how to organize and balance my day
- * how to relax and enjoy leisure

These are skills traditionally taught, or made arrangements to be taught, by one's mother to their daughter in their formative years. My mother received some of these skills from Grandma, as Mom had to clean the floors of their home every Friday before Shabbat. But Mom also told me that her mother was afraid of water, as she is, and never showered or bathed, only washed up at the sink. These all lead to my not being educated how to properly take care of myself compassionately.

I can now understand that because I received no consistent structure in the realm of domestic and self-care, what may be commonplace (if not almost instinctive) for most people has been a challenge for me on a daily basis. Therefore, I needed to create my own self-care structure, based on awareness and care of myself and my environment, to discover self-compassion. This is why I developed the Life Care Acts Procedure (see *Appendix*), so that I can have a structure to consciously recognize and perform the daily activities that most children get passed down to them, usually unconsciously.

The only self-care policy Mom emphasized was to “always look your best” and to

this day she still creates her image to be one of a very beautiful and charming woman. She has taught me to value appearance as a primary attribute in life. Her vanity, however, sometimes gets the better of her (and me). When Mom's strong aesthetic sense gets quite triggered by what she experiences as someone presenting themselves non-aesthetically, her habit is to be obsessively critical and judgmental.

...the celebration of a child's beauty by just one parent can be a turning point in that child's life. (p. 78)

Kessler *The Soul of Education* 2000

Appreciation of my beauty, or repulsion by my lack of it, has been Mom's initial uninvited imposed judgment whenever she sees me. She boldly expresses her view of my looks: beautiful, pretty, awkward, unkempt, inappropriate or just plain wrong. Mom became my teacher of beauty, critiquing my appearance and instructing me on how to change myself until she felt satisfied. Being the invalidated, but obedient, student I cringingly allowed Mom to put rosy-pink rouge on my face when I was just 4 years old as she saw me as too pale, and I became a blonde and wore pink and black clothing, all of which were inappropriate for my coloring, because she could most obviously sense my physical beauty when I looked like her.

These days, I am happy to say, Mom tries hard to keep her negative opinions of my appearance to herself. If she feels judgmental impulses arise, she will attempt to control them. Though, if her aesthetic trigger is too strong, she will still blurt out a criticism – unconscious of the pain her reaction could trigger in me. Even recently, while saying good-bye to my relatives that she had just newly met, she told me in disgust that wearing my fanny pack was ugly when I was dressed up. To her credit, she is learning to not react immediately to the pain energy that connects with her own *critical mother*

package. Presently, we have successfully worked out that I will be open to hearing her grievances about my appearance if she does so privately and with compassion in mind.

Mom as a Positive Educator

Though it seemed she would never be compassionate to me because she feared it could weaken her position with me and turn me into a weak individual as well, I was quite surprised to discover as an adult that Mom always gave some of her time and service to charitable organizations. When I realized this, I first assumed these efforts were self-serving and not compassionate. For instance, I knew she went door-to-door for the March of Dimes, but I believed she did so that for the sole intention of meeting everyone in the neighborhood; I thought she taught dancing in the Lighthouse Club for the Blind just to afford her the opportunity to dance and be away with other men – as that was the neighborhood gossip.

Now I understand that one of Mom's personas, who is frequently present, actually does want to be, and ensures she is, of service. I am finally learning that compassion for her shows up in the realm of being a *social do-gooder*! Perhaps this persona's dedication to engaging in these activities comes more from a sense of wanting to be valuable to society, rather than from being motivated by feelings of compassion. Either way, my view of her being purely self-centered has been shattered. Mom's positive motivation inspires me to include volunteer work for people in need as part of my every day life.

Another of Mom's positive educator personas that I have benefitted from is the *creative expresser*. Mom has the unusual ability to be fearless in utilizing her never-ending creative stamina. Though I need to be more weary of burn-out than she does, I

have learned that I am capable of successfully transforming many arenas in the educational world, making them more aesthetically pleasing and more functional (such as re-creating educational environments in schools and homes).

Mom's *creative expresser* goes hand-in hand with her *independent spirit* which has been a double-edge sword in both of our lives. I have found that for me, being independent without being compassionate can eventually be debilitating as it can separate me out from others causing loneliness. However, having an independent spirit combined with a compassionate spirit can bring about the interdependence I value and long for.

Probably Mom's most valuable lesson that she has been teaching me more recently actually falls in the spiritual realm – her capacity for joyousness. Even though she is often quite serious, she enjoys activating her good sense of humor, which I have not been blessed with. The function of her humor seems to be to shift the energy and to share joy. Her gratitude for her good health and family now brings her joy as well.

It had frequently disturbed me when I watched Mom having a cheerful conversation with someone in her agency – marked with humor - just moments after we had a fight. My disturbance related to the fact that I was still strongly feeling pain while she was joking around with clients. It appeared that she was either not affected by the pain that I was still experiencing or that I was so insignificant to her that she could just move on. I can now see that she *was* able to *stop* and liberate herself from the pain momentarily, even if she was not able to *just be* and transform the energy. Even when she had just been triggered and became explosive, she was capable of re-creating a joyous presence in the next instance, effectively engaging and resuming being productive. There

is still more I can learn from Mom in this area of creating joy in my life and extending it to those around me while successfully accomplishing my goals.

Resolution of Maternal Educator Pain Energy

Years of therapy, reflection, and processing were spent independently and together to resolve my challenging, and frequently painful, relationship with Mom - mostly to no avail. However, when Mom went into menopause, her violent outbursts mainly ceased and were replaced by a new interest to resolve the past by being more attentive in the present (perhaps she had had an undetected hormonal imbalance). First Mom transformed and then I newly awoke as well. By becoming more open to now listen to my vantage point of my growing up years, Mom made it easier for me to then find more peace with her career path choices. She told me honestly, with no feelings of guilt, that she probably she should never have had any children. Though not ever before able to put her children first, she is now making a much more concerted effort to do so as having a loving relationship with her daughters is now actually a true priority in her life.

Even with the positive changes she had made and the compassion I was committed to giving her, I still found myself getting triggered by Mom just recently. When I was upset with her, I applied my Practice of Self-Compassion (see *Appendix*) and then it finally dawned upon me that I had a persona that was critical of Mom, which was probably a generational transmission. I gave this persona compassion and, amazingly, I was immediately able to be more relaxed around her and truly enjoy our time together.

We are blessed that Mom, a committed worker, is learning and discovering how to be more loving and a better mother. After coming to terms with her physical and

emotional abandonment of her children, she now calls me fairly regularly and expresses her care. As a result of this inquiry, I notice she listens to my viewpoints more intently and consciously ends our conversations with a sincere *I love you* and well-wishing.

Mom's spiritual life is transforming as she investigates how to be a better Jew. Her transition from atheist to agnostic is admirable. Her Shabbat prayers are moving and have made us weep. Weekly teleconferencing on aspects of Judaism touches on empathy and compassion – which she once shunned and now is beginning to taste. Is there the possibility for true spiritual connection with my mother at last?

These days, as the opportunities arise, I find myself teaching Mom about what compassion means to me and happily I am increasing my own understanding of it through these interactions as well (when I am not being didactic). Pencil and paper in hand, Mom is growing into a more willing student and I, fortunately, am becoming a better educator. She is awkwardly practicing being compassionate to those in her present life and somewhat effectively to those no longer present (as difficult as it still is for her). Trying to appreciate me and my needs, she is not compromising her own.

My heart, still somewhat cautious, is more vulnerable to open and I can feel some pangs of pride when picturing my Mom. At 87 years of age, she is now more curious about, even fascinated by, exploring the realm of compassion and seeing the error of her ways without the need for self-punishment or penance.

Although she continues to appreciate and extol her own attributes (a characteristic I have perhaps incorrectly viewed as conceit), finally – perhaps miraculously – Mom is also able to truly love, share and enjoy her family. Self-compassionately, she is clever enough to not be only doing this for us. She is still doing this for herself, however now

she is stepping into the huge, varied realm of the larger self. Wow! This is Mom's version of vowing conscious evolution. More power to you, Mom! You are staying true to yourself, doing it "*My Way!*"

MOM! I'm so glad to have taken these intimate, healing moments with you. I now appreciate you and my Polish heritage. You're amazing! I love you!

My First Meeting with Compassion: Daddy - My Buddhist Icon

Daddy -
I honor you as my first Buddhist teacher
...of Oneness
...of Lovingkindness,
...of Compassion

I am in gratitude for your maternal lineage
...of European Orthodox Jews
...as unwitting (Buddhist-Jews) *Bu-Jews*
Now me, a (Jewish Buddhist) *Jew-Bu*

Daddy-
A natural Buddhist with infinite compassion
An archetype of natural empathy
Loving father, grandfather & friend
My role model since conception

Humbly bowing in recognition of your wisdom
With heart, spirit, body and emotion
Surrendering to our transformation
Opening to my happiness

Daddy's Parents

Daddy's parents were also both immigrants arriving separately to Ellis Island in 1906 / 1907. They individually settled in the same neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York – only a block away from my maternal grandparents. My paternal grandmother, who we all affectionately called *Bubby*, traveled to America in her teens with her younger sister.

Bubby brought to me yet another part of my Polish heritage. My paternal grandfather, who died years before I was born, came from Austria, but his ancestors had southern Italian roots which was obvious from Daddy's skin tone and my sensuality. Bubby was engaged to be married when, through mutual relatives, she met Grandfather whose charm (which Daddy must have inherited) swept her off her feet.

I had such valiant grandparents... to have left their secure family and households behind and at such a young age to travel alone on trains and boats halfway around the world ...to move to a place they had only dreamt of. That took great courage, from *coeur* in French, an action coming from the heart. It sounded so romantic. Why couldn't they have lived happily... ever ...after?

It was difficult for me to find out much about Grandfather from Daddy, his three sisters, or my older cousins. Whenever I mentioned my mysterious Grandfather, Daddy's face expressed disgust and he skillfully changed the subject to asking questions about my life - which I had noticed was one of his favored gentle methods of avoiding having to deal with subjects that triggered any pain within him. One day, a few years before Daddy died, when he was visiting me from the East Coast and we were alone in the car, I decided to push this subject!

Daddy finally told me that Grandfather had deeply hurt Bubby and the family. Grandfather hardly came home because he spent so much of the time with his niece, Daddy's cousin (I later found out that Grandfather was having an affair with her). Daddy angrily blurted out that Grandfather did not assume the responsibility of supporting the family, forcing Daddy to begin working when he was only an 8 years old child. Experiencing his triggered resentment, Daddy further recalled his miserly uncle; his

father's brother owned a market and hired Daddy, but never helped the family have enough food to put on the table. These memories triggered immense hostility, frustration and deep sadness within Daddy, who rarely showed these emotions, so I respectfully dropped the subject and never brought it up to him again.

My aunts could only speak a few words of the horrible lives they had with a father who was secretly thought to be an abuser. Daddy's eldest sister, now 95, considered Grandfather to be a "selfish and self- involved *Dapper Dan*, spending his money on his beautiful clothing" and giving Bubby a pittance for food and rent. Even Bubby had to go to work for a while to pay the bills for the six of them. This aunt was hurt that Bubby did not stand up to our Grandfather – not for herself or for the family.

Trying to get sympathy from his children, Grandfather attempted to explain away his behavior and his lost love for Bubby to Daddy and his eldest daughter. Neither of them could listen to his pain as Grandfather had not shown them any kind of compassion, and they feared betraying their hurt beloved mother. Their familial pain was so great that their ancestral patterning gave them no choice but to abandon their relationship with him.

It is a deep tendency to retreat from difficulties rather than advancing into them. (p. 110)

Goldstein *Transforming Suffering* [c. in Dalai Lama] 2003

Sadly, Grandfather died early, in his late 40's. No healing had taken place within the family. Grandfather's wife and children all harbored anger towards him for the rest of their lives because they found his behaviors, which they deemed as unethical and irresponsible, impossible for them to reconcile. As was my paternal family's habitual method of dealing with painful experiences, each bore their pain and suffering alone.

Bubby, on the other hand, brought fortune to this family through feeling and showing the immense love she felt for all of her children; due to her personal heritage, Bubby was the compassionate one! When envisioning Bubby, I see the image of a rotund, short, old-fashioned aproned woman, hair pulled back into a bun at the base of her sagged neck, enjoying a full-bodied laugh arising from her overflowing breasts and heart. Bubby was known to be very easy going, rarely sensing a need to discipline her children; this gentle attitude was carried down to her future generation. When any of Bubby's children had a problem, she always seemed to intuitively know how to handle the situation with love. "Never saying anything sharp," her youngest says, "she wisely helped each of her children to work out their problems for themselves."

However, although known for her compassion, she fell short in the area of self-compassion and never shared her moments of suffering with the children. In an admirable attempt to protect them, Bubby became a stoic and scarcely allowed herself to show any of her painful feelings. They never spoke of the pain that Grandfather caused everyone in their family – not even among themselves. Consequently, to protect their mother, the children learned to never show Bubby their own real pain as well.

Ashkenazi Jews, those from Northern and Eastern Europe, had a particularly strong appreciation of the value of education. Bubby felt education was very important and though she encouraged her children to go to school, she never pushed them. Though always reading newspapers and books, Daddy was not highly academic. Bubby ensured her children graduated from high school, the eldest recently graduating from college.

Always trying to do her benevolent God's good work, Bubby was known for her spirituality. Nearly all the Ashkenazi Jews were Orthodox, but that did not mean they

were spiritually oriented. One way she demonstrated this was through her generosity, always giving to the poor, though in near poverty herself. She relied on Daddy's generosity to give to the grandchildren. I recall seeing Daddy slide a dollar into Bubby's hand, so that she could happily give it to me as a present. Complimenting me, my mother has repeatedly said that I get my spiritual side from Bubby. I enjoy sensing Bubby as the ancestor that channeled down essential spiritual qualities, especially that of compassion.

The Dutiful Son

Everyone's real compassion for others comes from [their] mother [who was] very kind to [her] own children and other people who were facing difficulties.

The real teacher of compassion is not a religious teacher.

Mother is ultimately the real teacher.

Dalai Lama *Inter-Spiritual Panel* 2008

Daddy took on the sweet torch of compassion from his family, strengthening its power with his manly, but still sweet, approach of caring. For every member of his family, he became the compassionate beacon of light – especially for Bubby! To compensate for the pain his loving mother had received, his eldest sister says of Daddy, she "never saw a better son." I, too, remember this compassionate loyalty that Daddy expressed to Bubby every day until she died - when I was 20 years old.

The Socialist Capitalist

My father imprinted my social conscience. (p. 27)

Straub *The Rhythm of compassion* 2000

My compassionate upbringing by a Socialist father was the preparation for my social worker impulse to help individual people and the world at large. Genetically transmitted from Bubby's ancestors, I am hyper-sensitive to pain - predominantly group

emotional pain. The Socialist in me strongly reacts to social injustice, triggering the pain energy of frustration, betrayal and great grief.

I am noticing that the evolution of my pain began this lifetime as a young child extremely sensitive to all types of pain energy. I remember watching TV with Daddy and feeling intense pain whenever I saw anyone treating another poorly. How heart wrenching the movies! How abusive the news reports! (My Heuristic Journal: Jan 29, 2006)

Daddy's adherence to the laws of the Torah was abandoned for the principles of compassion in Socialism and equanimity (also a part of the Buddhist *dharma*) in Communism. He painfully rejected the concept of a God who could allow wars and suffering. After moving up the political ladder in his trade union, his surrender to the Socialist way was painfully betrayed when he found both the union leaders and the bosses to be self-centered and non-caring of the needs of their workers.

Judaism, Communism and Socialism no longer being the lofty *-isms* Daddy could dedicate himself to, he regretfully abandoned those for a base *-ism* he had previously rejected –Capitalism. This choice arose from his primary goal to put his heart and soul into his family, thus conceding to become a successful Capitalist to offer his family potential happiness and well being by ensuring them financial security. Unlike his own miserly uncle, Daddy's generosity of heart and cash, touching all those close to him who were in need, made him the favorite uncle to his family and the magnanimous Godfather to his friends. Unfortunately, neither Mom nor his second wife was so generous and both often treated his kindness as weakness, never having understood his Socialist and Communist core.

Despite this criticism, Daddy's heart remained that of a Buddhist. Lovingly he continued to treat everyone with equal respect and care, be it a five-star hotel manager he

was doing business with or a drunken *bum* on the street corner asking for money or a cigarette. When Daddy helped close ones get their needs met and be happy, it brought him heartfelt satisfaction.

The Compassionate Father

To truly love you have to be able to understand the kind of difficulties that person has, the kind of suffering he has, the kind of deep desires that person has within themselves, the kind of obstacles that person is encountering in his/her daily life. You have to see all of that. And how can you see all of that? You should ask him or her.

Thich Nhat Hanh *Compassionate line* 2004

Here, Thay is telling the story of Daddy's compassion to me: inquiring into and deeply listening to my personal desires, being respectful of whatever I found meaningful, assisting me in getting my true needs met, despite any opposing viewpoints he may strongly have. In his adorable way, Daddy silently shared his understanding of all I said. Whether he agreed with me or not, he accepted my truth. Expressing his compassion as encouragement, Daddy maintained confidence in me during many difficult times, the moments I sensed my path but needed assistance to take that next step.

When I was depressed and wanted to leave my position of co-counselor in a summer camp, Daddy understood my need to take care of myself and helped me prepare for my first year of university. When I was greatly suffering in a failing marriage and now ready for a second child, he offered to help me acquire a baby and financially support this new child. When I was very apprehensive about taking on a brand-new project unlike anything I had ever done before – starting my own school, Daddy reassured me that I would excel in anything I was truly interested in accomplishing.

Daddy's compassionate attitude increased the sharing of our love. I was so happy sitting on my father's shoulders, or being pushed by him on the swings, loving and playing with Daddy! I felt so deeply contented, relaxing in his space, watching an old movie on TV on his bed or sharing a meal at a restaurant. These were times when he and I were alone: him being my adoring father, me being his little girl - his beloved daughter.

Daddy's self-compassion sometimes acted as rejection of me. He was a man of little words and I was a girl of many. When his patience for listening to me ran out, needing to care for himself, he would express both his self-compassion and compassion while gently rubbing my arm. "Honey, I love you," he would say tenderly with a smirk, "but I'm going to read now." I often felt guilty in those moments, wondering how long he wanted to be alone, wishing that he wanted to connect with me forever.

The Gentle Disciplinarian

...when parents are genuinely present and loving, they offer their child a mirror for his or her goodness. (p. 13)

Brach Radical Acceptance 2003

Fortunate to have such a loving heart and a compassionate presence like his mother, Daddy, too, rarely needed to discipline his children. Punishment was not the method he chose to instill his strong values. When he saw and felt my violation of a value that he held dear, he would meet me in my heart (where I felt the pain of his disappointment) and then share a real-life example hitting home the importance of this value.

When a father shares the caring as most fathers do today then he must also draw upon the feminine qualities of his soul. He too must express tenderness in his activities, gentleness of speech, tell the story imaginatively and from his heart. (p. 87)

Salter Mothering with Soul 1998

When Daddy found us in a situation that required him being a disciplinarian, such as his need to impress upon me his value of my telling him the truth, he utilized his impressive masculine rendition of his maternal ancestry. When I disobeyed this bottom-line rule I immediately sensed his massive stature (though 5'8") and unshakable grounded and calm presence that foreshadowed his slowly spoken caring intense words. His disciplinary style of implanting this value deeply into my soul brings to mind the *black raspberry ice-cream cone with chocolate sprinkles* story:

One very cloudy day when I was 12 years old, Daddy kindly offered me money to take the bus, instead of possibly being caught in the rain walking to and from school. I gratefully accepted his coins and suggestion for the bus-ride to school, but (as it wasn't raining) I decided to walk home from school. Noticing extra coins, I excitedly stopped for my favorite black raspberry ice-cream cone with chocolate sprinkles - knowing the money I was spending was not intended for a sweet indulgence. Afraid to be found out, I gobbled it down as quickly as I could while savoring every lick. When I arrived home, Daddy asked me for his change. I tried to hide my transgression with a new one; I lied and told him I took the bus home leaving me with no extra money. He repeatedly, though gently, asked me to tell him what really happened to his coins. I eventually broke down crying, telling him the truth. He then admitted having seen me walk home.

Daddy proceeded to explain that he needed to have total faith in my words, that it was imperative that he knew he could trust me. He then presented a scenario of my being on trial for murder. If he could trust my honest innocence, even when all else deemed me guilty, he would find a way to set me free. "If not..." he said, and wisely ended his story

there, giving me time to ponder the consequences and begin to appreciate the importance of the value of honesty to Daddy.

Hidden Defeating Pain

In some ways I never really knew my father because he never revealed the nature of his suffering... My father's buried grief has inspired me to confront the *lacrimae rerum*, the tears that are in all living things...I may never know the details of my father's anguish, yet I have come to understand how it affects my life. (p. 54)

Straub *The Rhythm of Compassion* 2000

I greatly benefitted from the warmth, beauty and quantity of Daddy's love and compassion. He was a jovial shining star and a responsible, stable father that I have been blessed to have had for the majority of my life. Admittedly though, I realize that this does not represent the whole picture of what has been passed down to me through him as his deep pain, which I experienced, is within me as well. When watching a movie or sharing a meal, we sat together in our hearts *and* in our pain. All was handed down generation to generation: compassion from his mother, deep pain from his father. These are alive in me; I see both his compassion and his deep pain when I look at my face in the mirror!

Daddy tried to do as he learned from Bubby and protect me from all pain, especially his own. His maternal lineage curtailed off viewing the consequences of his well-intentioned goal: "*to protect my children from pain at all costs.*" Carrying down the stoic persona, he kept his troubles buried. Being given no other viable tool, Daddy felt that he had to remove his personal inner self from me and be alone with his pain; we both suffered from this separation.

Is it ever necessary to protect someone from the truth? Does protecting you from feeling your pain, really protect you from feeling the other person's pain? We have the fear of dealing with the repercussions of disclosing information that may negatively affect another and trigger pain

and suffering. Not everyone's hearts feel their own and other's pain so deeply. But for those of us that are hypersensitive, we can realize this as a potential gift and gain increased courage and not withhold our pain or the pain of others. This can be an opportunity to embrace our life! (My Heuristic Journal: September 25, 2004)

Sadly, Daddy did not understand the workings of transmission; he could not hide his suffering from me. The deep pockets of pain that resided in Daddy's heart and soul (that were in Grandfather's heart and soul and probably the hearts and souls of much of his paternal lineage as well) I too have stored deeply within my heart and my beingness. Daddy's pain *is* my pain; his unhandled pain energy became my unhandled pain energy.

Perhaps when the *Torah* says that the sins of the father will be visited upon the children for the next four generations (see p. 168: *Exodus*), I consider this means that the incapacity of the father to deal with his unhandled pain energy initiates transgression. The original pain of my ancestors, their transgressions performed to deal with their pain, their drama, and their pain from the guilt of transgressing - all of this got transmitted. We were passed down specific types of pain energy as well as specific types of *habit energy* patterns - the habitual methods we were *taught* as a means to deal with our triggered pain.

...the energy that pushes us to do what we do not want to do, to say what we do not want to say, is called habit energy, the negative habit energy in us. *Vasana* is the word in Sanskrit. It is very important that we recognize that energy in us. This energy has been transmitted to us by many generations of ancestors, and we continue to cultivate it.

Hanh *Transforming Negative Habit Energies* 1998

As I investigate my personal ancestral pain I experience specific types of pain energy I knew Daddy suffered with: resentment, frustration and *unbearable, painful sadness*. All of these found their home in the only song that Daddy ever sung:

Once I built a railroad, I made it run,
Made it race against time.

Once I built a railroad, now it's done --
 Brother, can you spare a dime?

Once I built a tower, up to the sun,
 brick and rivet and lime.
 Once I built a tower, now it's done --
 Brother, can you spare a dime?

Harburg & Gorney, 1932

That combination of these pain energies, our mutual pain, I experience as social desperation leading to apathy. It is, I believe, what finally killed Daddy and Grandfather. Their pain energy alone did not kill them. Perhaps their unconscious self-destructive generational habit energy patterns greatly contributed to their probable untimely demise.

The major *vasana* frequently utilized by Daddy to deal with his pain energy was *unmindful consumption*. His daily intake of sour cream, fatty meats, ice-cream, chocolate, coffee, Camel unfiltered cigarettes and Johnny Walker Black whiskey seemed to do the job of temporarily numbing some of his worst pain, at his overall expense. Daddy and I have had quite similar *vasana*, (as well as different) our assumed means of dealing with our familial suffering. I, too, engage in unmindful consumption as a means of dealing with my own pain energy and I am vowing to change these generational negative energy patterns for myself and my grandchildren.

Fifth Mindfulness Training: I vow to cultivate good health, both physical and mental, for myself, my family, and my society by practicing mindful eating, drinking and consuming...I am determined not to use alcohol or any other intoxicant, or to ingest food or other items that contain toxins... I am aware that to damage my body or my consciousness with these poisons is to betray my ancestors, my parents, my society and future generations.

Thich Nhat Hanh *The five mindfulness trainings* www.plumvillage.org

At the end of his life Daddy was nearly traumatized by being forced to feel his pain wholesale, as each of his habit energy patterns for dealing with his personal pain was stripped away, one by one, exposing his great suffering. I feel such empathy for him as

having to stop these ingrained patterns is so hard to sustain, especially when it is not the result of a realization and subsequent commitment. His addictions and cravings were still there, but it became impossible to carry them out: his throat cancer took away his cigarettes; his diabetes took away his sugar and alcohol; his heart problems took away his meat; his food tube operation took away the possibility of ever eating again, and worst of all, the stroke took away his cheerful disposition.

Prior to his quadruple by-pass heart surgery Daddy was loved by all the nurses and doctors alike. But to make painful matters worse, he came out of this surgery with a different personality, marked by agitation and anger. The stroke resulting from this operation seemed to expose the transmissions from Grandfather that had been suppressed in Daddy all these years. Did they arise from the dead and get dramatized through him?

Daddy had a difficult time in rehab after this operation, frustrated that no one was paying attention to his desire to be left alone. Wanting to extend my help and compassion, I sent Daddy a card offering him my shoulder to lean on - as I have always leaned on him. Uncharacteristically, he jumped at my offer and I flew out to him within the week. I found myself soon at his hospital bed hopping onto the band wagon of trying to get him to do his exercises, scared to feel the pain of the truth, incapable of following through with my promised gift of empathy for his needs. Daddy felt betrayed by me.

My father wanted to...know the truth about his situation nearing his death and not have it hidden from him like what happened to my ex's father. I did that to some degree, but I was scared to feel the pain of the truth so I did not tell the full truth to Daddy. I lightened it up so he would not feel so bad. I regret that now, wishing I had more courage to find a way to state my truth... that is what he had asked for from me. (My heuristic Journal: September 25, 2004)

Had I not learned the lessons on compassion well enough from Daddy? Perhaps, it was really a lack of *self*-compassion - not dealing compassionately with my own triggered pain surrounding my immense fear of loss: his immanent death. Self-compassion could have freed me to create a space for truth and compassion.

In his last weeks, *living* with Daddy in his hospital room, we were both limited by our inability to take care of our pain, his and mine. My heart hopes that before he died, he was able to *be with his pain* and that it transformed; my intuition says this *has* happened!

In Celebration of the Life of Daddy

Our wonderful father...that twinkle in his eyes!

How blessed are we to have had him as our devoted and nurturing father!

With immense gratitude and humble respect we experienced his everlasting guidance, sincere trust, adorable smile and undying love for us. No matter the circumstances, he was always there!

His gifts of angelic compassion, gratitude, honesty and generosity touched so many of us. Never asking anything for himself, that sensitive heart of his was wide open to all of us - in his quiet way.

He is now free of suffering. May we all cherish our heartfelt memories that we have shared with him. Join us in wishing him eternal peace and love. He is forever in our hearts! We love you!

(Written by my sister and I for his memorial *unveiling* in 1996)

My Sacred Universal Wisdom Connection

Feeling all aspects of Daddy now compassionately in harmony, I am healing my wounds and transforming my pain energy through compassion, both to Daddy and to myself. In both asleep and awake dreams, he now stands as a part of my *Sacred Sangha*, a spiritual archetype, my 7th chakra *Universal Wisdom Connection*. Reassuring me that “anything I do will work out well” helps me to relax into Universal Wisdom. I am also now beginning to understand the meaning of the wisdom expressed in his favorite phrase,

“happiness is the most important thing.” I am once again receiving Daddy’s energy and hopefully will better learn how to embody his wonderful gift of wanting to teach serious me how to live life: Relax, enjoy and be happy!

Can self-compassion bring these about? He was so compassionate –he was self-compassionate as well in his own ways - that inner smile, the twinkle in his eyes. With all of the amazing love in my heart for him, I hope that Daddy and I, together, can begin a new conscious transmission. In Daddy’s name, may I be able to apply and pass on the possibility of healing pain energy through self-compassion, thereby increasing compassion and world peace. Daddy, though you always told me you were *no saint* – you are my saint. Thank-you for showing me infinite compassion so that I can embody it!

Family Life

The artifacts from our parents offer us both our strengths and our vulnerabilities. When we can honestly acknowledge both -no matter how much we have suffered - we enter into a mature relationship with our parents as well as ourselves. (p. 25)

Straub *The Rhythm of compassion* 2000

Diverse Parenting Treatment

After the investigation into my family history and both parent/child relationships, I feel more compassionate and closer to my parents than I have ever felt before. However, embracing how their differences affected their treatment of me, and also how their differences affected their own relationship, brings to mind areas of being parented that have both pain and compassion. Can I reconcile their differences within me?

Feeling or Intellect

One strong difference in Mom and Daddy's parenting style was the predominant center, or *chakra*, each utilized and relied upon when interacting with children. To Mom, parenting meant operating mostly from her authoritarian intellect. Daddy, on the other hand, believed parenting meant operating mainly from compassionate feelings.

I recently found my junior high school autograph album and was interested in reading what each parent wanted to convey to me before I entered high school. On the first page, which I saved for Mom, after writing a sweet salutation, she wrote the same impersonal creative phrases she always wrote to everyone on these types of occasions: "May your days be filled with joy; May your nights be filled with magic". She signed it "Mother – Mom," never even adding the word *love*. Daddy, a minimalist, wrote, "My one wish is for your happiness always, your loving father" – and he meant it!

It was painfully sad that Mom did not write something personally meant for me and instead gave way to what her intellect thought clever and deemed appropriate, though perhaps quite inappropriate for a 14 year old girl. Re-reading the short message from Daddy, I could feel his heartfelt connection to me. I find it surprising, though, that social and spiritual goals were addressed, but neither one addressed any educational goals.

Punishment and the withholding of love must be replaced by the skillful use of presence of presence, by egalitarian negotiation using honest and empathetic dialog, and the protective use of force based on self-compassion. (p. 300)

Kelly Bryson *Don't Be Nice, Be Real* 2004

Regarding the honoring of my choices and their consequences, Daddy and Mom were in direct opposition, which caused all of us great difficulty. Dad's compassionate discipline pushed against the face of Mom's authority. Daddy listened to my problem and

felt my pain via what Bryson sees as a “...skillful use of presence of presence,” “egalitarian negotiation” and “empathetic dialog.” Through inquiry, he gained sufficient understanding to sense my reason for making a choice he and others may have perceived as non-optimal - and then helped me to carry out my choice.

Mom was black and white; my choice was either responsible or irresponsible. If it fell within her *irresponsible* category, with no inquiry, she harshly *made me wrong*. If Daddy helped me, she would lose her temper, admonish him for once again *giving into me*, and then withdraw from both of us. In the same way that my aunt did not respect Bubby for sanctioning her husband’s behavior, Mom continually let me know how much she did not respect my father for not disciplining me by putting his foot down.

An adult did not spoil his child when he yielded to him, but when he hindered his growth and caused his natural development to go astray...
Adults manifest a contempt for children which they fail to realize. (p.167)
Montessori *Secret of childhood* 1966

I felt it absolutely necessary to leave summer camp early to prepare for my first semester of college (see p. 195: *Daddy: The Compassionate Father*), because I was in severe emotional turmoil. My fiancé had just been killed in the war, my parents had just officially separated while I was away in camp that summer, and I was having full blown anxiety attacks.

My parents told me by phone that I could go home with them. However, Mom later said, of course unbeknownst to me at that time, that she had bribed Daddy to make me remain at camp as a counselor for the duration of the summer. They arrived together on the country campgrounds presenting a united front.

On their arrival, Mom informed me that it was wrong to leave my job as a camp counselor. With a *tough love* approach, she demanded that I complete my contract and

forbid me to go home. No discussion! I burst into tears. Ignoring me, Mom went back into the car, ready to leave with my father for the city, but her temper began to boil as my father, instead of accompanying her, walked back to nurture and talk with me.

Clutching the cold metal fence of the camp's swimming pool, I pleaded with my father to take me home with him. He told me he concurred with Mom that I should not renege on my agreement. I became frantic. Carefully, he then asked many questions and deeply listened until he began to understand why I felt it was necessary to prepare myself emotionally, physically and spiritually before leaving, in two weeks, for my first semester of college. We told Mom and she was furious. Mom refused to have me live with her any longer. She said I would have to move into my father's new apartment until school began. We drove three hours in silence, dropped Mom off and arrived at *our* new home.

As an educator it is important for me to recognize when a child is making a choice that seems contrary to my preferences or values. How do I then treat that child? Like Daddy or Mom? Should I always let them carry out their decisions when I find them to be incorrect, non-optimal... harmful?

One of the reasons I chose to study compassion is because although I had a very compassionate father, I had a strongly non-compassionate mother. This part of Mom within me belongs to my authoritarian intellect and is judgmental and opinionated. When assuming that persona of hers, I sometimes have difficulty being with my own or another's pain. However, I also recognize as the educator (be it parent or teacher) that I have a responsibility to present all possible options, to teach social mores and to help build character. Perhaps including "protective use of force" as Bryson advocates, but have it be based on self-compassion, could combine both of my parents' lessons to me. It

is important for me to begin to examine when taking personal responsibility means *compassionately not giving in* to others or to myself.

The Tricky Truth

I have found a greater need than the harnessing of technology for the common good: the un-harnessing of truth for the human good. Truth is inconvenient for our culture because it is messy. Truth is inconvenient because it challenges our simple answers. Truth is inconvenient because it is not controlled by human power.

Tom Heurman *Facing the shadow* (post 9/11) September 2002

Another basic disparity between my parents - that I unhappily have embodied - is the importance of and varied interpretations of the *truth*. Daddy had a strong sense of integrity and Mom was, to put it kindly, *creative*. Many a heated argument arose with Mom when I worked in her office: she would tell her clients' stories, leave messages and make excuses that I knew were all untrue; I watched her even buy into them herself. Daddy, who was mostly honest, often avoided saying his full truth if he thought someone might be hurt by the telling or he thought it was inappropriate.

Wanting to integrate my parents' truth structures, this subject often emerged during my heuristic inquiry. Some of my *grapplings* and new found truths about truth:

Truth, the capitol "T" kind, can definitely be experienced! However, having deepened my understanding of how Truth is actually subjective, I have had to shift my writing and teaching attitude from an authoritative stance to that of a trusted friend. I believe, in addition to understanding, it takes a balance of inspiration, perspiration and imagination to transform another's truth into your own. (Introduction – my ideas: Fall 1999)

We often tell ourselves that we should withhold the truth to protect others from pain we might trigger in them. We also withhold the truth for our own self-protection. The pain that another person feels, especially someone close to us, may be difficult to experience. Of course, another common reason for withholding information is because we don't want to deal with the outcome or the consequences of telling the truth.

We stay ignorant, ignoring the truth, because we are not a warrior and because we have forgotten how to transform unconsciousness and suffering into increased aliveness. I need to build up my courage to discover the areas of my pain and suffering so that I can be with my pain, so that I can then transform it and be truly alive.

Transformation is a process. It requires increasing our ability to be with our pain. The more I collude in not feeling my pain, the more I prohibit myself from being able to take advantage of the miracle that the Truth has in store for me. (My Heuristic Journal: September 25, 2004)

I impulsively stretched the truth so that I would not be taken advantage of. The truth is - that I no longer know the truth when I start stretching it... (November 10, 2004)

What wisdom and skills can I apply that can allow me to have the most successful day and the least amount of consequences from my actions? 'The truth shall set you free', so I am inclined to go deeper into the truth of this moment, and tell the 'whole truth and nothing but the truth so help me God!'

I have become incapable of being manipulative without immediately suffering the consequences. To me, manipulating means trying to get something from someone else that I sense is good for me and that I don't believe I will get without maneuvering the total truth. Manipulation makes me be the *separate other*, becoming oppositional and then defensive.

I am being *separate self*. I am not coming from a viewpoint that is holistic. I am engaging in an oppositional reality, perceiving a 'they' and a 'me'...I want to be willing to *see and be both sides* and work out something that is agreeable to all... It is a leap of faith. (November 11, 2004)

I am learning to balance my father's and mother's meaning of truth. Children trust that they are receiving the truth from their educators. Telling the truth at all times to children can be challenging. When I do not tell the truth, separation can occur. However, being creative with the truth may be a fine way to tell the truth without hurting the child. It is important to sense what the child can most easily receive.

The Best of Mom and Daddy

My best integration of my parents' differences is revealed on personality and vocational tests alike: I show an equal propensity towards being a social worker and an actress. As an educator, I have enjoyed utilizing this combination quite successfully.

Cultural Distress: Fighting, Separation, Divorce

In Hebrew the word for compassion, is *rachamin*. The root of that word is *recham*, which means *womb*. Compassion really begins in the earliest parent/child relationship...children whose parents are violent with each other or with their child...are affected by violence in every aspect of their development, their physical health, the way their brain is shaped, their trust in relationships [and] their empathy for other people.

Alicia Lieberman Seeds of Compassion Conference 2008

As I wrote in the *Statement of the Problem* (p. 75), a problem which has appeared to be “rooted in the educational system, or even a problem with the modern youth, seems to actually be stemming from being a part of a culture in distress.”

My family has been part of this *culture in distress*. Both my parents were parented with pain. Both grandfathers were abusive to their wives and neither of my grandmothers satisfied their husbands, thus exacerbating their already painful family life. I felt my family's intense masculine pain (and the suffering it can cause) was magnified by Mom's embodiment of her father's male-chauvinist persona. This was quite debilitating for my family. May the pain energy of this masculine persona be transformed compassionately!

I am an example of a child whose parents were violent to each other and to me from the time they decided to move up to the middle class by starting their own business. Until then, though I don't remember much love in my parents' relationship when I was a little girl, little arguing occurred in my presence. They both worked away from home, so I had the good fortune of enjoying an unstructured independent childhood in the

multicultural *bad neighborhood* of Brownsville in Brooklyn. We ate dinners together, spent Saturday *Shabbats* with both grandmothers, shared birthday celebrations, had very occasional family outings, and -somewhat begrudgingly- participated in family performances that I initiated. This is an overview of my family life until I was 11 ½ years old, before moving two blocks away from our seven room apartment and a wonderful neighborhood where the children played in the street until bedtime.

Family life radically changed when we moved to a small two-bedroom apartment on a semi-commercial street above Bierman's Bakery - up a long, narrow, dark stairway, behind their new office. My parents' upward mobility marked the end of my *joie de vivre* and the beginning of my chaotic, violent, workaholic, lonely, family life. *Shabbats*, visits to Grandma, mealtimes and any time together ended; cooking canned ravioli, given money to eat in local restaurants, embarrassed by a dirty house, 24/7 office hours began!

The risks are clearer than ever before: an adverse environment can compromise a young child's brain function and overall development, placing him or her at greater risk of developing a variety of cognitive, behavioral, and physical difficulties.

The quiet crisis - Meeting the needs of our youngest children
<http://www.carnegie.org>

As screaming and fighting became incessant, my creative, adventurous and high-spiritedness life was replaced by a low level chronic depression. Throughout puberty, my parents violently argued and threw their pain at whoever triggered them. As my parents were now constantly together, the quantity and intensity of their fighting increased. This left me bombarded by their pain since we lived right behind the office where they fought.

Mom's workaholicism resulted in our relationship worsening considerably (destroying relational trust), marked by frequent physical abuse and neglect: she rarely fed me; she did not teach me self-care and she did not holistically prepare me. When I

began menstruating for the first time, my mother would not leave the office when I unhappily signaled to her my fear of what was happening; my father had to assist and reassure me instead. Also, Daddy was the parent who got things done around the house and ensured we were fed. Workaholism expressed by Mom needing to always be productive in the world, not caring for the home, not stopping and just being, never sitting and relaxing for fear of the guilt of wasting her life, got instilled into me during my puberty and teen years – a precursor of my future burnout.

During my teen years, though the office was now away from the apartment and in a better neighborhood (in which I soon moved five more times) the difficulties escalated. When I was 17 years old my parents finally separated, but continued to work together. Mom relentlessly screamed and fought with me most nights when she came home before, during and after the separation. Her verbal abuse had definitely affected my development. I began getting anxiety attacks so I was sent to therapy and was put on drugs. My education vastly suffered. Eventually moving in with Daddy reduced my stress, but as it further angered Mom, it caused too much trouble. I eventually moved out on my own.

In my early 20's, my parents divorced, Daddy re-married and stayed in Brooklyn, Mom opened a new agency of her own in Manhattan, but the pain of the relationships persisted. Wanting to heal my heart, I had many phone conversations with Mom. The methods of dealing with this pain energy that I used were fairly ineffective. My communication techniques, attempting at compassion, wound up actually being an attack.

Trying to Compassionately Fix my Family

Feeling the pain in my home life was unbearable so much of the time that I felt like my actions were choiceless: I had to be the one to fix my family if no one else would.

Unskillfully being compassionate to Mom was my primary method of dealing with my pain energy. Though I received compassion from my father, I had not learned how to be compassionate to others, even if my heart had that inclination. Trying to be empathetic to her in my teen years and beyond only worsened the family's problems. Perhaps my intention to give compassion in order to heal my pain and fix my family in times of emotional turmoil worked against us all.

Life, when my parents nightly returned from their office, was often a heart-wrenching drama for me. My little sister and I got overwhelmed by Mom being furiously abusive toward Daddy, who would initially defend himself. As this war escalated he would retreat into his room and my sister would escape into hers. That left me to hold down the fort.

My constant inner questions that bordered on compassionate inquiry were: How can I help Mom so that she could understand Daddy's feelings and needs? How could I get her to stop screaming at him and leave him alone? How could I help Daddy who had to shut himself up in his room as his only method of ending the argument? What would stop Mom from hysterically crying?

I recall one evening when one such dramatic incident took place. Both Daddy and my sister had retreated to their corners of the house while my mother loudly sobbed at the dining room table furious and frustrated with Daddy. Fearfully, I took a deep breath and approached her. I was quiet at first, listening attentively, wanting her to relax. She more calmly told her story about how wrong Daddy was. As I listened I was analyzing my mother's upset to discover what piece she was missing that could solve this problem

by bringing her to a new understanding. It seemed that if she was only able to see my father's viewpoint, this new awareness would bring wholeness and peace.

I was then shocked by her violent outburst, although I had heard it so many times before. "You're always taking your father's side; you're your father's daughter. You don't care about me!" Turning into her *monster* persona, she screamed these bombs into my face and then pounded her fists into the table. Mom's dispersed energy drew me into her chaos as I was not grounded or spiritually present. I took her words and actions as a personal attack on myself and Daddy and went into my defense mode, a combination of Daddy's sarcasm and Mom's authoritative invalidation.

As our voices were combatively shrilling, Daddy, a man needing peace, stormed out of his room to end this traumatic argument. Quite triggered, he nastily raised his quiet voice, "Stop it already! You are both the same." Daddy saying my fire is the same as my Mom's pierced me through my heart. I felt utterly betrayed as my purpose had been to explain and defend *him*. Daddy, my savior, the first and primary love of my life, my compassionate one, fed up with my mother's fighting with him was then fed up with my fighting with Mom. He threw his worst insult at me: "You're just like your mother"! I ran into my bedroom and no one spoke a word for quite some time. The pain of disapproval from Daddy ran deep. My attempt at being compassionate had disastrous results for all!

Mom's post-menopausal state mainly leveled out her violent outbursts. She tried to establish a connection with my sister and myself and make up for her absence and antagonism throughout our childhood and young adult years. Admitting she probably should have never had children since she was really a career woman resolved some pain.

Mom and I have come to a place of agreeing to disagree about Daddy's attributes and faults. Mostly we are finding more and more ways of enjoying each other. Sometimes, however, it is still challenging. Recently, while attempting to get close with me she showed interest in my dissertation topic; I introduced it to her and she strongly invalidated it. We had a major uproar as she still asserted that focusing on your feelings was a sign of weakness and again reminded me how weak my father was to have ever indulged me.

I spent a lifetime trying to be compassionate and *enlighten* Mom about Daddy in order to create peace, harmony and love in the family. When that did not work I moved into various elements of spirituality to help parent me instead. But still, it is only now that I can sense more of the truth and begin to be more sincerely compassionate to my family.

It's a turning point in our life journey when we can genuinely say, "This is my mother, this is my father...They were human. I forgive them, and I love them. (p.31)

Straub *The Rhythm of compassion* 2000

Erroneously I had believed that the reason Mom couldn't receive my compassion, my care, my reasoning, or my advice, was because what she really wanted instead was my sympathy. I was afraid to give Mom sympathy as I thought that would solidify her position believing I agreed with her, and because I feared that I would then take on her negative traits.

The child simultaneously identifies with the authority figure who didn't meet the need and identifies with the part who was rejected. (p. 36)

Huber *There Is Nothing Wrong With You* 2001

Now, I am beginning to understand this quite differently; she did not want sympathy, she wanted connection. I had not connected to her human needs and loved her

for who she was. Why? I could not connect because of *who I was being* and *what I was not able to be*.

I tried *to be* compassionate, but I was ignorant of my initial need *to be* self-compassionate when I was experiencing enormous pain. My first agenda was to compassionately address *the suffering daughter wanting to transform the psychotic mother*. Being successfully compassionate had required self-compassion – the ground for being a compassionate presence. Without this, we were merely individual personas in our own pain trying to get the other to listen and change. Compassion transforms pain energy, but compassion is never intending to change the person. Was it self-compassion then (which includes opening the channels of spiritual connection) that was truly needed for me to be able to at once lovingly appreciate Mom’s *and* Daddy’s painful dilemma, to not take it personally, to *taste the oneness* and be able to *be free to sense how to serve compassionately and creatively?*

I attempted to embody the enlightened words of Ram Dass on this subject over 20 years ago when I was a counselor and massage therapist; it took a while for them to sink in personally and to apply this more successfully: Here’s to a compassionate family!

Who *are* we to ourselves and to one another? -- It will all come down to that. *Will we look within?* Can we see that to be of most service to others we must face our own doubts, needs, and resistances? (p. 15)

Our service, then, is less a function of personal motive and more an expression of spontaneous, appropriate, caring. We’re not so much helping out, then, because it’s “me” needing to tend to “you.” We’re helping out, because it’s “Us.” (p. 49)

If within each of us is that essence of Being which is in all things...so we have it to share with one another...they can feel in *who we are* the reassurance that they are not simply isolated entities, separate self, lonely beings... They can feel us *in there* with them. They can feel the comfort that we are all of us in this together. (p. 50)

Ram Dass & Paul Gorman *How can I help?* 1985

Being a Public School Student

(*Being a Public School Student* corresponding artwork of same title in the *Appendix*)

The Flowering of a Student

A spacious independent flowing intelligence
Playfully loving being, finding a way to shine bright
Within the walls of paradox - anchored *and* free.

Primary colors exposing the full spectrum
But needing the stark dichotomy of black-and-white
To create combinations - individual possibilities

Ouch! If black-and-white advances and takes over
In that grey world - true learning and living stops,
Convoluting structures - a pretense of security

Children require *Freedom within Limits*, Doctor says.
Curved edges, where boundaries are transparent and vibrant.
Inviting doors await the opening of new vistas of energy

Partaking in all the senses of life and consciousness,
Wombed in each new universe by joy, care and compassion
Hands warmly getting dirty with Earth's exploration

The Solo journey can bind us by our blindness and free fall
Structures thicken, holding, saving us from frenetic overwhelm
Controlled learning opportunities of infinity and humility

Learning the ways of this random and ordered world
Embracing light/ dark, pleasure/ pain, bringing solid wholeness
Doors translucent now preparing breakthrough revelry

Seeking to become who we are asked and desire to be
Student and servant, learning to skillfully play their parts
Each unique color, creating, blending, benefitting all and me

My Elementary School Years

Street Smart

A, my name is Alice and my husband's name is Al. We come from
Alabama and we sell apples; Betty B. Boop buys Bond Bread because

Bond Bread helps build strong bodies; Can you or can't you cook a creamy, cherry, chocolate, candied, cookie cake like my cute cousin Carol C. Cooke can?...

From the time I was six years old, I sang this street song most every day, going through each letter of the alphabet trying to fit in as many words beginning with that letter as possible. Mastery included the coordination of this sing-song with the bouncing of a pink Spalding ball, turning my foot over this ball, back and forth, whenever the word I sang began with the letter of the alphabet I was up to - never allowing my foot to touch the ground until that lettered verse was complete. If I did tap that concrete, or if I did not turn over the ball successfully, or if I missed turning over on an initial lettered word, I was out and it was then my playmate's turn.

I had not realized that this mere child's game that I loved to play (common to my neighborhood in Brooklyn at that time) was actually a wonderful educational technique. It incorporated alphabet sequence, phonetic and non-phonetic word recognition, verse creation, auditory and tactile senses, gross motor skills, singing, mild competitive challenge in game form, and best of all – it was joyfully played outside of a classroom with friends. *A my name is Alice* facilitated scholarship through the most productive and pleasurable methods possible for my specific style of learning.

With never a thought that we were educating ourselves, the children on my block had fun playing a variety of games together in our *street school* until bedtime, only breaking for dinner. Some games, similar to *A my name is Miss Alice*, were both mentally and physically oriented: Categories, Boys /Girls, Double-Dutch, Stoop Ball, Skully and Hopscotch. Others were only academically challenging, like Geography, Ghost, Dominos, and Hang Man.

Those games were balanced by playing purely physical and social games utilizing fine and/or gross motor skills: Jacks, Pick-up Sticks, Russian 10, Off-the-Wall, Punch Ball, and Chinese Handball. And then there were the physical games that increased your survival instinct to not get caught. They tested just how fast you could run compared with your neighbors, while teaching you how to think quickly on your feet: Red Light / Green Light, Hide and Seek and Ring-a-Levio.

Focusing also on the creative element, we drew Venus Paradise colored pencil-by-number pictures and acted out musical plays which I found scripts for. I loved knowing the popular new rock 'n roll songs of the day and I found it was surprisingly easy for me to memorize their words. Pretending we were stars, my friends and I happily sang and acted out these songs in small groups on our *stoop* porches or in our bedrooms.

This combination of street games and activities were my culture's homework assignments which we gladly partook in when we came home from school. They were both fun and challenging, and with just the right amount of effort I learned how to be quite successful. My mental, physical and social skills greatly increased by playing in the street. Games were played spontaneously and learning was joyful, not stressful as in school. I could have studied anything through games, physical activity or songs. Those were, and still are, my best learning tools. My development of *street smarts* provided the balance between freedom and the tight structure of the elementary public school system.

Non-Compassionate Education

The child is considered a receptive being instead of as an active being... This error, when applied to the will, is even more serious, for the ordinary school not only denies the child every opportunity for using his will, but it directly obstructs and inhibits its expression. (p. 250)

Montessori *The Absorbent Mind* 1967

My non-compassionate education in elementary school began with being forced to be immobile and silent, violating the needs of myself as an active being. Before I was allowed to enter the classroom, I had to line up with my class in single file. If I talked or moved I was rudely scolded. Once in the classroom, I was expected to robotically sit still, be silent unless called upon, look at and listen attentively to the teacher, the assigned God of my education. While feeling my antsy body, talkative nature and spirited personality being stifled, I worked diligently at adjusting to this suppressive environment.

Though learning without activity was difficult for me, my academic grades were adequate (receiving *excellent* or *good* for each subject). However, I was given the grade of *fair* - and once *unsatisfactory*- in Social Behavior admonishing me for chatting with *my neighbor* and defending myself, which had apparently triggered the teacher's educator pain of willfulness and *being talked back to*. The receipt of this initial student burden led to my later student burnouts. As a *Fire element*, sitting still was extremely difficult.

The classroom is a *very* challenging arena for Fire element children fore they are just bursting with energy, yet expected to sit still and listen all day. Others have no idea what an impossible task this is for them.

Rider *The Elements of Who we Are* 2004

A specific time period of non-compassion was third grade which was marked by my authoritarian teacher, Mrs. Ein, the initial bane of my elementary school existence. As *wicked witch of the west*, she did not mind hurting this cheerful eight year old girl until she was in tears. Because of her lack of compassion to me, that year was the beginning of my lowered self-esteem education pain in the areas of both reading and self-control.

The last half of second grade I spent mostly at home sick with one childhood disease after another. I did not even realize I had missed important academic training

until Mrs. Ein coldly sat me down at her desk and had me read aloud passages of a book that I saw I could not breeze through. Having had strong confidence in my ability to do anything well that I put my mind to and a demonstrated track record of high achievement performance, when Mrs. Ein expressed disapproval of my reading skills I was stunned, frustrated, and became nervous; this led to my making many more mistakes. As she kept firmly pointing and hitting her pencil at words and phrases on the page that I was reading incorrectly, I asked her for another chance to prove myself. She harshly refused and criticized me, saying I was not a good reader and did not belong in the top reading group.

I was devastated as I had been either the best at every skill or in the top group of everything I had attempted until then. If I been offered tutoring or lessons in what I had missed, I probably would have caught up in no time. Instead, putting me in a lower level reading group became a reading disaster for me. Besides not being challenged, I was with children who either could not read well or did not care about reading at all. A new sense of myself as an ignorant girl lowered my reading self-esteem and reduced my interest in performing well in this subject. Being a student, this was forever a great hindrance to me.

Adults dominate children by virtue of a recognized natural right... Rather than disobey, a child must keep silent and adjust himself to everything... Adults claim the right to judge and even to offend a child. At their own convenience they direct or even suppress a child's needs, and his protests are regarded as a dangerous and an intolerable lack of submission... And to make the picture more complete, they refuse to admit that they are exercising any tyranny. (p. 152)

Montessori *The Secret of Childhood* 1966

An incident of grave humiliation occurred in this classroom a few months later. Mrs. Ein was giving a Social Studies lecture when I realized I had to go to the bathroom. Needing her permission, I raised my hand for a pass. Once discovering that I had nothing to add to her academic lesson, she ignored my physical need. My self-control was tested,

and, alas, I could hold it in no longer. Tears streamed down my face as I found myself surrounded by a urine puddle on the floor. Mrs. Ein reacted by harshly grabbing me out of my seat and squeezing my arm tightly while screaming at me to clean up the mess. This double embarrassment was so traumatizing that I refused to return to school.

For the first time as a student, I feigned illness for a few days until my parents caught on. When I told them I was unwilling to go to school, Daddy had a quiet talk with me. I broke down and revealed this shameful and abusive incident. He caringly took me back to school, hand-in-hand, promising to work it out with Mrs. Ein. Now also feeling negatively judged and disrespected like me, she defensively lied about the part she had played. Somehow Daddy and Mrs. Ein then convinced me to join the class. Although our war ceased, my sense of alienation common to burnout began. From that time forward, when playing *school* I became a strict and authoritarian teacher just like Mrs. Ein!

Another element of educational pain energy began with my first experience of standardized timed testing. This was the onset of my performance anxiety that greatly worsened over the years. 180 fourth graders sat at grouped tables in the open area in front of the bathrooms, large clock overhead. A stern stranger gave us #2 lead pencils, a question booklet, cursorily ran through the instructions, and then rang a bell and called out "Start!" It was nerve-racking to not be able to read and answer the questions fast enough before the bell rang again ending a section. Also, being expected to quickly know the answers to questions I was unsure of, or did not even know, or did not understand, or needed more time to think about, created severe tension and reduced my self-esteem.

Compassionate Education

Considering I was, what would today be called, reading disabled, I self-compassionately read what was easiest, most available and most enjoyable to read - comic books. The 1950's was their *Golden Age* and I read as many Archie, Superman, My Little Margie, Little Lulu, Ritchie Rich and Blondie comic books I could get my little hands on. Their stories were not only relevant, they had colored pictures, short phrases and conversation, all which I most wanted from a book. Reading plays had the same appeal – they were alive with conversations. While reading school books, I would briefly scan the pages until I got to any quotes, which then I found to be the meat of any story.

When 10 years old, besides comics, I rarely read any books on my own outside of Nancy Drew mysteries, which stimulated self-compassionate education as it served my needs for heuristic learning, being outdoors and learning while physically active. I created my own adventures with someone who has turned out to be lifelong close friend. We changed our names to Beverly and Amy and took on the true challenges that both of our paths wanted to travel. Taking bus rides to unknown places, trying to *get lost*, inventing stories while feeling the sensations of a foreign land, pencil and paper in hand, letting the words flow, we naturally applied transformational education tenants.

The teachers that stuck in my head were the ones that helped me find my passion. (My friend Laura, August 2008)

My fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Gura, a young woman who greatly inspired me as a student and as a future teacher, finally aroused my love of reading and of becoming fully academically involved in the classroom. With a presence that included a balance of flowing compassion with an unyielding ethical stance, Mrs. Gura threw out the textbooks and introduced an *Individualized Reading Program*, taught roots, prefixes and suffixes in

fascinating ways, made math fun, and kept the class alive yet under total control. Though academically oriented, she shared her knowledge and heartfelt understanding of the value of play, creative work and making compassionate connections with the students. Out of utter respect, I offered to be of service to her as her needs arose and became this teacher's *pet*. This transformational relationship taught me the potential of the teacher/ student duo and the possibility of myself becoming a joyful and productive educator.

Education and My Parents

Mom prided herself as intelligent and expected excellence from me, though I don't remember Mom ever taking much interest in my education. Wanting me to do well in school and life, when I was born left-handed, she ignorantly turned me into a *righty*. Though well-intentioned, it was actually non-compassionate for my Mom to ignore my instinctive tendency, as my brain had to constantly go against its natural programming.

The only homework assignments that Mom ever worked on with me were in the two subjects she enjoyed most: writing and theater. The occasional spelling tests she helped me prepare for, the 6th grade play she helped me to learn my lines for and the sci-fi *phono-vision* essay we wrote together were the only positive educational experiences I can recall. I would have loved her to share her knowledge with me and be more involved.

Mostly Mom's educational input was absent or non-compassionate. She offered no holistic preparatory education and I daily rushed to school, with barely a bite of food in me, scrounging to find my needed handkerchief and something to get the dirt out from underneath my fingernails. Though rarely asking me anything about my school day, receiving my report cards activated Mom's habitual educational technique of invalidating the negative and ignoring the positive: she expected my good grade in Language Arts,

personally taking credit for it by saying that I took after her; she reprimanded me for my non-optimal grade in Social Behavior, never inquiring into its cause or into any difficulty that I may have been having. Luckily, I had my Daddy to rely on when needed.

Daddy, a compassionate father, was also a compassionate teacher. He always offered to help me with any subject - except Language Arts; his specialties were Math and Social Studies. After dinner, Dad and I often hung out on his bed, where he effectively taught me the multiplication tables, discussed politics and tried to get me involved in current events, encouraging me to read the local newspapers he read daily. We enjoyed studying, and cutting out, articles for school on Khrushchev's US visit, discussing the terrible plight of the American Indians, and the atrocities of war. I had the desire as a very young girl to make things different. My father said there was time for that later. Right now, enjoy life, be happy being a child and don't take the world's problems on my shoulders.

Childhood Compassion

My childhood was one of being quite self-determined marked by independence, joy, skill and leadership in most areas of my life. I additionally cultivated physical prowess, spiritual connection and intuition. These amplified my ability to get most things I wanted in my life - if my intention was strong enough. That seems pretty impressive to me as I now look back at my life as a child. My life never returned to this powerful innocence. What happened?

During these years, as I was developing my autonomy, I was not cultivating compassion. Autonomy needs to ripen, and might have been lost if I were strongly encouraged to be compassionate too early in my life. Perhaps if I had received

compassion from both parents it would have come more naturally for me. Empathy, however, was an experience I felt early on in life. I definitely was touched and affected by the pain of others, if it was overt enough for me to recognize.

Children have a deep sense of personal dignity... how easily they are wounded and oppressed. (p. 126)

Montessori *The Secret of Childhood* 1966

I was finally forced to open my eyes to others compassionately at the age of 12, when *friends of mine* from my old neighborhood inferred that I was self-centered; I was devastated; the magic of my childhood collapsed. The awareness that I had been unaware of my friends' needs, initiated my swing to the side of enforced compassion. My new-born humility shrunk my expansive world; guilt seemed to exacerbate the onset of my bouts of depression which I had attributed to puberty and my family life. Could becoming compassionate truly contribute to being depressed? Actually, it was *caring* that I decided to become, not yet understanding all the elements of compassion. Caring was not enough!

Unraveling the story of my elementary school years has brought me interesting insights and increased integration. I have a new-found respect for my attempts to educate myself outside of the educational system which leads me to be more compassionate to the needs of both elementary school children and their educators. I realize I have to be weary of being self-centered when I am teaching, both adults and children, and ensure that I am meeting their needs as well. Also, feeling a revival of my independent spirit, now able to be combined with self-compassion, I feel sad as I realize how easily I could again be crushed through overwhelm and criticism. This new understanding helps me consciously create an educator persona that includes never violating my independence, while maintaining my loving, self-compassionate and compassionate nature.

My Junior High School Years

Middle schoolers are more in need of guidance and discipline than ever before...they straddle two worlds. In one, they're still children, so they need enormous amounts of love, support and attention. In the other, they're becoming teenagers — which means they also seek independence and room to mature.

The Parent Institute *Common discipline problems of middle schoolers* 2008
<http://www.parent-institute.com/educator/products/guides>

Freedom with No Limits

Towards the end of sixth grade, my parents' involvement with their new business pretty much ended their involvement with my education. Though I was fortunate (I think!) to have had neither parent control me by lavishing me with rewards or doling out punishments for educational achievement or demerits, I still found myself lacking some sort of educational support. Although it was wonderful at first to have so much freedom and independence during these years, it *got* old and I got lonely. It was their availability, their attention, their connection, and their *showing me that you care at all* kind of loving discipline that I missed most – even Mom's strict ways of *helping*!

Over the next few years the pain of emptiness in this starving child initiated an emotional downward spiral, slowly bringing a hazy disconnection from all that was around me. It is curious that I unconsciously began to treat myself as my parents' were treating me; I too became uninvolved in my life. This brought about a type of lethargy, and then apathy as I once again alienated myself from school, the educational system – and for the first time alienated myself from social groups and only interacted with one or two close friends, and the current boyfriend. But all of my strategies did me little good, as this time period, puberty, was when I needed parental love and guidance the most.

Puberty

What is puberty, anyway? Puberty is the name for the time when your body begins to develop and change as you move from kid to adult...your pituitary gland (a pea-shaped gland located at the bottom of your brain) releases special hormones... Your body is growing and it's happening really fast! ...your feet... are growing faster than everything else. This can make you feel clumsy or awkward... Another thing that comes with puberty is... pimples... Don't squeeze, pick, or pop your pimples... During puberty, you might feel confused or have strong emotions that you've never had before. You might feel overly sensitive or become upset easily... hang in there. Puberty can be quite a wild ride!

All about Puberty http://kidshealth.org/kid/grow/body_stuff/puberty.html

It would have been a God sent to have been educated on what was actually going on in my life and given an article like this when I began this strange stage of pubescent development. Outside of bleeding profusely and irregularly I was clueless that my entire life was going through immense changes. Neither parents nor teachers seemed aware of, knew what to do about, were compassionate about the affects of, or offered suggestions about how to deal with puberty as an adolescent.

I was left alone to feel all of it without any understanding – the mood swings that drove me crazy, the self-consciousness about looking weird, the physical and emotional affects of giving into *all* of my sugar cravings, the strange spatial sensations of feeling exterior to my body, the lack if interest in doing any more physical activities, the intimidation and fascination with boys and sex, and the introspection that drove me into bouts of depressions. None of these symptoms and affects of puberty remotely aligned with the assigned persona of a junior high school student. Ah, to have been blessed with an educational system that was compassionate to my needs during these years!

The Socialite

Dr. Montessori felt that because of the rapid growth, the increased need for sleep, and hormonal changes, it is useless to try to force the adolescent

to concentrate on intellectual work. She recommended an Erdkinder, or Earth school, where children would live close to nature, eat fresh farm products, and carry on practical work related to the economics of supplying food, shelter, transportation, and so forth. Intellectual work is still done, following the child's interests, but without pressure.

Olaf, M. *Montessori for ages twelve to eighteen* 1995

Junior high school is a blur except for certain social moments in its first year and a half. I remember becoming secretary of the school, becoming captain of the boosters, playing trumpet and then drums in Band – basically all social activities (except for gym, which I hated because I became self-conscious changing in front of more developed girls). I had zero interest in the traditional academic advancement my school was *offering*, except for learning the new language of Spanish and the puzzles of Algebra.

My educational setting was less than compassionate at every turn, since my personality, my high energy level, my purposes and most efficient styles of learning did not fit into this traditional educational structure. I became very disenchanted with school as I enjoyed nearly nothing of what I was forced to learn and I hated being stuck passively sitting at a desk quietly for hours every day. My huge amount of energy was overwhelming me, as I was no longer channeling it through physical activity and creative projects. By covertly shutting out the teacher, I gave myself a bit of privacy to be in my inner world and to contemplate my own serious thoughts while doodling in my notebook.

...being attentive and caring and at the same time not directive and coercive, gives the children the courage and the impetus to listen to their own inner selves. (p. 144)

Greenberg Free at Last 1987

The true educational longings I had were for spontaneous education, for studying about the inner workings of people, for having the opportunity to practice working out real-life situation in a classroom setting, for being given the freedom and structure for creative and physical expression that was ungraded, for having discussion classes about

spirituality, religion and sex – all of these educational needs were unmet and I became both anxious and bored.

My Purpose Revealed

The second half of junior high school marked a radical change. It was the mid 60's and along with my personal pain, I was affected by the pull of my generations' social movement, feeling the great pain and disgruntlement of society. My early mission to be a part of the transformation needed in this world, which Daddy had asked me on hold until I finished college, was burning inside of me and now wanted to take flight.

Sharing my political disapproval, societal grief and personal passion in any of my educational settings was not an option. I was not permitted to express my outspoken viewpoints in class; although I sensed the lies in what I was being taught, I saw no space for the truth and was firmly encouraged to blindly believe what I was told. My education pain energy so intense, the stressors so strong, the emotions so erratic, and the alienation so pervasive, created an eruption which caused student burnout. I needed to extricate myself from my educational setting and attend to a specific mission - joining the Peace Corps! I was personally experiencing - as a student for the first time – the educator problems that I have discovered to be so rampant today.

With his unlimited possibilities, he can well be the transformer of humanity, just as he is its creator. The child brings us a great hope and a new vision. (p. 74)

Montessori, *The absorbent mind* 1967

At 14 years of age my personal path of service was activated and I was ready to do my part toward the conscious evolution of humanity through compassion. I was

anxious to learn what I needed in order to achieve this end. School, however, forced me to focus on studies -throughout the day- that had nothing to do with these goals.

Excited about actualizing my purpose, I spoke with Daddy about joining the Peace Corps. Upon investigation we found out that I needed to have a minimum of two years of college before I could apply to help the world. I was heartbroken when I realized there was no way for me to pursue, or even prepare for the achievement of any of my goals, purposes or desires within the public school system or out on my own at that time.

I desperately wanted to follow this path and learn everything I could to prepare me for it *now*, but there was nothing built into the educational system that allowed for teachers to be compassionate to my needs and help to further my productivity along the lines of helping me to attain my career goals which would have helped me to blossom and become of greater worth to society. My needs to be active and contribute from my heart and soul to people experiencing misfortune, was in contrast with the needs of the educational system to transmit standardized information. As there was no opportunity to move forward, I became very frustrated, bored, lethargic and depressed. How could I last until my third year of college? I suffered through school while hating it.

Depression and Self-Compassion

Studies with direct hormonal measures lend...weight to the idea that puberty is `bad' for girls... as far as depression is concerned. (p. 52)

Angold, Costello & Worthman *Puberty and Depression* 1998

Throughout the last year of junior high school I moved from having huge amounts of energy to having practically no energy at all. Having no supervision or meals ever made for me, I survived on chocolate sundaes for lunch and steak, fries and a bottle of

Pepsi for dinner. Bouts of depression and thoughts of suicide watered my pubescent pain. From being totally active I no longer wanted to move at all, except to move out of my school, out of my house and out of my neighborhood – which my family did mid-year.

The saving grace of these years was nature and writing. Escaping into the woods or the shore, I found solace. I learned that I could transform my pain energy through expressing my deepest sorrows and confusions, often in poetry form, with the assistance of a spiritual presence. Miraculously, by the end of my creative writings, I found relief from my suffering; I found self-compassion!

My High School Years

If a biofeedback subject is asked to think about school memories, the feedback shows immediate alarm... Most of us have considerable unfinished business with school. This residue of anxiety may intimidate us yet on some level of consciousness; it may forever pull us back from challenges and new learning. (p. 283)

Ferguson *The Aquarian Conspiracy* 1980

My true desire for learning coupled with constant academic disappointment, frustration of denied purposes, angst of life's betrayals, horrors at home, dissociation with social problems, stress of testing, performance anxiety and its resulting anxiety attacks were the key educational problems during my high school years. These lead to the de-personalization, alienation, and leaving of schools common to my educational careers, both as a student and as a teacher. Even if all other areas of my life had remained the same, if there was just one change -that of having the privilege of going to a high school that embodied the principles of *holistic education* - perhaps I would have: been mostly stress-free; had educators who were compassionate to my whole self, and been blessed

with an schooling that encompassed all that I needed to learn. But this was far from the case for this high school student.

Inside the Hierarchy

Here [in a Montessori high school] they must learn "to put things right" when necessary, to adjust a machine or the engine of a car, to mend a broken window or the catch of a door. They should also be able to make a path, build a shed, chop firewood, and so on. (p. 79)

Montessori *From Childhood to Adolescence* 1976

There were three tracks in my high school: academic (college bound), commercial (secretarial/business) and general (for laborers, machinists, etc.) - and there never was a question as to which path I was destined for. I and everyone else that were in any of my classes from kindergarten through high school were obviously already involuntarily on the *superior* academic path to the exclusion of the potentially wonderful courses representing other paths (deemed less worthy). Possibly they could have lead to my personal balance or to steps toward the actualization of *my* purposes and path. But no one ever consulted me about my present or future goals, the track I wanted to be on or which courses I was interested in taking: standardized testing chose the curricula for me!

I realize that I was fated for academia, but never for traditional education. It was sad that I could not learn woodworking, figure out how to fix a car, plant a garden, balance a checkbook – all those practical skills important for living a highly functional life. But no academically oriented student would think of transferring over to the *other tracks* as those students were disrespected, especially the *dummy* general track ones. I was able to find a system hitch: when I completed most of my high school requirements by my senior year, it was then acceptable to take commercial courses, which academia normally looked down upon: typing, stenography and business law; I loved them all!

Outside the Hierarchy

It is not enough to teach a man a specialty. Through it he may become a kind of useful machine but not a harmoniously developed personality. It is essential that the student acquire an understanding of and a lively feeling for values. He must acquire a vivid sense of the beautiful and of the morally good.

Albert Einstein, *Education for Independent Thought* 1952

Beyond that hierarchical structure, I still longed for practical life skills, creative arts and discussions about the psychology of people and the meaning of life. There were few teenagers, outside of my dearest friend and my beloved Cal, who at the time were interested in investigating moral, ethical, spiritual and social issues that could not be discussed in school. We felt strongly about social injustice, God and atheism, human nature, and (when Cal was sent to Vietnam) about the war. Summer camp turned out to be a solid ground for that kind of education, or at least for that kind of questioning.

When I was 16 years old, I was hugely amazed during the first week of camp when a bunkmate of mine *stabbed me in the back*: lying, putting me down to the other girls, covertly invalidating me and manipulating me to my face *and* to the boy that she *stole* from me. I questioned how people could be so cruel and non-compassionate. Her mother, a swimming counselor at that time, with a modicum of care, told me that she *taught* her girls to *Look out for Number 1!*; she advised me to the same. Shocked, I refuted that supposed value and said *I'd rather be dead than live that life*. Her harsh lessons of dishonesty and selfishness (that she purported as self-compassion) disrupted my optimism about the goodness and oneness of life that I sensitive pledged to uphold.

The Academic Track – The Anxiety Machine

The academic track of high school was pure college preparation – always teaching for that future. College was the carrot for getting good grades in each subject. Testing became highly important because your class test grades and state Regents exams were the sole criteria for your course grades, which along with the SAT test scores were the only decisive factors used for getting into college. This school's academic track had very high standards. Even when I *aced* the Regents' exam, I frequently got a *B* because my class tests were always more difficult.

Being tested was stressful, especially when the instructors lay their stress on the student; it often made me anxiety ridden. These educators were not compassionate, as compassion includes an awareness of others. They were not aware of, and therefore unable to be deal with their own educator pain, thereby being available to be compassionate to my needs, my learning style and my stress level.

Only three classes I took in high school had a lasting impression on me: Spanish, Chemistry and English. Spanish had been my favorite subject throughout junior high school but became my worst enemy in 10th grade when my teacher fell into the trap of *teaching to the test* – the dreaded three year Spanish Regents! Utterly confused by when and how the *preterit tense* of a verb was used, I could not get the teacher to be compassionate to my difficulties. Asking questions of him was not an option and it was met with subtle ridicule. Losing ground, I fell behind and spent hour after hour practicing earlier Spanish Regents. No matter how much I studied I just couldn't get it. I became more and more frightened and had nightmares of failure. I panicked and crashed when, even though I got a B on the state test, I received my first lowered grade, a C in Spanish.

Children sometimes become embroiled in learning problems...a child's resentment and hurt can render him ineffective in dealing with academic material... daydreaming... lack of attention, doodling (p. 62)

Greenberg *Teaching with Feeling* 1969

There were more anxious moments to come during my junior year of Chemistry.

Although I did quite well in 10th grade Biology, I unfortunately never had the solid physical science foundation of 9th grade Earth Science that my fellow students in this new neighborhood had; I had loved Biology, but I was totally lost in Chemistry. I began to get anxious when my teacher put equations on the board that were totally foreign to me and that my fellow students understood. I desperately reached for some tutoring, but my confusion ran deeper than my tutor's understanding and teaching ability. Now knowing Hubbard's *Study Tech*, I realize that I was doomed to another academic failure, as this Chemistry class had all three of the *barriers to study*: it was *out-gradient* beyond my reach, the material was laden with *misunderstood words* that never got defined and there was not a *balance of mass and significance*. No wonder I would daydream, feel dizzy and fall asleep in class. Despondently, I began to see that no matter how much effort I put into this class, I received my second *C* which further lowered my self-esteem.

The one class I truly enjoyed was first semester senior English. I felt bright and alert in this class and contributed to discussions. What a blessing to finally have the opportunity to *flow*, immerse myself in my personal experience, and produce creative writing that was highly appreciated. My teacher assumed I was a straight *A* student and was quite surprised to learn otherwise. This class was one of a kind for me!

The only down-side to my English classes was that since I was a slow reader I had trouble finishing assigned literature on time. My savior was *Cliff Notes*! When reading lengthy books became overwhelming, the *comic book reader* in me took over and was

thrilled to find a quick and easy way to get the guts of the reading assignment. This series not only gave a decent summary, but also delineated the author's intent and value of the book; this was quite helpful for test taking!

I now realize that this method of dealing with what might be seen as a reading problem, cultivated in me, an aspect of *cheating* with regard to academia. This negatively affected me when I started writing up the curricula program I created for my school; I did not know how to get a copy write and was afraid of possibly *getting into trouble* using other people's information illegally – without their permission. This also has added stress for this dissertation. I am always on the alert, making sure that I *dot all my 'I's*.

Performance Anxiety

The worst problem I had in high school was developing anxiety about the way (the quality) I performed and the level (the quantity) of that performance. These were the eyes of judgment and grade-giving. I was unable to easily subject myself to this educational tyranny, though hard I tried. However, I did surrender to seeing myself academically through those eyes. All for the GPA! All for going to a good college!

Though realizing that I was only learning so that I could perform well, and somehow sensing that a potent part of me no longer really cared about even getting a college degree, I still found myself attached to carrying out that *high achiever for college* program. The pressure to perform hurt my mind, my brain, my body, and my spirit. I was especially overwhelmed when I attempted to figure out something of importance, which I was *expected to know* and would be judged negatively if I could not get my mind to understand it. Even if the subject was totally unimportant to me, I felt intense pressure to know it and demonstrate my comprehension!

I sense the core of my anxiety actually was related to *not knowing*, not knowing the answer wanted by the people *in the know*, the answer that would solve the problem. That has been the pain energy! My anxiety has been because I wanted to know the right answer, did not know the right answer and could not find out what the right answer was!

Over time this anxiety strongly contributed to the process already in force, my student burn-out: emotional exhaustion, emotional pain, physical exhaustion and ill health. I began getting anxiety attacks corresponding to being tested and not knowing the answers. The first clear sign of this was during a math exam in high school which I was not fully prepared for. Feeling detached from my body, I watched my heavy breathing turning into hyperventilation. These attacks became more frequent and severe over the next couple of years. They turned into epileptic type convulsions accompanied by blackouts. When no physiological source could be found, the doctors checked for psychiatric causes and put me on the anti-anxiety drug called Librium which slowed down my central nervous system and increased the waves of depression during my teens. Anxiety, and its precursor stress, was getting the better of me!

Stress affects you in three ways, physically, emotionally, and behaviorally ...Stress affects me emotionally. For example, I get nervous; I cry or want to hit out or strike something; I feel sad, or giggle a lot; I worry excessively; I am irritable or feel depressed...Are you aware of how you cope in stressful situations? Some people cope by tuning out, running from, or otherwise avoiding situations that cause stress for them...when one event leads to another, it can begin the cycle of stress. An important lesson to learn from the stress cycle is that when we become overloaded with stress, you are likely to feel overwhelmed and out of control...In order to last the distance, you need to have specific coping skills, techniques you can use to manage stress (pp. 5 – 16)

Betty Youngs *A Stress-Management Guide for Young People* 1986

I had not understood that I was suffering from the affects of stress. Of course, at that time, there were no guides to bring awareness and help to troubled teens, let alone

introduce them to the concept of techniques to manage the stress cycle common to adolescents. Falling farther away from the positive possibilities of school or life bringing any joy or fulfillment (or even less suffering) the only methods of dealing with my pain that arose within me at the time were commiserating with friends, stuffing my face with junk food and baring my soul and emotions through writing. However, the transformative writing that blossomed from the uplifting spiritual sense I felt in nature, was absent in my lifeless city apartment. Without access to creating wholeness and including no aspects of self-compassion, my writing increased my stress, which I felt as pain and suffering.

Seclusion is a single solidified room with site of nothing but three walls and a large window through which can be seen nothing more than a gray black sky and a foggy unknown.

The scene continually blackens and means no more than it is, space which holds animals struggling for existence –lying, cheating, stepping on and stamping out other animals, for this is the code of survival.

Seclusion is the only means of escaping what lies behind the window sill. Safety is finally achieved in a single room, which *seems* to be concealed from the surrounding world. But is it?

No! Every room contains a door, which will open once more and expose this hell, which is lived in, day after day.

There is a far simpler way to rid yourself of this torture called life. And that – is simply to end it! (My Personal Verse: 1965)

Leaving my Educational Setting

Being quite psychotic during my senior year, Mom bitterly told me that she was going to leave our home by January 1, leaving me alone with my younger sister. Daddy was hardly around since both my parents were having separate lives this last year before they officially separated. *I freaked out!* Knowing nowhere else to turn, I went to my guidance counselor crying that I needed to drop out of

high school and take care of my *baby* sister. Having only one high school requirement left, English 8, she said that I could take that in night school and still graduate with my class. I was thrilled to finally be able to get out of this stressful and suppressive environment and be on my own.

Mom's threat was a bluff and she never left home. Already enrolled in night school, I worked for my parents in their explosive office. Despite this difficult half a year, my new school environment and English 8 was fun and I did very well. I got my *A* even though I had to take the four year state exam and had poor reading skills as a child which still slowed me down in my growing years. My high school years ended positively, and I decided to go to college.

From Not Know to Mystery to Know

I am learning the amazing importance of reducing the stress and anxiety of not knowing by initially being totally fine with not knowing the answer, and then with actually finding the value of that mystery. When I take the time to explore the mystery of not knowing, then heuristically I can unveil some greater truth, as opposed to memorize an answer by rote for a teacher or an exam. As I experience the pain and suffering of not knowing, I can be compassionate to myself. This means giving myself the time to be with each piece of the question, and through awareness, appreciation and care I can liberate myself and surprisingly... the right answer will pop right out at me!

Compassion and my Public School Years

During my years as a public school student, being compassionate to my needs as a growing young girl, as a student, or as a human being who was touching into her

passionate purposes in life, were painfully rare, if ever, considered. The educator / student relationship was distant and none of the subjects in the curriculum offered an opportunity to learn what I longed to study. Being educated with *me in mind* would have included the joyful subjects of service: human nature, psychology, ethics, morals, and what would later become the key subject for my life's work: compassion!

Part 2

Reaching for Higher Education

The Transformational Student

(See *Appendix* for creative expression of Part 2)

New student confidence arising,
Shouldering pockets of pain energy

My curriculum - a Lotus flower
Drawing sustenance from the elements

Inquire into and give myself
The one which creates internal balance:

Do I need more water, more flow, more heuristic intuitive studies?
Is the fire in me ready for action, creativity or expressive communication?
Am I earth-bound, needing grounding, practical, physical contact subjects?
Are air /wind studies ripe with mental input and spiritual experiences?

My spirit is shining through every subject and within all elements:
Practicing and being self compassion as a perennial student
My gifts and challenges embraced in my unique choices
Able to transform all pain energy arising in any study
Consciously evolving through higher education
Freeing myself to sense how to serve
Compassionately and creatively
Myself and others

Separating the Wheat from the Chaff

My Own Transformational Education Curriculum

Every aspect of my whole self began to experience incredible relief as I began to viscerally comprehend that going to school was no longer mandated. Although the educational pain that I developed over the years still remained, my increasing sense of freedom to choose what and where I wanted to learn evoked a tingling anticipation of

exhilaration. Life was guiding me away from my dire adolescence into the possibility of the creation of an exciting and fulfilling adulthood for myself.

My intense thirst and excitement for gaining a vast amount of new and varied knowledge was strongly juxtaposed by traditional educational systems. Their rejection of my personality style, lack of respect for *my* purposes and goals and denial of my craving for independent input and expression, along with my already gnawing built-up student pain energy, often overwhelmed my innocent love of learning. I was doomed, or perhaps blessed, to repeat my past pattern of getting stress-out, burned-out and abandoning those educational settings.

Both the engulfing pain and the liberating pleasure contributed to the story of being an adult student of higher education. They fashioned an unusual skyline created from my vacillation between mainstream structures and unconventional formations. Because my quest for higher education was self-compassionate, the traditional and alternative choices that I made reflected the fulfilling of my own holistic educational needs. I have come to realize that I have actually created and followed my own curriculum for transformational education.

Attempting a Traditional Route

...students have lived with the burden of anxiety day after day. (p. 8)

Jersild *When Teachers Face Themselves* 1967

My higher education history began with just shy of a semester at Rider College before having to leave this educational environment. It was great to be away, out of town, but I was not holistically prepared to be present in a traditional environment and couldn't appreciate the experience. Socially I was experimenting with being outgoing, making a

number of friends in the popular group, going to beer drinking parties with the football players at Princeton (an embarrassing mistake), and even taking third place for Miss Freshman Rider, but I had no interest in anything academic and I wasn't very happy.

I might have just rode the wave, as many college students do, if I wasn't confronted by two painful areas that I was incapable of handling: a massive anxiety attack and Biology 101. I was unaware of what caused the attack, as I was disconnected from my internal and external stressors: I just remember waking up dumbfounded in an ambulance after being on my way to class, having fallen down that impressive external staircase and blacked out. Other intermittent minor attacks increased my fear of the unknown and my precarious situation.

As for Biology (the only class I remember taking at this college), it totally baffled me and led to my downfall. I felt lost in this huge room that sat 500, with 150 students scattered throughout trying to understand this quiet, boring man lecturing to himself. My performance anxiety escalated as I realized this little man on the podium, a mile away from where I was falling asleep, was going to have no choice but to flunk me for this class. I never failed anything in my life and this was not going to be my debut. The severe academic and social stress, anxiety, and burnout led me to follow a habit pattern I was developing: Quit school! Given my holistic unpreparedness this was probably the most self-compassionate thing I could do. However, I learned a bit too late that I did not have to quit the whole school; I could have just quit the class by opting for a grade of *withdrawal* without penalty. I later took advantage of quitting classes that triggered too much pain energy not having to immediately leave my future colleges and universities.

Dramatic Arts

After I left Rider my parents sent me to therapy in an attempt to get to the bottom of my anxiety. The vocational psych test evaluation was that my two highest equal scores were: being an actress and being a social worker. I chose to acting school as it would be a wonderful break from left brain studies. I was accepted to the American Academy of Dramatic Arts and spent two years taking a large variety of classes all related to performance. It is no wonder, given my introverted, depressed adolescent years, that I no longer had the confidence I had as a child to fearlessly sing my guts out and have a blast! Though the cause and the *proper* handling of my anxiety were still undiscovered, this school rarely triggered my student pain energy.

The actress in me who loved musicals and played the wholesome young women of the '40's, was too old fashioned for this *avant gard* group. I felt embarrassed to divulge the dramatic, passionate woman inside of me that the teachers tried to drag out as I was not free enough to make those necessary changes. And even though I loved learning new elements of dance, I had not engaged in physical activity for years and felt klutzy. Fencing had become my favorite course as I seemed to be learning something subconsciously that I desperately needed, perhaps advancing and retreating. But, as in every one of these classes, I was never quite good enough. I continued to experience levels of alienation, depersonalization, and devalued personal accomplishment; however the stress was low so I did not need to leave this school. As I was being prepared for getting into commercials and (if I was lucky) soap operas, I woke up from my dream of ever becoming a Broadway musical actress.

Psychology and Children

I attempted a *normal* life style and took a job with the airlines. Still having difficulty with transmission learning, I fell asleep during their intensive training and was made a reservation representative. Totally bored, I read voraciously between phone calls and was reprimanded for separating out and not socializing with the other workers. I realized this lifestyle was not for me and I had to return to school. I then realized my work had something to do with kids... children with emotional problems (like myself)... becoming a guidance counselor... or a child psychologist... or a school psychologist... or...

The next college and university I attended only had a couple of classes I could take along this new path. I was very disenchanted with both psych courses; Freud, Adler and other men of their ilk did not align with my worldview. Looking outside the box, I found one course that touched my soul, *Utopia – dream or reality*; field trips, art and personal discussions made this wonderful class transformational for all of us. But these school systems, as a whole, triggered my student pain energy package. Always being judged by my test scores and grades again produced anxiety and further reduced my self-esteem and confidence. The huge pressure caused me to retire from yet another traditional school. Following a Utopian dream I discovered, I went to work on a kibbutz in Israel.

When yet another dream was crushed, I returned to mainstream life in the US while also stepping outside of its perimeter. I began a new semester at a university and considered joining the Jefferson Starship or Rosicrucian's - and then Scientology found me. I studied counseling at both institutions, but saw my university expectations could

not be met. The wheat got separated from the chaff and I chose the most self-compassionate action for me to take: quit school and become a Scientology *auditor*.

My Holistic Curriculum

The purpose of holistic education is to prepare students to meet the challenges of living as well as academics. Holistic education believes it is important for young people to learn: about themselves, about healthy relationships and pro-social behavior, social development, emotional development, resilience, to see beauty, have awe, experience transcendence, and appreciate some sense of "truths."

<http://www.holistic-education.net/visitors.htm>

As I began to take further charge of my own education, being compassionate to my own needs (even when I wasn't consciously aware of what they were) seemed to be the inner movement that was clearing my educational and vocational paths. Having figured out some of what had been unworkable for me as a student, I wanted to discover new workable alternatives. While still burdened by anxiety attacks, I found myself sensing and connecting to my wide-open future with willingness and commitment to unearthing life's possibilities.

My educator path was driven by my yet unnamed essential jeweled goal (which emanated during my heuristic PhD study): *to be free to sense how to serve compassionately and creatively*. Following my own perceptions with no pre-meditated plan, just like Montessori *following the child*, I began developing my transformational education curriculum with my personally assigned, but always personally unnamed, major of holistic studies. I was on a mission to understand all of my parts, how to transform the pain of those parts, become whole, be present with life, and be of service.

The highest function of education is to bring about an integrated individual who is capable of dealing with life as a whole. (p. 24)

Krishnamurti, *Education and the significance of life* 1953

The teachers of my holistic studies were, primarily, far more compassionate than the public school and traditional universities that I had attended. Most of these instructors were involved in their own personal development and transformation, and although sometimes self-absorbed, their personal increased awareness often led to an increased awareness of their students. This seemed to make them more compassionate to us. We students were a part of, and not separate from, their personal worldview.

In the new worldview, the universe is seen as a web of interrelated events. None of the properties of any part of this web is fundamental; they all follow from the properties of the other parts, and the overall consistencies of their mutual interrelations determines the structure of the entire web. (Capra, p. 276 / Miller p. 16)

Capra *Tao of Physics* 1976, Cited in Miller 2006

Putting one foot in front of each other, utilizing my various holistic trainings I was becoming aware of the many parts of the whole. When finding, walking and staying in the *flow* of my co-created path, I tried to check within to intuit educational guidelines. Concepts such as interconnectedness and oneness began to create meaning within my own life. I am baffled to realize that *even then* I was dabbling in what I thought I had just discovered during my heuristic study – which is a core foundation of my practice of self-compassion - that *connection births wholeness!*

Not being limited by traditional curriculum and having a more expanded worldview, the holistic student /teacher relationship seemed to create less boundaries; my teachers could be more inclusive of my fellow students' needs, encouraging us to increase our personal consciousness and our potential interconnectedness. Beginning to actually *feel* the holistic philosophy, we were more able to be compassionate to our

instructors as they were more able to be compassionate to us, the students in their fold. The increased awareness of the interconnectedness of all things permeated academic and social interactions. Rather than now helping the needy, I got the glimmering of how much I needed to learn, to heal, and to deal with, in order to be able to help through intimate understanding and interrelatedness – a new sense of compassion for myself and others!

The ability to face the conflicts and fears within ourselves, to acknowledge our longing for security, for roots and unending love and approval and yet - at the same time - to remain unswervingly fixed on an uncertain, insecure path because we sense it to be our right path, is, to my way of thinking, a heroic thing. (p. 46)

Sineta *Ordinary People as Monks and Mystics* 1986

I humbly feel proud of myself now for having been courageous enough to be both self-compassionate and self-determined in my attempts to attain my life goals. These two attributes were the tools I needed to unswervingly walk my path of consciously evolving into a whole self that could be free to be of the highest service possible. It is only in hindsight that I recognize I have been giving myself a holistic education. It is surprising to realize that I have been encouraging myself to become holistically prepared to be a compassionate educator that could benefit myself and others in an environmental setting.

Being a Student of Conscious Evolution

Human beings now play an active and critical role not only in the process of their own evolution, but in the survival and evolution of all living beings. Awareness of this places upon human beings a responsibility for their participation in and contribution to the process of evolution.

Jonas Salk *Anatomy of reality* 1983

As I was now taking my education into my own hands, I became free to listen to the part of me that I previously was forced to suppress - the one whose service goals and purposes had been rejected. I became very excited about the prospect of finally being

able to become that *me* and take on my natural responsible role in society. My *social worker* persona (the one that Daddy told me I had to wait until I grew up to become, and the one who shone through on my vocational testing) represented that aspect and ran to the top of the line, to the head of the class, ready to do her part and happily, in some way, make a difference in this world through service!

But I could not move forward! When I sensed that I needed to obtain necessary training and develop specific skills to successfully take on this high level responsibility, I began experiencing an internal suffocation caused by my triggered education pain energy; its associated programming had the power to inhibit my attainment of all of my service goals. Rather than give in to this pain, falling prey to its ability to immobilize and depress me, I chose to change this unskillful pattern. Instead of following my programming, I self-compassionately began to co-create my conscious evolution for the sake of myself, for everyone I encountered and for people in need that I could reach.

Deep in the hidden process of our metamorphosis, we can see a natural design—an evolutionary pattern to guide toward the next stage of transformation. We intuit the presence of this still – invisible societal butterfly, yet how do we become it? What we are seeking is a worldview that will call forth our creative action and direct our immense powers toward life-oriented and evolutionary purposes. That guiding worldview is, I believe, conscious evolution. (p.57)

Barbara Marx Hubbard *Conscious evolution* 1998

Once I instinctively took the vow to consciously evolve, this intuitive understanding was revealed: if I wanted to actualize my purpose I had to be free to sense how to serve; unfortunately my pain energy, based on my unmet needs, prevented me from attaining this prerequisite to service. How could I assist and be compassionate to others when I could not compassionately take care of my own pain, meet my own needs? Whether as a social worker, a counselor or as an educator, I was doomed to failure if I did

not proactively deal with this pain energy. Taking on this challenge, I tried many different psychologists and drugs, but none of these really helped to transform this pain.

L. Ron Hubbard – My First Holistic Educator

What could help me to free myself of my pain energy? How could I personally evolve so that I can find my place and do my part in the conscious evolution of this planet? Is there any group or philosophy that could take me further along my personal and professional path towards the achievement of the potential of my whole self *so that I could help* the world achieve its potential as well?

I checked into the Rosicrucian sect and tried biofeedback, but it appeared that L. Ron Hubbard (LRH), the first holistic teacher I ever studied with, might have more answers. LRH created an organization I could belong to, Scientology (Scn), a combination of Buddhism from the East and philosophy and technology from the West. Through his heuristic research, LRH came up with a tremendous amount of material that he continued to revise with the intention of it being able to be used by everyone. It promised personal freedom through holistic awareness and a group goal of *clearing the planet*, making this world a saner place. This aligned with my goals of becoming wholly free through conscious evolution and compassionate service.

Scientology: It is the science of human affairs which treats the livingness and beingness of man, and demonstrates to him a pathway to greater freedom. (p. 369)

L. Ron Hubbard *Dianetics and Scientology technical dictionary* 1975

Scientology and Communication

My first introduction to Scientology's version of conscious evolution was transformational. I was taught Hubbard's *communication cycle* (cause – distance –effect

with attention, intention and duplication) through some of my favorite learning styles: blackboard diagramming, real-life examples, a short film and an interactive demonstration. This was very compassionate teaching for a student such as myself. A Scn staff member then sat me down to do the first Training Routines drill from their Communication Course, *TR 0 Confronting*:

The whole idea is to get the student able to be there comfortably... And not do anything else, but BE there... and say and do nothing for some hours. Student must not speak, blink, fidget, giggle or be embarrassed... without apologizing or moving or being startled or embarrassed or defending itself... Student passes when he can just BE THERE and confront. (p. 114)
L Ron Hubbard *Training drills modernized* 1971

I was amazed that someone understood and actually wrote out a simple formula for communication, and taught it so effectively, and that through applying that awareness and training, communication between people could be greatly improved. Learning the basics of good communication seemed vital for anyone, especially those seeking to be of service as a counselor, social worker or educator. My appreciation burst forth when I then experienced just a taste of this first communication drill. My world changed: it was the arrival of the embodiment of my spiritual presence while feeling intimately connected to another having a similar experience – the core of compassionate communication!

This next step in my conscious evolution inspired me to begin my training at once. I practiced drills that had the goal of asking, listening, responding and acknowledging through increased attention, intention and presence, despite becoming purposely and repeatedly triggered by a coach. Though never viewing this as such at the time, this had been my first introduction to both meditation and mediation. Practicing these TRs for thousands of hours contributed to major realization during my PhD

heuristic study: the first aspects of compassion are: *stopping and just being*, the physical connection with self; compassionate educators required compassionate communication.

My Scientology Personas

Although this part of my holistic journey had some trials and tribulations, through my many certification training courses, internships and counseling sessions (both giving and receiving) I felt I was able to be of better service to humanity. I became a *minister* of the Church of Scientology and a practicing *Class VI Auditor*. Being a pastoral counselor who *audits*, processes interdependently, a *preclear* (someone who wants to consciously evolve to *become clear* through Scientology processing) satisfied my earlier yearnings of becoming a psychologist.

Simultaneously, I received all of the lower and many of the higher levels of Scientology processing. Becoming a *Solo Auditor* was fantastic, processing myself and evolving to their level of *OT 4 (Operating Thetan* – a spirit that can operate without dependence on the universe around him). I was able to really free myself and attain states of being beyond anything I had ever imagined.

In addition, I became a mission staff member, now learning the organizational elements of Scn. First I became a *Course Supervisor* (their equivalent to being a teacher) and then I became their *Qualifications Secretary* validating Scn results and correcting and re-training students and auditors who *flubbed*. I was accomplishing so many of my original goals, including a very early one – to be a teacher!

Hubbard and my Practice of Compassion

Many aspects of my practice of self-compassion and compassion I now realize came from concepts, processes and practices that I learned while I was a student of Scientology. Although there are obvious, and not so obvious, differences between what Hubbard wanted to achieve and the intention of the practice of self-compassion, there is no doubt that Hubbard greatly influenced my practice. For instance:

TR 1 taught me how to assess. For my practice I use it during the inquiry to assess which pain energy area I will work with when many show up at once, or during the process if a pain energy area has many personas in it. (My Heuristic Journal, February 11, 2006)

In addition to Hubbard and myself being aligned in non-evaluative counseling and conscious evolution on a social level (LRH's *clearing the planet*), there are many other areas of significant similarities, such as: *taking full personal responsibility, intention without reservation, postulate* and his practice of *solo auditing*. These are areas of Scn that contribute, support and align with the first line of my vow: *I will liberate myself*;

The first time I truly learned how to be there for myself from my higher spiritual arena and take care of the parts of me that needed help was when I did Solo Auditing in Scientology. I was able to see my pain energy expressed on the e-meter before, during and after it was transformed. I offer my deep gratitude to LRH for finding ways to be responsible for one's own life and for teaching this to others. (Journal, October 9, 2005)

A holistic aspect that LRH opened up to me was the idea of all people having *valences* - false or true identities. Seeing none of my parts as false, I call these *personas* – personality aspects of my whole self. Also, Hubbard's definition of *somatics* is similar to my term *pain energy*; his intention for *charge* to be *released* or *erased* is similar to my term *transforming pain energy*.

Charge: 1. Harmful energy or force accumulated and stored within the reactive mind, resulting from the conflicts and unpleasant experiences that a person has had. (p. 67)

Somatic: ...a pain or ache sensation and also misemotion or even unconsciousness... because the word pain has in the past led to a confusion between physical pain and mental pain, the word somatic is used... to denote physical pain or discomfort, of any kind... (p. 392)

Release: The act of taking the perceptions or effort or effectiveness out of a heavy facsimile (p. 343)

L. Ron Hubbard *Dianetics and Scientology technical dictionary* 1975

Attitudes towards Dealing with Pain

The main differences between Hubbard and my treatment of personas and pain energy have to do with compassion and interconnectedness. Whereas I relate to personas with appreciation, Hubbard has expressed a tone of depreciation with regards to *valences*, *circuits* and the *Genetic Entity*, etc. Whereas I am interested in integration of these personas into the whole person, he is interested in eliminating them.

In addition to getting rid of personas and pain, Hubbard wanted to erase the earlier incidents that caused their creation. My choice is to compassionately accept, understand, value, and care for the needs of personas, this creating integration and the co-creation of our human consciousness - the evolution of new patterns. LRH believed that confronting pain gets rid of it; I believe that compassion for it transforms the energy of the pain and that being self-compassion can bring a softening quality to confronting.

Non-Compassionate Educator Personas

Though Scn continued to offer me fascinating information which I gobbled up and used immediately in my life and processes that propelled astounding personal revelations and experiences, I was not able to fully devote myself to its cause. This

seemed to have mainly come down to differences of attitudes, actions and styles of Hubbard's and my dominant personas. Although I consciously and unconsciously utilized Scn technology during my heuristic inquiry to help me to create my self-compassion practice, I do not remember receiving the degree of compassion as a student, as a staff member, or as a member of the organization that I would have liked, and perhaps needed.

While I was becoming more and more *free to be me*, within the organization I did not feel free to exercise this personal freedom. The structure / freedom fulcrum was tipped too far over to the structure side for my personality type. It required me to play my part non-creatively and fit in with the only roles possible within the organization and in the exact way it dictated. Much like my experiences with some of my educators that I deemed non-compassionate, I felt the authoritative (and often critical) tone and policy that I sensed within parts of the organization, and even in some of the technical aspects of Scientology, as being non-compassionate; yet I know many others might not agree.

Although LRH was brilliant, well-intentioned and gave his life to *saving the planet*, I noted particular personality traits of his, personas perhaps still laden with pain energy, that kept me alert to the fact that some of what he believed and said did not resonate with what my heart felt. I experienced him as having *Navy commander, tough love, autocratic, no non-nonsense*, and *egocentric* personas and what seemed to be *high production workaholic* programming which when coupled with his assurance that his was the only right way available, rubbed against and triggered my sensitive heart, liberal personality and free-spirited nature. Similar to my Mom and other authoritative educators I had difficulty with, I felt his personas as non-compassionate. They triggered my educator pain whenever their energy came through my studies, like in the following:

I once had an idea that a group could evolve truth. A third of a century has disabused me of that idea... the group left to its own devices would not have evolved Scientology, but...would have wiped it out... Man has never before evolved workable mental technology and emphasizing it is the vicious treatment he *did* evolve – psychiatry, psychology, surgery, shock treatment, whips, punishment... there is no more ethical group on the planet than ourselves.

L. Ron Hubbard *Keeping Scientology Working* 1965

When I experienced these traits filtering down through his policies to the veins of his organization, further educator pain got triggered. I appreciated this human idealistic system that believed in *granting beingness to* and freeing of its members, but I separated out when they could not tolerate my disagreement with any aspect of, or adding any slight alteration to, Hubbard's *workable technology* in the name of *keeping Scientology working*. What had felt like a radical approach to life, then felt like conservative strict dogma which demanded my *100% commitment*, opposing my independent path:

When somebody enrolls, consider he or she has joined up for the duration of the universe – never permit an “open-minded” approach...they're here on the same terms as the rest of us – win or die in the attempt... We'll survive because we are tough and dedicated.

L. Ron Hubbard *Keeping Scientology Working* 1965

LRH's educator persona *was* tough. For the good of the organization, he felt that students should learn only what *he discovered* all students should know. His standardized educational approach was not unlike most other traditional educational systems. Inquiry into what I would personally most benefit from was never an option, as he believed that all students would get everything they needed if they learned and applied his technology precisely. Any personal input into my own training curriculum was completely ignored. This tough attitude felt like a violation of my self-awareness. In the public school system, this style of non-compassion may be similar for many educators and students alike.

Following my personal perceptions and creative expression as to how to run a particular process on a client or on myself that deviated at all from the standard approach was absolutely forbidden. My supervisors were taught *not to be afraid to offend*, so non-compassionately invalidated any new thought as meek and needing to be stamped out, even under duress, in the name of human survival. I feared even thinking of not being *tiger* enough to follow LRH to the letter. I did want to deeply understand the *tech* and contribute, but wanted, and could not get, my opinions and ideas to be respected as well.

It is the task of all members of the Church of Scientology... to get the correct technology applied ... [which] consists of...hammering out of existence incorrect technology [and] closing the door on incorrect application... If you can't graduate them with their good sense appealed to and their wisdom shining, graduate them in such a state of shock they'll have nightmares if they contemplate squirreling [altering Scientology technology]... When we *do* instruct somebody properly, he becomes more and more tiger. When we instruct half-mindedly and are afraid to offend, scared to enforce, we don't make students into good Scientologists and that lets everyone down. The proper instruction attitude is, "...we're going to make you into an expert auditor... We'd rather have you dead than incapable..."...The whole agonized future of this planet...depends on what you do here and now... Remember, this is our first chance to do so in all the endless trillions of years of the past... If we miss getting out the trap now, we may never again get another chance.

L. Ron Hubbard *Keeping Scientology Working* 1965

I now see Hubbard's warrior approach as a correlation to the attitudes of the current administration who is ordering what should be taught, how students should learn and how they should be tested and evaluated. This brings to the surface the corollary of whether compassion can be beneficial in an educational setting: can non-compassion be harmful to educational settings? I realize that educator personas that might seem non-compassionate to me may be effective and positive for others; what may be harmful to me may not be harmful to another. Many, but not all, students and educators may

experience alienation and depersonalization when their freedom to be compassionate to particular needs, interests and specific paths are denied.

Training students to ensure US success in global markets is similar to LRH training students to *clear the planet*. Both may be extremely valuable and perhaps necessary. But no matter what personas educators act out, can they be triumphant, or might they be harmful, if the needs of their students are being by-passed?

Hubbard and Education

Over the nine year period that I assumed the beingness of a Scientologist, I learned indispensable information and techniques. As I consider LRH, his work and his organization of Scientology, I can see that there are large areas of Hubbard's works that I have applied to the field of education as well as to the development of my practice of compassion. Through reviewing his literature I found clarity as to what aspects of his material could potentially help students in their educational settings and what has helped me to become a more compassionate educator.

While I was training to become an *auditor*, I began to visualize applying the techniques I was learning to young children in an educational setting. This was the first time my *educator persona* showed itself since playing school as a young child. The educator I saw myself becoming was no longer a version of mean Mrs. Ein. My studies brought forth a new educator persona: an agent of holistic and compassionate education.

Hubbard's *Student Hat Course* taught me how to be a more effective student *and* educator. His text on *The Barriers to Study* was especially useful in my tutoring of elementary school students, as it increased my compassion for the actual needs of the

students, which then increased my efficacy in helping to solve their problems. Assisting troubled students in finding when and where they last felt good, then discovering what they did not understand, helping them to define their misunderstood words, teaching them how to balance their mass and significance through demonstrating what each concept meant, and ensuring there was not a more basic concept they needed to first comprehend (checking for a *skipped gradient*), met the needs of my goal for compassionate service.

Additionally, this course offered a new way of testing that brought relief to me as a student and as an educator. Understanding of the material was ensured through more compassionate methods. If any part of the material was not understood, instead of being marked wrong and going on to new material, I was grateful to have been given the opportunity to re-learn what I had missed until I eventually reached understanding.

Correct examination is done only by making the person being tested answer: (a) the meanings of the words...and demonstrating their use in their own made-up sentences, and (b) demonstrating how the data is *used*.
Hubbard *Instruction on an examination: Raising the standard of 1964*

Learning and testing in Scn was totally different from all other systems I had been involved in as it was solely interested in my understanding and ability to apply the information. Every course had a *check-sheet* with detailed instructions as to how to best learn everything on that course, including what concepts to demonstrate, examples to make and words to define. Testing was done after each article or bulletin was read before being allowed to proceed. I never got stressed-out or anxious with this style of testing.

LRH re-inspired being a teacher, as I began to consider how what I was being taught in auditor training could apply to education as well. The need for spiritual preparation before entering an auditing session was accomplished through the *TRs* which were designed to help confront areas that contained “buttons that get pushed” in life. This

brought insight into the possibility of educator preparation before entering an educational setting. His practice of *getting your TRs in* before going into session easily transferred to doing the *Educator Preparatory Practice of Self-Compassion* (see *All Practice Versions in Appendix*) before teaching a class. Hubbard was actually the source of my insight into holistic educator preparation and of my understanding the necessity of spiritual practice.

The point of practicing being self-compassion on a regular basis, is to be prepared to be present for children. It is especially useful if practiced right before going into class or entering a situation that one feels uneasy about. It is similar to doing TRs before going into an auditing session. The teachers become present and handle any personal difficulties before engaging in activities where their buttons may be potentially pushed. (My Heuristic Journal: Oct. 11, 2005)

Hubbard and Holistic Studies

Although I first learned about holism from Hubbard, the word *holistic* was never mentioned. His teaching of the spirit-body-mind connection and how each aspect affects the others was a thread throughout the vast amount of materials he wrote on each of these subjects. My holistic worldview developed as I studied and practiced his techniques.

With regard to the whole self, LRH assigned a greater value to the spiritual entity and a lesser value to the body and mind and rarely addressed the heart. But true holism felt incomplete to me if the spirit was better than the body-mind, which supposedly got in the way of the soul's desires. I have since found that wholeness requires respect and appreciation for the body-mind, its personas and the programs that was created to honor and care for its basic needs. I value the interconnectedness of all of the parts, the body, mind and soul working together to consciously evolve old patterns, with the heart leading to way to integration, as *connection births wholeness*. Compassion for me is connecting and creating wholeness with all parts of the self.

Though LRH taught what I now consider *spiritual supremacy* over the other parts of the human being and his environment (which does not reflect my current view of interconnectedness), his teachings did include truly holistic studies as well. He taught procedures called *assists* which helped the spirit make necessary connection with their body and their environment. I first awakened to the importance of maintaining good physical health during LRH's holistic programs of vitamin therapy, detoxification and purification long before any of these had ever become popular. Additionally, LRH also taught his *8 Dynamics* theory (eight interdependent urges or motivations in life) which was my first introduction to true interconnectedness and was a basis for my *Caring Adventure* holistic educational curriculum.

Integration with Ron

So many aspects of compassion were included in Hubbard's work, but the subject of compassion itself was not. Hubbard's technology brought me a healthy distance on my road towards conscious evolution and my holistic educational goals. Through Scn I definitely advanced in the areas of spiritual awareness, potential for planetary service, granting of beingness and respectful study technology. Through TRs, training and processing, I became freed of a great deal of my pain energy (my anxiety attacks totally ceased) and my confidence was improved. Though I gave up my connection to God, I developed a spiritual connection with myself and other people that was needed for my spiritual evolution. The sense of openness and flow that brought me into Scn turned into a sense of greater personal responsibility for my actions and to my group which raised my overall sense of personal integrity. It is interesting, though, that I was probably less compassionate when I left Scientology than I was before I entered the *Church*.

Creating this section of my narrative triggered educator pain energy connected to LRH and Scn. I bumped up against personal aspects and contrary values and my assumed false identity as a Scientologist. I was aware that I often was unable to apply the best of Scn, though at the time I did not know why. My pain energy surrounding this could not get resolved within the group and its processes. *Being self-compassion* during this inquiry allowed the pain energy to transform. Just being with, aware of, empathetic to and appreciative of this educator pain energy resulted in my becoming compassionate to Hubbard as I was being compassionate to myself.

Now less resistive to *Ron* and his teachings, I experience him as having been much more sensitive and caring than I ever realized him to be (Perhaps that is why he defensively had to assume such a tough veneer, and create his *tiger persona!*). Whatever the cause of his specific pain energy and the patterns he developed to deal with this pain, my heart has opened to his in a new way. Just sensing the pain and suffering he must have been experiencing with his group, his family, and various governments, allows me to recognize that because he had to maintain his altitude he may have had great difficulty being vulnerable with others. Who could he share his deepest pain with, and receive compassion from, when alone in his *Ivory Tower*? I am sad to realize that he was probably unable to give and receive the tender compassionate care that was his birthright. If this is true, my heart aches for his and wishes his spirit all that it longs for.

These awarenesses now raise my ability to receive his wisdom, which allows me to then differentiate that wisdom from my own and his pain energy. I have come full circle and admire, respect and have compassion for Ron. Because of this I now feel more

at ease with him and in a state of – to use his terminology – high *ARC* (affinity, reality and communication equaling understanding).

Because, for me, the positive definitely outweighed the negative, I am thoroughly grateful to LRH for all of the training and processing that he created and that I took advantage of. So much of his technology could be applied both in life and in the field of education with wonderful results. For instance, I learned the value of perception, observation, confront, and practice. I am aware that without these activities in my life, I would not have been able to create the practice and process of compassion and self-compassion. I see these as vital in the becoming of a compassionate educator.

While being a Scn staff member and student, I experienced degrees of burn-out as alienation, depersonalization and devalued personal accomplishments, but because I was receiving so many gains, I remained a Scientologist as long as I was able. When I no longer felt I could consciously evolve through this system, then I could no longer honestly maintain my vow of total allegiance to Scientology; it was time for me to move on. I always remained in good standing with Scientology and took all of Ron's wonderful wisdom with me on my continued journey.

Since holistically Scientology had been top heavy, I had immersed myself mainly in discovering spirit-as-self and engaging in mental processing. With self-compassion and self-determinism leading the way, I was now ready to take my next step towards conscious evolution which would hopefully balance all that I received from Hubbard. I found myself being led to earth-based spirituality and physical healing.

Student of Energetic Physical Connection

Early Physical Energetic Connections

When I was a child I was naturally physically active and surprisingly victorious in all physical activities. But this changed from puberty onward. My adolescent depression immobilized me except the occasional times that this city girl got into nature. My life as a Scientologist was fairly physically inactive, sitting so much of the time as a student and as an auditor. The only connection I made with my body that I recall is when I was playing ping-pong, playing my favorite Brooklyn game, *Off the Wall*, and doing Scn's *Purification Rundown* which included a daily run, a vitamin regimen, and an introduction to health food. I had not developed an understanding of an internal energetic connection.

...to "inhabit the body" is to feel the body from within, to feel the life inside the body. (p. 59)

Tolle *Practicing the Power of Now* 2001

The first type of *energetic* physical connection I made was during Scn *assists*. If a client was ill or had an accident, there were a variety of assists that could be given to help the person be able to confront being in their body. It required both the auditor and their client to connect physically with various parts of the client's body, especially areas of pain, and feel their body from within. I always enjoyed the deep presence I employed during these non-mental processing sessions when I would gently touch a body part and with strong intention ask them to *feel my finger*. Receiving assists were highly beneficial to me as well, and I loved this new energetic relationship with my body. There was a

calm compassionate flow during these mostly silent physical processes that brought about a sense of peace that I believe increased the effectiveness of its healing.

It is a pleasure, finally to begin to come home to the body, our earthly home; to be fully embodied in this physical existence without wishing we were in the more rarefied realm of the angels; without, in fact, wishing we were anywhere but where we are. That's when we fall into ourselves, and it is a relief indeed. (p.175)

Housden *Seven sins for a life worth living* 2005

The next energetic physical connection I experienced was with my son. After leaving the church, I decided to create a family. Being pregnant connected me to energy changes in my body, but the most significant connection occurred when I began nursing my baby. This physical connection (which later became a step of my practice of compassion: *stopping and just being*) took on the sense of deep relaxation combined with archetypal maternal nurturing. Nightly nursing *lie-downs* began with closing my eyes, calmly creating a relaxed presence, then lovingly connecting with my son to help him fall sleep. My breathing naturally slowed down, my heart opened a great embrace. In that release I felt a new type of peace. I had never before experienced such a beautiful, intimate and natural energetic physical connection with myself and with another.

Being a Student of Taoism

I began embarking on the Taoist branch of my path when my husband suggested we take a local Tai Chi class. Getting involved in a physical practice interested me, but I never realized that by learning and embodying this new practice I was getting myself involved with a new spiritual philosophy as well. Learning Tai Chi brought forth my physical and earthly connection that I needed. Though my practice was mainly practical, reading no literature about Taoism till much later on, I had become a student of Taoism.

My T'ai Chi Introduction

Celebrate the Life Force

Arouse the Life Force through your feet;
 Release it up through your legs;
 Direct it through your waste, staying grounded.
 Now, manifest through your hands,
 Letting a quiet power extend into Infinity

Yocum *My Dance of Tao* p. 49, 2007

Through the practice of Tai Chi my world was once again, literally, turned upside-down. From feeling myself as a being from my eyeballs up and out through the top of my head, I began experiencing myself as an energy coming up from the roots of the earth through the *bubbling wells* (a point in the middle of the soles [souls?] of my feet) and out through my hands. My next nine year education, in energetic physical connection, began with Lou, my first T'ai Chi teacher, who helped me to transition out of the mental/ spiritual healing practices of Scientology into earth and body based ones to create more balance – which, unbeknownst to me, was exactly what I needed.

Having just spent most of my life questioning and analyzing, and nine years in Scn being asked for significances and applications, I assumed Louise, as my current educator, would want to share, discuss and help me to understand the Taoist principles. However, I guess Lou got triggered when I wanted to talk to her after class to get the meaning of what she was teaching and how I could use this in life. It was confusing and difficult for me, being a diligent student, when Lou would not engage in conversations about my inquiry into the why and wherefore of anything she was teaching.

Lou seemed non-compassionate when she would not answer my questions and help me to get a verbal, mental understanding. I remember trying to learn her exercise *stepping over the log*. She instructed me to feel the energy coming up from the earth through one side producing a powerful presence, then without tilting, lift my other foot over an imaginary log –without touching the ground - and then return my foot back over the log. It was so simple, yet I couldn't quite get it. Directing this energy to course through my body, store it and use it at will was a totally foreign concept to me.

I sheepishly asked Lou for help, worried about her being cool and standoffish. Impatiently, she told me to not engage in asking any more questions or analysis, to get out of my head, and instead be in my body, feel the energy from the center of the earth throughout my body and do the exercise; *then* I would know the answers to all of my questions. She could not be compassionate and honor that persona of mine that had been heavily trained and highly validated for being in my head and that being in my head meant success. Not giving herself compassion for how my behavior had triggered her, she was unable to be *at one* with me, connect with my pain, be aware of my needs, and help me get from where I was to where she wanted me to be: balanced and centered.

As we experience and explore different ways of centering body, mind and spirit, focusing on patterns of energy within us and outside ourselves – with movement and rest, silence and sound, and breathing and imagery as our tools, we come into balance. (p. 15)

Yocum *My Dance of Tao* 2007 p. 49

Lou did not realize that the belief systems I was operating from were diametrically opposed to the alien philosophic concepts (such as movement, breathing, centering, balance and silence as spiritual) she expected me to embody. Taoism, being elementally based spirituality in the physical universe, is contrary to my roots of Judaism

and my longtime commitment to Scientology. Neither traditional Judaism nor Scn included, or valued, spiritual energetic qualities connected to the physical universe, so considering spirit as something energetically connected to the physical universe was strange to me and difficult to embrace. That spiritual energy could come from earth energy and that the elements were endowed with this energy opposed my traditions.

The latest science leads us to a worldview not unlike those held by the earliest civilizations, in which every material object in nature was thought to possess a spirit. (p. 185)

Lipton *The Biology of belief* 2005

Jewish spirituality, which was post matriarchic idol-worship, refuted material spirituality and connected to a God in the heavens; LRH viewed the spiritual universe as separate and senior to the physical universe (which he called MEST: matter, energy, space and time). Judaism rejected earth based religions and Scn's *OT* levels aimed at evolving you to become *cause over* MEST – even your MEST body. As opposed to an earth connection through your body, Scn's ideal spiritual location is three feet behind your head so as to not to be *stuck in the body*. Neither religion honored the human body or the earth as having spiritual or energetic value. Both Judaism and Scn had an outside-of-the-body sense of spiritual connection and a moralistic, intuitive, anthropomorphic base and were not open to these aspects of quantum physics which seemed heretical.

Though the degree of con-compassion I experienced from Lou was fairly minor and I was able to later practice Tai Chi with much less struggle and increased appreciation for years to come, even considering Lou as my best Tai Chi instructor, her lack of compassionate sensitivity did hurt me; my understanding was compromised. An educator who can listen to a student's belief systems compassionately can make the

difference in a student learning or failing. Honoring a student's style of spiritual values and connection is vital. Grasping the unusual often requires educator compassion.

Introducing new worldviews or religious beliefs are important as they broaden student's horizons and can help students' get needs met that they might not even be aware that they had. In this instance, although it seemed to enter my life without being for no reason, Taoism was necessary for me to be exposed to for balance, centering and for the conscious connection to energy. Many of its concepts still pervade my way of thinking, the way I live my life and are even intrinsic to my practice of compassion. They can help me to become a better educator, using it as a part of my holistic preparation.

I have taught...T'ai Chi...to undergraduate and graduate students in education classes...Many report a growing awareness...A mind/body reconnection in the individual...is the first and necessary step towards the creation of a spiritual dimension in education - one which ultimately connects the centered individual to the universe. (p. 58-61)

Sidwell 1989

Only Connect: Tai Chi and a Spiritual Dimension of Teacher Preparation

Embracing the Taoist Ways

Over time I began to resonate more and more with Taoism and honor physical/spiritual energetic connection. The core of what Lou tried to teach me *tingled* through my body. I asked much less questions as I learned how to trust my non-verbal answers.

We don't need to play Abstract Philosopher, asking unnecessary questions and coming up with meaningless answers. What we need to do is recognize Inner nature and work with Things As They Are. (p. 30)

Hoff, *The Tao of Pooh* 1983

My Taoist education expanded into learning by practicing and recognizing my Inner Nature through *Push Hands*, *Chi Gung*, *the 5 Elements*, *Inner Smile* meditations and *Tantra*. I studied with many other Taoist teachers, but my two new favorite ones

(outside of my ongoing connection with my beloved Lou) were Chinese, Al Huang and Mantak Chia. Through them the *Yin / Yang*, *Dantien* and *Wu Wei* principles, along with a new style of energy transformation, became alive in me as an active part of my life, and eventually of compassion. To understand all of these principles I needed to first understand the meaning of the concept of *Chi*.

Chi is...the primal life energy that we receive from our parents, as they received from their ancestors since the beginning of time. Chi is the air we breathe, and the food we eat, and the enveloping atmosphere, both natural and unnatural, that we respond to...when we feel good about our environment and the people around us, we feel more energized. We have more Chi power. (p.21)

Huang *Tai Ji: Beginner's Tai Ji Book* 1989

Chi was my connection to my ancestors and my children. Experimenting and playing with Chi (especially with children as we created and threw an energetic *Chi Ball* to one another) I began to truly feel my energetic physical connection with myself and began to sense this connection with others as well. Learning how to get out of my head and into the gut force in my belly, the *Dantien*, allowed me to more fully know this Chi-flow. I was opening up to a new way of learning, very unlike that which is taught in traditional education. Can educators making this type of energetic connection with children create more compassionate encounters and deeper learning experiences?

Yin/ Yang Polarity

There are no beginnings and no endings, the universe is process and the process is in me. When I fight this process or ignore it, I am in trouble. When I move with it, something happens... P5

Huang *Embrace Tiger. Return to Mountain* 1973

My first exposure to Yin/Yang was during Lou's teaching of *Reconciliation of Opposites*. In Scn everything was hierarchical – so many vertical charts and scales aiming

high towards perfection, just like traditional educational systems. Taoism was so different - one pole moved into the other. I loved creating energetic wholeness between the polar energy of my two hands, much like I did when I was a child and felt the different energetic personas of my right and left hands. Can they work together harmoniously?

Yin/ Yang Polarity...is a philosophy of a continuous interplay of the natural forces, such as...a woman and man playing and harmonizing. Yin/ Yang is a complete concept with dual possibilities, inseparable and constantly striving to complement and unify. (p. 23)

Huang *Tai Ji: Beginner's Tai Ji Book* 1989

My second deep understanding came at an Al Huang workshop. I had a major experiential cognition while in a huge circle of other students we walked the Yin/ Yang concept, progressing from one aspect to the other aspect of various pairs. The experience was so astounding I broke down into tears.

What a compassionate educator act it would be to discover how to apply this Yin /Yang concept as a compassionate educator. I could practice self-compassion before entering the classroom and be ready to then be compassionate to the students; it could obviously be applied by creating a balanced curriculum; it could also be vital to the transformational educator /student relationship: If I, as an educator, get stuck in verbal outflow and my students are nearly incapable of listening, can learning happen effortlessly? A compassionate educator can learn to allow a 2-way circular flow!

Wu Wei – The Action of Inaction

[In] the Wu Wei approach to conflict-solving... never is force opposed with force; instead, it is overcome with yielding....“Flows like water, reflects like a mirror...,” said Pooh, walking by. (p. 87)

Hoff *The Tao of Pooh* 1983

When I first read the concept of Wu Wei it blew me away. It seemed to relate to all the causes of my stress. I began to understand the possibility of passive learning and teaching with strong presence. It also offers me a new possible disciplinary approach as a compassionate educator: it can be an important conflict resolution aspect of the compassionate educator persona and can increase the skill of observation.

Transforming Energy

...if we...conserve, recycle, and transform raw sexual energy back into principle energy...we then will have more principle energy available to transform into Chi, which then, in turn...transform[s] into...spiritual energy. It is important to know how to transform negative energy into positive energy and good feelings. (p. 3, 6)

Chia, M. *Healing love through the Tao* 1986

When I began studying with Mantak Chia, I immersed myself in his healing personal tantric practices and his *Inner Smile* meditation. His *Microcosmic Orbit* tantric meditation practice truly assisted my personal goals of freedom and self-compassion.

Experience actual Chi flow. Relax and let your mind flow with the Chi in the physical body along a natural circuit... The more conscious you become of the functioning of the subtle energy in your body, mind, and spirit, the greater will be the freedom to creatively love and be yourself. (p.40/ 41 Ibid.)

His *Inner Smile* meditation also greatly influenced me in many ways. The major one was that it introduced self-compassionate communication with my body's personas for healing purposes. I even learned more about why I had my many puberty problems: "Women's major loss of energy occurs through menstruation (p. 2 Ibid)."

As transforming suffering is vital to achieving the state of compassion, energy transformation techniques seemed vital. However, doing a process as a means to a specific end may not work:

Chia says, “Smile into the tension, until it is released.” That has been a great pressure for me...where a specific process was intended to bring a specific result. Smiling into tension often releases it, but not always. That is why I needed to make the self-compassion practice not be dependent upon...what any body part...will be transformed into or whether or not any pain energy can be released...in any given session. What Hubbard called an *EP* (end phenomena indications) is difficult to be predicted... It is not self-compassionate to push for a particular EP. Deep internal listening and understanding will bring forth whatever needs to next be brought forth without predetermination. We can not always know what actions will be needed for a particular transformation to take place. (My Journal: 2005)

...

Considering the creative energetic nature of Taoism, I saw my mentor teachers, Huang and Yocum, use Tai Chi as expressive dance. I tracked Lou down, sensing her input would be valuable for this dissertation. I found her daughter who eventually sent me Lou’s only published work. She wrote this last year, in 2007, “at 89 years young”:

I dance my truth! From my deep;
The movements come up fresh and innocent. I dance! (p. 57)

Being a Student of Bodywork

Lou said there was a connection between T’ ai Chi and bodywork. She taught Japanese acupuncture, Jin Shin Do, and suggested I take her class. I decided that I would do this to further my Taoist practice. Truly sensing, within the field of another person’s body, when the energy between specific meridian points begins to flow was an amazing experience. It satisfied my goal of social service and my purpose of being free to sense how to serve. This marked the beginning of my career as a holistic massage therapist.

T’ ai Chi forces you to be in the present moment and to be aware of the whole body...we are cleansing the body to let the energy flow naturally, and then we make positive use of our own energy. (p. 12)

The transformative power of Bodywork is intertwined with the creative source of therapy, but also artistry, and our humanity itself... Authentic Bodywork serves the purpose of: Self-Discovery, Self-Awareness & Self-Enjoyment. (p. 17)

Yocum My Dance of Tao 2007

When I stopped nursing my son at 3 years of age, I needed a new expression, a different nurturing physical connection. I also wanted an avenue to develop more physical intimacy with my husband. These were the only reasons that led me into massage training; I was not interested in becoming a professional masseuse at the time.

This initial training program offered grounding and spiritual connection: Tai Chi was used for massage posture; I was finally forced to study anatomy; I was introduced to new concepts, such as *Chakra Balancing* and *Therapeutic Touch*; I furthered my investigation into using energy for health. All of this led me toward engaging in a new field that I had never before considered: *healing through physical and energetic therapy*. Instead of doing mental spiritual processes for transformation, I was using energy to heal.

...cell biologist James Oschman... defines healing energy simply: healing energy...is energy of a particular frequency...that stimulate[s] the repair of one or more tissues...Energy therapy...enhances the ability to recover.
(p.85)

Barrett Taijiquan: *Through the Western Gate* 2006

I took a plethora of holistic bodywork courses, trainings and workshops before and during activating my career as a massage therapist. Through these trainings I came to realize that practicing bodywork involved much more than working on, or with, bodies. My holistic training had intertwined emotional, psychological, physical and spiritual energy systems that could be applied during any session.

I was even able to utilize earlier trainings as bodywork applications. I used Ron's preparation for a session by preparing for bodywork sessions by engaging Taoism's earth connection and Chi storage. I used LRH's explanation of the parasympathetic nervous system and the Yin/ Yang theory to first massage the left side of the body, as it was the feminine receptive.

Studying holistic bodywork was like practicing *whole self* healing through touch. Bodywork was a means of dealing with pain energy and reducing suffering. Thus, it was a holistic compassionate practice which turned out to be very much on my path.

Compassionate Kinesthetic Education

It was on my first massage training that I began to understand my dominant learning style was kinesthetic and set my kinesthetic development in motion. I began to realize that I learned best by being shown how to do something, then reading about it while I can experiment with doing it, and then practice doing it. This learning style made bodywork training fairly easy for me to learn as it involved learning what was going on inside of a person through the practical activity of touch.

Sometimes, though, I missed it. I recall one *cold* teacher approaching me in a practice session, somehow realizing that although the stroke was technically perfect I was not making adequate physical connection throughout. When she asked me to perform the stroke on her, I felt criticized and embarrassed for having done the stroke incorrectly. But then when she taught me by performing the stroke on me, I easily learned what I had been missing and was grateful for her kinesthetic correction.

This demonstrates that compassionate education is more about holistic connection and less about personality type; it does not always need to be accompanied by a cheerful or sweet persona. This teacher was effective because she was compassionate to my strengths, my shortcomings and my learning style needs. Most of my training and examinations in energetic physical connection were practical; I felt confident with this style of testing.

However, even though many of the government examination officials were *sweetness and light*, when they gave me the written exam I found myself fearing them. While I passed the county and city's certification examinations, I never felt that I demonstrated my competence. On the contrary, I had a reduced sense of confidence after completing my written test. Since we are imperfect beings, there needs to be a margin for error. I learned that compassionate testing is best for me when it is done through practical demonstrations and verbal questioning, with any errors practically corrected and retested.

Energetic Physical Connection by Example

My ultimate teacher of physical energetic connection was my cat Silk. She educated me by example. While we were out on the backyard greenbelt, I would take a short walk staying safely in her site. I watched her *stopping and just being*, then stretching, and finally making a deep earth connection - while always staying mindful of her surroundings. I took note of this and began utilizing her practice. I would like to recall and apply all she taught me on a daily basis. It is the root of the preparation of physical connection that is needed to be both a healer and a compassionate educator.

Being a Student of Spiritual Connection

“If you are to produce the ideal society of the future, the society in which children can thrive and express their personality in the atmosphere of shalom - which means not only peace but human welfare - those who are its architects and creators must be 'taught of the Lord': that is, spiritually minded people." ...teachers...whether or not they adhere to a particular creed, they must have a sense of the transcendent - a sense that there is something more to life than what they perceive with their senses. (p. 111)

Pollack *Children Taught of the Lord* Cited in Bennett, et al. 1984

I have included spiritual connection as a part of holistic connection because I have found it vital to be spiritually prepared as an educator. When I was aware of my location on my spiritual path I usually engaged in a spiritual practice in the form of daily or weekly rituals. It was during those times that I was not only able to be spiritually prepared as an educator, but I was also able to create myself as a holistically prepared educator. Making spiritual connections has been an act of self-compassion leading to regularly transforming pain energy that could stand in the way of my teaching.

Prayer and meditation facilitates integration by allowing time for previously unrelated thoughts and feelings to interact. Being able to get in touch with one's deepest thoughts and feelings, and providing time for them to regroup themselves into new formations and combinations are... a way of relieving tension and promoting mental health. (p. 28)

Storr Solitude: a return to the self 1988

My Spiritual Journey

I have contemplated, read books about, written on, and inquired into the subject of spirituality more than I have for any other holistic or academic field of study, including this one. It has led me to take part in a greater amount of spiritual group activities (like trainings, courses, retreats, conferences, seminars, services, ceremonies, workshops, rituals, dancing, chanting, etc.) than any other type of group activity I have ever been involved in throughout my life. Honoring my spiritual journey, I have tried to be open to each of its steps so as to bask in the enlightening possibilities of their new horizons in the name of spiritual fulfillment.

I believe there are many of us who are sharing a similar journey through life. We feel a sense of separation and alienation from our worlds, our friends and loved ones, and even ourselves. We need and want to live in a deeper and more meaningful relationship with our world and the people in it. We want to live more in the spiritual dimension of life, the spiritual

dimensions of time and space. We are searching, if not for answers at least for questions to help us live the life we want to live.

Martin Buber *All true life is meeting*, Cited in Levy 1994

My trek has been from an ethical masculine God-based spirituality (Judaism), to a personal power-based spirituality (Scientology), to a physical universe-based spirituality (Taoism), to a masculine/ feminine deity devotional-based spirituality (Mysticism) to a heart /peace /affluent-based spirituality (New Age), and then to an *All is Sacred* /*Oneness*-based spirituality (Buddhism). Committing to and devouring one religion to the next, I avoided taking on all of the dogma. Following the thread of what satisfied the depths of my soul at the time, I amassed spiritual knowledge and experiences that bore many fruits (some of which were sour) which gifted me a potpourri of spiritual pleasures to choose from and religious rigidity to reject.

My latest spiritual step, which has been recently forming, is an evolution from the Buddhism that is practiced as a closed system. Applying its Oneness principle I am now moving into an inclusion of all of my earlier spiritual modalities that I have experienced as now a part of my practice of spiritual oneness. This is possible, and even natural, because in some ways each spiritual religion embodies the others within me. I have always been able to find a spiritual group within any of these religions that, in addition to their primary base, includes a flavor of other religions. For instance, the heart may be valued and extolled in other sects outside of New Age religions, such as by some Jewish rabbis and by many mystics. This has given me the aesthetically sacred pleasure and mysterious intrigue of mixing and matching my various spiritual clothing.

Concurrently, I am now experiencing the paradox of embracing many spiritual deities and aspects of various practices, and staunchly believing that the essence of

spirituality can not be spoken in words and that no particular practice or religious tenet is necessarily true. Recently experiencing life situations that have been difficult to grasp and deal with, I found no solace in any spiritual rituals (outside of my own practice and art therapy) which has been pointing to the fact that the best I can do is surrender to the Great Mystery. All spiritual and religions paths and belief systems seem limited as they are being communicated by human beings who only can smell the Great Mystery but can either not taste it or have not found a way to effectively share it. My spiritual ebb and flow dance of utilizing spiritual connections and then surrendering to spiritual mystery, of both believing in all and believing in nothing, marks my current stage of spiritual development and connection.

As I begin to incorporate personally chosen spiritual tenets of each religion to use for my practice of compassion and as a compassionate educator (such as the *Sacred Sangha* I have created for my current daily spiritual connection [see *Appendix*]) I recall Brother David Steindle-Rast, a Benedictine monk I met in a spiritual conference at Naropa University in 1988. He warned me of the perils of eclecticism and encouraged me to find one religion that I can cleave to and receive all of my meaning from.

Brother David is a compassionate sage of the highest order to me and writes beautifully about the *listening heart* and gratitude, both of which are so dear to my heart, so I assumed that what he said probably has some greater truth. He was fearful, as was Hubbard, that I would allow myself to take too many side-roads and lose my spiritual path. I was cautioned that being spiritually eclectic would easily allow me to get seduced by the wondrous beauties of a practice but that then I would leave it when I was called to

do the dirty-work or confront areas that were distasteful and required me to roll up my sleeves or bare myself naked for transformation.

Mindful of both of these great teachers' warnings while engaging in my next spiritual evolutionary step, I will tell just a few of the great many spiritual education stories that there are to tell. Although I find spiritual connection to be a vital aspect of compassion, each educator's unique spiritual connection is for them to explore and bring to their own compassionate practice. It seems unnecessary to go deeply into my spiritual journey for this narrative, but instead I felt drawn to give this overview and to now touch upon those stories, insights and spiritual teachers that directly relate to compassion, self-compassion and perhaps even to education as well. The stories will reflect connecting with my Jewish heritage, both traditional and mystical renewal, and my Buddhist connection. Embracing these two paths should be sufficient to delve into and re-experience as they spiritually keep me grounded in my ancestry: Daddy's Jewish roots and Daddy's Buddhist heart. I believe this would satisfy Brother David after all!

My First Spiritual Connection – Being a Child of the Jewish GOD

Parallel to my childhood's *First Meetings with Educator Pain and Compassion*, was the onset of my spiritual path: I was being a child Jew - a child of GOD. Though I subsequently became a part of the Church of Scientology and Taoism, my involvement with those religions, although a part of my conscious evolution, didn't feel like it was a part of my spiritual path since they were not God based. Spiritual connection, at the time, had to include the feeling of a grounded sense of security that I could fully experience by being personally and profoundly connected to an infinite spiritual power.

My relationship to GOD was not one where he was in heaven and I was on earth. We connected inside and around me. As a child, this spiritual energetic embodiment allowed me to both physically function quite effortlessly and to easily correct my own errors. My surrender to this connection seemed to bless me with *super-powers* and I thoroughly enjoyed expressing these gifts of His in my world.

My early Jewish God experience was one of connection, conscience and contemplation. I contemplated on, and felt, God's omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent attributes. If God was omnipresent then He was inside of me, everyone else and everywhere else at the same time; so I knew we were connected and that His guidance would be correct because He was omniscient! Feeling I possessed His omnipotence made me capable of personal infinite power... As a child I was able to use my Jewish God connection to find objects I lost, to experiment with life and death, to win any game, to get the leading role, to become the captain, and to have the power to more easily deal with any pain; I seemed to be able to make all my wishes come true. I didn't ask for much, because I didn't see anyone else having these same powers and I did not want to be greedy... My inner world was huge and wonderful. (My Heuristic Journal: February 16, 2006)

Keeping the Sabbath Holy – Creating Spiritual Connection

Sh!
Ah!
Stop!
It's Shabbat!

...

The Sabbath is the presence of God in the world, open to the soul of man. It is possible for the soul to respond in affection, to enter into fellowship with the consecrated day... *Shabbat* [is] the act of taking upon oneself the obligation to rest. (p. 53/54)

Heshel *The Sabbath* 1951

My extensive contemplation as a child of GOD occurred on *Shabbos* (the Yiddish term for *Shabbat* which is the Hebrew word for Sabbath). For one day of every week life made took on a major change for myself and my family, though this day did not have the same affect on anyone else in my neighborhood. On *Shabbos*, you could not work or do

anything that ever resembled labor. Activities like writing, cutting, tearing, spending money, cleaning, and cooking were supposedly forbidden. I never found this inhibiting as I enjoyed stopping the week's routines and appreciated *Shabbos'* sacred nature: I wore a dress, I read, I talked, I walked, I visited my grandmothers, I communed with GOD.

It must always be remembered that the Sabbath is not an occasion for diversion or frivolity...but an opportunity to mend our tattered lives (p. 7)
Heshel *The Sabbath* 1951

Even during the time periods when I was *not* practicing Judaism, I still weaved observing regular Shabbats in and out of my life. It was wonderful to relax, to not use any electricity and light candles, to stop all of my compulsive activities, to *just be* and to heal any areas of myself that were hurting. I began to understand why the Sabbath was touted by some as the most important of the Ten *Commandments* and the holiest of all Jewish holidays. Practicing the Sabbath turned out to be a very self-compassionate activity as it gave me a chance to rest from work, even from my mental obsessions, and heal my soul.

You need to be able to disconnect from everything that drives you.
Reb Zalman Schacter-Shlomi *How Yom Kippur Resolves Karma* 2003

The concept of educator preparation was borne in me on the Sabbath, which proved to be meaningful to my practice of compassion in many ways. Spiritual preparation gave me the needed foundation for being able to do my process of self-compassion. I had to stop the pattern, the negative energy, the controlling persona, before I could re-create my beingness of self-compassion and transform my pain energy. The Sabbath also influenced my practice by teaching me about making a commitment to a spiritual connection, giving me my first notion of the importance of making a vow. Additionally, the Sabbath demonstrated to me that a practice necessitates a time period of

stopping the rest of life's activities and thoughts in order to do inner work. Keeping the Sabbath holy can perhaps even prevent the stress connected with educator burn out.

Jewish Morality – Jewish Guilt – Jewish Pain Energy

When I was around 8 years old and contemplating GOD, I had a realization that what GOD represented, or helped me to connect to, was my conscience. This GOD /Conscience taught me right from wrong and *intended* me to do what was right. An extolling of punishments was not really attached to this moral / ethical immortal edict, though I was strongly encouraged to develop an awareness of inherent goodness and practice this if I wanted to maintain our sacred connection. Vowing to honor this Jewish law brought the support of GOD /Conscience who became present within me whenever I was tempted to do something potentially unethical.

GOD as my conscience came to mean that when I felt that GOD was judging my actions, in truth it was possible that as my conscience I was judging my own actions. Considering that I was externally judged caused me to self-judge. I wound up measuring the validity of my actions by GOD's approval or disapproval. Not wanting to create any blip in His connection with me, I internalized this and approved and disapproved of myself based on whether or not I sensed I was adequately obeying or disobeying the known laws of GOD. The development of my self-esteem became interwoven with this development of self-discipline. I was good enough if GOD felt I was!

When I consciously or accidentally deviated from His norm, I punished myself by moving into the state of self-blame. The pain energy associated with GOD /Conscience was my constant figuring and worrying about moral issues and feeling the fear of making possible divine errors. Each new decision-making moment was increasingly fraught with

anxiety and tension. The consequences of potential mistakes seemed irreparable. This has led me to non-compassionately expect much more from myself than is comfortable, or perhaps even possible, for me to achieve (establishing the underpinnings of my future workaholism). These consequences of non-success have been shame and guilt. At my own physical and emotional expense, I have been always pushing and striving – creating and re-creating my pain energy.

I need compassion for all the suffering I have experienced. I need self-compassion for my overwhelmingly difficult tasks, for the trigger of my fear of wrongdoing and imperfection that results in the pain of low self-esteem. Rather than feelings of guilt, shame and self-blame, I want to have compassion for all of my mistakes, for all of the risks I took and experiments that didn't turn out quite right, especially if I or others had to suffer consequences because of my actions. The Jewish path requires self-compassion.

Judaism and Education

The Jewish race functions as an anchor for [the] manifestation of God... This works itself out on the physical plane as the Jewish race and on the emotional plane as the Jewish faith, and on the mental plane as the Jewish genius...There is much knowledge of the laws of manifestation within the Jewish consciousness. This is demonstrated in the brilliance of the Jewish mind which has done so much for the advancement of Humanity. The Jews are very good at perceiving high ideas and bringing them down into physical practical manifestation.

Uta Gabay - A Bridge of Compassion 2004

Being born a Jew brought with it certain attributes: a sense of aesthetics (noted by the Jewish Garment Center and the number of plastic surgeries), a sense of humor and a desire to perform (shown by the Jewish entertainment industry, especially the Jewish comedians), and the big one that Jews pride themselves in - a strong intellect (evident in the large percentage of Jewish educators, doctors, lawyers and scientists, though we are

but a tiny population of the world). The glitch is that these attributes are accompanied by their dichotomy. Many of us Jews felt that none of these attributes were given without a struggle; we were simultaneously laden with overconfidence and insecurity.

This directly related to the field of education. Part of the Jewish pain relates to the gift of intelligence. Helping and healing your family, your race, and the world depended upon the development and skillful use of your intellect. Being a Jew (and for me, having my Jewish GOD/Conscience) then had the expectation and demand of getting a good education, excellent grades and then becoming someone of intellectual value to society.

The stress of my GOD/Conscience created anxiety in school. I experienced GOD /Conscience as my parents, my teachers, and all the powers that be – anyone who tried to teach me right from wrong rather than helping me to develop my own good sense of judgment. The evaluations of my mental, physical and social performance were stressful. Fear of not doing the right thing, giving the right answer, acting the right way coupled with the educational model of perfection on tests, attendance, behavior and socialization. When being my Jewish persona, education was something I both craved and despised.

**Judaism and Great Compassion:
*Tikkun Olam: Restoring the World***

The Jews are seen as a "priestly nation", ordained by God, and empowered through obeying the law and carrying out the Mitzvoth [divine moral commandments], to be a model for Humanity and to redeem Humanity.

Uta Gabay - *A Bridge of Compassion* 2004

As a child my strong sense of self-determinism had kept me involved in playing competitively, performing and creating a pretty happy life, but my Jewish social angst,

that Daddy recognized in me, always lied right beneath the surface. My path of service began as a child once I realized that I was not being compassionate.

Having already established a sense of vigilance in distinguishing the most ethical action to be taken, when I was 12 years old this intensified. I had the rude awakening from a couple of friends and neighbors that I had been self-absorbed. I inherently understood this to mean that I had unconsciously been unethical and felt the shame of self-centeredness. I was guilty of breaking the law of not doing unto others what you would have them do unto you. But how was I sincerely expected to know what was best to do unto them until I discovered what was best to do unto me by doing it unto me first? Was I free to sense how to serve? My sense of social guilt paired with the wondrous GOD sense of the infinite and eternal goodness threw me on my path of compassion by the means of self-abnegation.

The compassionate disciplinary Jewish approach that I learned (and later assumed as an educator) raised the bar on my becoming a responsible compassionate person. With the vow of *Tikkun Olam* came a sense of focused righteousness. This viewpoint was captured perfectly by Rabbi Uziel Weingarten (2003) in one of his weekly study writings on *Communicating with Compassion, Metsora: Sanction with Compassion*:

...we show as much compassion as possible, making sure that we are only protecting ourselves and not retaliating... And what keeps us spiritually centered and in a compassionate place is taking care not to cause one ounce of unnecessary suffering.

To be of service to the world without healing me first, creates my workaholic monster. I had not been told that causing unnecessary suffering also applied to myself. When I felt the fire of compassion I surrendered to my forward thrust with little care for

my own needs, and this is even taking place in the writing of this dissertation in the name of *Tikkun Olam*.

Healing the Jewish Pain and Suffering

Fortunately, in some Jewish circles, there is the new awareness of that self-compassion is the ground of compassion to others. This understanding reminds me that GOD has lovingkindness and has mercy for all of us and therefore, in his image we should have lovingkindness and mercy for ourselves. Repairing my workaholic beast through being self-compassionate is then a requisite for the healing of the world.

Tikkun Hanefesh Tikkun Olam : Heal your soul then heal the world!
Burt Bialik *High Holiday Contemplative Workshop* 2008

Judaism was my first real potential salvation from pain. Although I relinquished it many times, I also brought it back in different forms throughout the years. As I became more familiarized with self-compassion, I found points of agreement and points of disagreement with Jewish attitudes towards, and treatment of, expressed pain energy.

... The Torah's idea of sin is of thoughts, words, and actions which distance people from God to a lesser or greater degree (I-7)
Levy *A Mahzor for Rosh Hashanah* 1994

I wanted to treat with compassion my personas that were causing difficulty, but Judaism encouraged me to treat those parts of myself as sinners; I wanted to handle my personas connected to my pain with appreciation, but like Scientology, Judaism handled them with depreciation; I wanted to integrate them, unlike Judaism and Scientology; I wanted to eliminate these sinners and the cause of sin. Of course, I wanted to learn from my mistakes, but I found that difficult to do when I was labeling my actions as being sinful and being encouraged to purify myself by throwing away my sins in the ocean. How could I then learn from my mistakes if I distanced myself from my *sins*?

There are many techniques, processes and tools created to work with personas or areas of difficulty. However, most view these parts as negative. They include rituals intended to purify you of these parts. They all suggest ridding oneself of those parts because they are impure. They need to be washed away in the ocean... Taschic (section 3-111) tells us to “cast your transgressions into the water...create within yourself a new heart and a new spirit.” I commit to transformation not purification! (Heuristic journal: October. 29, 2005)

I developed a more self-compassionate view of the common term *sin*. Personas may look like *sinner*s, but to me they actually are good- intentioned parts of ourselves that lack consciousness. They are trying to help us, but unconsciously, inadvertently, cause us pain. We need to connect with them compassionately to create wholeness which transforms the pain energy – healing! Self-compassion is a connecting of highest spiritual energies with all of our personas and their pain which remain separated out.

I experience a major Jewish psyche persona that is burdened with pain energy and is in dire need of transformation. This subconscious level of Jewish pain can really use a healing. The Jewish race, our DNA, seems to strongly possess the *victim persona* which includes suffering from the negative energy of anti-Semitism. The personas of being persecuted and being the scapegoat (and which are attached to the polar opposite persona of the powerful, brilliant, and oftentimes arrogant, *Chosen People*) need healing.

The...Jewish soul must be raised into the heart. It is locked into this emotional fixation due to trauma. The prolonged and continuing chain of trauma...which has been created over the millennia between the Jews and the non-Jews is a result of an extremely solid and powerful archetype meeting softer and less solid archetypes, which have rejected the powerful impact. The trauma keeps the archetypal pattern hard and separative... there is some development towards softening, healing and resolution.

Gabay A Bridge of Compassion 2004

And that is where Judaism came through with flying colors! Our personas wait to be touched and receive compassion but it is very difficult for the pained self to be self-

compassionate. That is why the spiritual connection is first needed before moving to processing. My practice of compassion includes two concepts that are very similar to those in Judaism which help with the spiritual preparation of healing pain: *T'shuvah* and *Hisbodidus*, which respectively are spiritual connection, and taking the time, making the space, and engaging in, spiritual processing.

T'shuvah... means “return” [and] is a process of re-alignment with the Divine Presence within us and around us... Returning to God includes returning to one’s higher self – the One. Come into a state of t'shuvah in joy and expansiveness of spirit!

Rabbi Prager *The Spiritual Practice of Return*

Return again... return to the land of your soul. Return to who you are, return to what you are, return to where you are born and reborn again.

Carlesbach and Kahn, Cited by Burt Bialik 2008

Once *T'shuvah* is accomplished, the Jewish disciplined meditation practice, called *hisbodidus* can then be engaged in. This has many aspects that are aligned and helpful to the self-compassion practice and many that are not. *Hisbodidus* points to a conversation with an external spiritual force, but if I feel myself as an ultimate part of this force, my practice of self-compassion can still be utilized. It is similar as it also includes self-awareness, inquiry and freedom from our pain energy. However, its intention is to improve yourself which is different from my intention of being self-compassion, transforming pain energy and becoming my whole-self presence. Both are for self-liberation; both can be used as a spiritual preparation for educators.

In *hisbodidus*...the main discipline needed is nothing more than making a commitment of time and keeping to it... We as individuals ‘make ourselves alone’ – we seclude ourselves somewhere private for an intimate conversation with God in which we can open ourselves to God completely...As you look at yourself and become aware of the way you are, you should begin to get a clearer view of the obstacles holding you back... You should examine how your different character traits structure the way you live... You may feel satisfied with some of your traits, but

others could well be obstacles holding you back. These are the “screens and barriers” separating you from God. *Tsohar* points to the idea of truth and honesty as the guiding principle in our spiritual healing and growth... The promise of *Tsohar* is that truth brings liberation (p. I, 4 -9)

Rabbi Stan Levy, *A Mahzor for Rosh Hashanah* 1994

Testing, Giving up... *Losing* my God Connection

Over the years I frequently tested the existence of GOD and His ability to help me. On *Shabbos* I connected with the powers of GOD deeply, and then during the week I experimented with this when I was in trouble in life or had difficulty making a decision. For instance when I was afraid I would be in trouble for losing my house key after searching for it every place it could conceivably be, I asked God for his assistance and I found it within seconds. By the time I was 10 years old I queried the validity and power of GOD and “upped the ante” by giving Him greater challenges. For example, on the way to school I decided to cross a street when the light was red and a car was coming to see if He would save me from getting killed. The car stopped and let me cross the street; I felt GOD smiling at me as he showed me his existence by demonstrating his power!

When I was 15 years old I went to a *sweet sixteen* party at a Chinese restaurant. I was *kosher* and never ate any pig products, but there in front of me was a plate of spare ribs that smelled wonderful to me. I thought for sure that something bad would happen to me if I ate them. I talked to GOD about what he would do. I sensed I had a choice; I ate it and nothing happened. That was scary!

During those late teen years I began to study the *Torah* on my own. I was horrified at the way my GOD was represented. The book of Job especially shocked me. How could my benevolent GOD devastate his devotee’s life in such cruel ways just to test his loyalty and faith? How could He be so self-centered? As I was moving into my

young adult years my earlier intimate compassionate images of GOD began to fade and our relationship deteriorated - my heart broke with GOD!

I unfortunately allowed what I read in Jewish literature and belief systems to alienate me from my Jewish GOD source that I was born into a Jewish family to connect with. I had not been able to differentiate between the spiritual and religious aspects of Judaism. My pain of confusion and despair had isolated me from my spiritual connection.

The security that my GOD connection had brought to me had been accompanied by an unconditional faith in me. This was not unconditional love or unconditional approval. I experienced an initial faith in me that expressed itself by allowing me to make mistakes and then learn from them without holding on to the guilt. Before others interpreted His laws to me, GOD's presence was empowering. Later, His presence felt suppressive. It seemed at the time that GOD betrayed me. And now I wonder... was it me who betrayed GOD by abandoning Him? He kept his faith in me, but I withdrew my faith in Him.

My God of my youth! Come back to me in all of your glory. Show me your egoless omniscience. Return my powers of courage and success.

My Heuristic Journal: May 26, 2005

Buddhism and Compassion

Buddhism has been the key literature that I have reviewed for many reasons. It is the religion where compassion is their keynote; Buddha himself was dealing with overcoming suffering and discovered compassion as a helpful means to that end. This is beautifully depicted throughout Hermann Hesse's (1956) *Journey to the East* (the first book I ever read on Buddhism). On a personal level,

White Tara is a Tibetan Buddhist deity to whom I am primarily dedicating this work. One of the purposes of this study is to create this be a gift to Tara.

I consider Buddhism to be highly important for this study as it embodies the concepts of: liberation, spiritual connection, vows, pain and suffering, bad habits, energy, practice, the body-mind, stopping and just being, awareness, being present, mindfulness, being of service, taking refuge, transformation, and of course, compassion and self-compassion. All of these Buddhist aspects are crucial for understanding and practicing compassion, as well as for the holistic preparation of educators.

Tibetan Holy White Tara – Mother of Compassion

The Disaster of Baby Tara

My baby Tara brought me to Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism, via White Tara – the Mother of Compassion. The tale about this baby is quite intense and complicated; it is both dreadful and transformational. I have written many self-compassion narratives and Tara notes, some of which are located in the *Appendix* as *Pain Narrative Tara*.

This story is of a pregnancy, death of a new-born, a broken family, and also an amazing spiritual connection that escorted me to the next step of my life's journey: compassion!

The simplest version begins with Tara coming to me when my son Ryan was 4 years old, whispering her request that I allow her to incarnate through me and be her mother; I agreed and within moments I was pregnant. I experienced a huge variety of experiences during this pregnancy from being tossed around by a God and Devil war inside of me (I hadn't *believed in* God for over 10 years), to an unwarranted Down

Syndrome scare, to a loss of my favorable mid-wife's Ob/GYN in my 8th month, to having little choice but to accept a doctor antagonistic to my birth plan, to thoroughly enjoying taking near perfect care of my body and soul, to a schism with my husband around his birth coaching and the midwife's hospital choice, to gaining amazing healing abilities with the assistance of powerful spiritual presences, to a feeling that I may now be operating as an enlightened being (though always wondering if it wasn't really that *the baby was enlightened* and that she was doing her incredible healing work through me).

Experiencing her as a being who was more advanced than myself, I asked her, "What could you need that I would be able to provide"? She let me know that she needed me only to provide her care and space to continue her work. Our now mutual mission was marked by remarkable light and love coursing through us so that I could help her fulfill her life's purpose.

In September 1985, on Friday the 13th I was open and ready and nervous. The nursery was prepared and my family and friends were lined up to support me. I was still burdened by a compromised birth plan and a resentful doctor when my water broke and my labor began. My husband was superstitious and my soul-sister Leni felt her new god-daughter's time of birth was different from what I was sensing. In an altered and confused state I went with my husband to get a midwife exam and then go to the hospital. Leni and Ryan were to follow to help bring our baby into this world.

Laboring at the midwife center and the hospital became a horror story: a friend of mine sped up the labor with unasked for acupressure; my doctor was having an affair and did not check in though he knew I was in labor; my midwife was doing her business paperwork and ignored my assertion that there was no time between contractions. I was

in unbearable pain so we went to the hospital where I was treated like a hyper-emotional woman in labor; my communications about my pain were disregarded by my midwife, the nurses and the staff at the hospital. The truth that was eventually revealed was that my uterus exploded, then my bladder ruptured, and both I and my baby were dying without my doctor, or any other doctor in the hospital, available or willing to save us.

With everyone frantic around me, I knew I *would* die if I took on their energy. I closed my eyes and began practicing my relaxation techniques. Within moments I felt two presences behind my shoulders lifting me up to a compassionate and powerful male presence before me. Forgetting the current drama and trauma, I blissfully acquiesced to leaving until I was rudely *awakened* by my husband screaming at me, “Don’t go!” I returned and said I was not going to go anywhere and then went unconscious.

Eventually my doctor showed up, gave me a C-section, and although she was *dead* upon delivery, he managed to resuscitate Tara and send her to another hospital that had machines to *keep her alive*. A picture of her was brought to me in Intensive Care and, although I knew there a mere 5% chance of recovery I named her - *Tara* - a name I had never heard of before but similar to ones I had been considering. As for me, my doctors said I *should have died*, but somehow, miraculously, my arteries *clamped themselves closed*. I lost six pints of blood, yet I felt strong as I still felt the baby’s presence with me.

Tara had become 100% brain dead, so we were instructed to let her go. Three days later, after I insisted on seeing Tara, and after my internal bleeding stopped, an ambulance took a psychiatric nurse, Daddy, Pat, and I to the neo-natal unit where Tara had been living, to take my baby off the machines. Though told by my nurse that I could see her for only a few minutes, I calmly and joyfully held my baby for three precious

hours. Surprisingly, I felt two personas present: baby Tara's physical presence that was frightened of death and the spiritual presence that first contacted me who remained light and loving. We asked for inspiration from the *Course in Miracles* and received #153: "in my defenselessness my safety lies." I communed with and prayed for both of her personas, then after a few minutes in her father's arms the machine's attachments were removed and our baby Tara died instantly.

The Blessing of White Tara

Savoring every possible contact with her, a week later I watched her body burn and the particles of her physical essence go up in smoke and become a part of the physical elements, the material world of this planet, during the cremation of her body. The resultant grieving process was difficult for all of us, but one surprising event occurred that brought our family together. With Ryan's help, I realized Tara's spirit was still with us, and through a magical twist of fate, this led us to Buddhism and White Tara.

When I returned home from the hospital I serendipitously found a written invitation to receive a White Tara initiation from a Rimpoche, a Tibetan monk of high rank. When I viewed the visual representation and written description of *White Tara: Mother of Compassion*, I went into shock. Leni conferred that White Tara's qualities were the same ones we felt in baby Tara when she was still alive inside of me.

I had no idea how this Buddhist pamphlet got sent to me as I had no prior connection to Buddhism and had never heard of the name Tara before the moment that I named my baby. Hoping he could bring us some clarity and comfort, and to balance the effects of the horror movies we were compelled to watch, Pat and I visited with the

Tibetan Rinpoche. Her image we saw on a Thanka outside of his room made us gasp; that image of White Tara looked and *felt* remarkably like our baby Tara. Rinpoche told us this event had been the baby's karma and is not ours; what it is telling us is that we need "to not worry and to serve others!" Pat, Ryan and I soon received the White Tara initiation which transmitted her compassionate qualities and gave us the 45 page long practice of the White Tara Meditation.

The Compassionate Benefits of Holy White Tara

Over the years to follow, I realized Tara had brought God spirituality back into my life as well as birthing within me a new religion in the form of a *Buddhist female goddess* spirituality. As the Tibetan tradition espouses through this meditation, I became White Tara. This added a holy dimension to my bodywork practices and enlightened me as to the possibilities of sharing this with children as an educator. I learned how to bring forth the highest form of spiritual kindness through her compassionate love.

The luminous expression of the love and presence of beauteous Goddess
Bestows itself amidst the cracks of normalcy and infinity

I welcome the new spaciousness and comfort as the Earth welcomes the Sun
The spine of consciousness brings her to re-flower with offerings of her nectar
I sip respectfully and we momentarily share eternity

(Journal: December 30, 1989)

As well as White Tara being my dominant persona as an educator, the White Tara meditation also influenced my creation of the practices of compassion and self-compassion in many ways including: having a practice, making a vow, taking refuge in a spiritual connection, educator preparation, dedicating to being compassionate, and offering me the first inklings of self-compassion.

The initial White Tara meditation influence was that of making and using a vow. In order for my self-compassion practice to work, the vow was imperative as it generated force. Since her energy emanates from the heart, then this vow could directly generate heart energy. This made the vow a self-compassionate activity in itself, of which Tara was the symbol. Additionally, the Bodhisattva vow, *to liberate all beings*, was analogous to my vow to be *free to sense how to serve compassionately*. Of course, my intention is also to liberate the educational system through compassion, perhaps by teaching transformational self-compassionate education.

She is the embodiment of that faithful devotion which is borne of love, and strengthened by the Bodhisattva vow to liberate all beings. Such a vow generates the force necessary for that devotion through faith and complete self-surrender.

Tibetan Rinpoche *Daily Meditation of Holy White Tara* 1985

Instead of *faithful devotion* being attached to a religion or deity, my faith was in myself through this practice. It was an opening to the mystery of the moment through self-compassion moving into *pan-compassion* (like Hubbard's *self-determinism* needed before *pan-determinism*). Pan-compassion, compassionate to everything in the oneness, is what was needed to be free to sense how to serve myself and serve everything in my educational setting compassionately. As for *self-surrender*, I did have to surrender, but to my whole self which is borne of the love of my whole self, as well as all beings.

Another great influence was that it gave me something in which I could *take refuge*. I learned to take refuge in White Tara which later became taking refuge in myself through my practice. Educator preparation required a vow and the development of an inner place of refuge; my vow *brought* me there. I felt it as similar to Hubbard's *intention without reservation*, but it added a sacred dimension. Jewish prayer had the sacred, but it

included a never-ending servitude to the Almighty. That is why I used the Buddhist version. My various my self-compassion vows, such as my August 2007 vow (*Until such time that I am integrated into life, including being free to sense how to serve the fullness of this moment and serve it pan-compassionately, I will use my practice as a refuge*), always reflected the essence and intention of the White Tara Meditation which stated:

Until such time as I become one with the Buddha aspect – clarity and emptiness together in non-duality – this refuge is my source of protection and shelter in this world, and I surrender myself to it, till such time I become a refuge in myself. (Ibid)

My goal was to be fully integrated personally so that I could be *free to sense how to serve* as an educator and it necessitated a spiritual connection to accomplish that goal. Creating spiritual connections to help me attain my life's purpose was assisted by the White Tara meditation section called the *Refuge Thought*:

In Buddha, the Dharma [ultimate reality, law, the teaching], and the most excellent community [deities, gods, gurus, angels, prophets], I take refuge until enlightenment is reached. (Ibid)

White Tara was a key element whenever I made a spiritual connection. During the evolution of the various *spiritual connections* I have taken on as a part of my compassion practices, she has always played a central role. At times she was the divine feminine who combined with the Jewish masculine GOD in the wedding within; other times she represented my conscious self, which was a part of the masculine / feminine spiritual triad; she also held the place of *being self compassion* once my spiritual *wedding within* made me reborn again; and most recently, in my *sacred sangha*, I could feel her in my 4th chakra, as *my compassionate heart connection*. Creating a spiritual connection and taking refuge in it united me with my inherent spiritual self. As I honored and communicated

with her, I experienced our relationship which led me to become her on the road to becoming my whole self and being a refuge onto myself.

With regards to being of service, in my case to children, educational settings and humanity, this Tibetan Buddhist path taught me that serving others included being of service to yourself. I too was a part of the concept of *all sentient beings*. This sparked my first notion of *self-compassion*. As an educator this means I have to prepare myself by committing to engaging in activities that serve that cause *and* serve me. Serving from what Buddhists call the attainment of *enlightenment* includes serving myself since I am an aspect of those I am in service to: the children of the world. This type of service could not include self-centeredness or self-sacrifice, as they detached me from the oneness, which was ultimately of service to.

The Enlightenment Thought:
Through deeds of giving and other good deeds,
May I attain enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings...

I will enter into whatever activities are necessary to bring self and others to that state. (Ibid)

An activity I entered into to reach a state of *being my presence* and *tasting the oneness* so that I could be *free to sense how to serve* was the writing of this dissertation. The theme of my thesis and of this narrative was inspired by the concept of compassion that I received through the Mother of Compassion and her powerful meditation. My tender, intuitive, heart connection with Tara, as a spiritual goddess, my guide, and my dear daughter, taught me about compassion and led me to make more compassionate decisions and create more compassionate relationships. At times I believed I was doing this dissertation in her name, to give me the extra spiritual power I needed to do this fully.

Allowing Tara to enter myself and realizing Tara's continual presence, my presence, I become present in every moment that I allow myself to be aware of it. Perhaps we still have a mutual mission and this is a part of our co-creation. I am exploring, researching, sharing and perhaps actualizing the gift that Tara's incarnation has given to me.

For and From the Blood and Soul of Tara
A Dialogue with White Tara on the 5th anniversary of her Life/ Death

These pains they are deep and demand no rejection.
This body bears storage and begs for relief.
It cries out for use - asks for touch - needs expression
Of long aching traumas and heart-wrenching grief

"Please listen, my friend, my lover, my blood-line!
Oh, hear with compassion, forgiveness and faith.
YOU are the healer, redeemer, the God sent.
Do not turn away from my offer of Grace.

"Arise gentle power - blend courage with mercy.
Defy not your ignorant, innocent Path.
But nurture with tenderness - open to wisdom.
Embrace Holy Union, triumphant at last!"

[My Journal: September 15, 1990]

Later Buddhist Connections:

Stephen Levine: Mindful Healing with Lovingkindness

After Tara died I was encouraged to attend a three day workshop called *Conscious Living - Conscious Dying* by Stephen and Andrea Levine. It was there that I received my first introduction to a non-Tibetan Buddhist style meditation. Stephen's meditations were both heartfelt and deep, aligning both with the White Tara meditation and the bodywork principles that had been dear to me. But I found the most significant aspect of his work to be his self-compassionate approach. It touched my heart to be

taught to treat myself *as your only child*, learning that I could nurture myself the way I learned how to nurture my son Ryan.

I desperately needed this at the time since I was told by my doctor, and then my husband, (and had begun to believe it myself) that I was responsible for the death of my baby. I feared that I might have been to blame as a result of a motherly conversation I had with her on the beach two days prior to my labor. My intention was to be responsible in a positive way – compassionately looking at the big picture: I gave her the option of coming in or not because of the dissonance with my husband and being unsure as to how stable the family was going to be! Potentially having caused such extreme damage to my child triggered unbearable pain, requiring my needing huge amounts of self-compassion.

Levine was personally compassionate to my pain, and I was thankful of the way he tried to assuage me from my guilt. I was also fascinated by his meditations. They included the two aspects of Buddhist practice that I came to love and which became an intricate part of both my compassionate practices as well as my compassionate educator persona: mindfulness of my body-mind and lovingkindness (*metta*). His body-mind meditation included both concepts, teaching me how to deeply relax and be my own nurturer by methodically bringing awareness and compassion to each area of my body. It additionally incorporated the possibility of transformation. The practice of *metta* was gratifying as it, like the White Tara meditation had the essence of *being self-compassion*.

Stephen directed me to explore my body compassionately, which included being present. Unlike Chia whose guidance was very strict leaving little opportunity to listen to what my body was *telling me*, Levine let me hear my own body's expression. However,

though he moved me through my body at a steady slow pace, I found I needed more time to linger in the specific body parts whose pain energy needed transformation.

Slowly at your own pace receiving the sensations of the body...allow this healing awareness to gradually move down the spine perhaps even receiving one vertebra after another in lovingkindness moving from the top to the base of the spine – the wonder of spine supporting so perfectly the flat muscles of the upper back extending down to the long lateral muscles of the lower back.

Levine *Healing the Body-Mind* 1985/1999

My understanding of *pain energy* (and the personas of my body that have pain energy) has been influenced by how Levine uses the term *sensation*. He encourages *just letting the pain be transformed with lovingkindness*, which are all important aspects of being self-compassion. His compassion was not just for the spiritual being, but also for the body-mind, which I had not at the time heard from any other teacher. His poetic phrasing touched my creative spirit. Forming a healing, compassionate relationship with the conscious self and the body-mind helped to inspire the *just being with, awareness of, appreciation and connection births wholeness* aspects of my compassion practices.

It is an opening into the body, a clearing from the body of long held pains and hardness and even a filling of our dead spots with a new aliveness, a direct contact with our life force experienced as sensation in the body... to touch the pain, as well as those parts numbed by pain, with a new mercy, with a deeper healing... no force, no rush here, just a gentle allowing of sensations to present themselves as they will... Sensation arising, moment to moment, where awareness is focused...sweeping through the body with awareness tuned to the level of sensation, so that sensation can become a conduit for the energies of the heart and so that we can begin, at last, to take birth, wholly, fully, once and for all...

Feel this whole body becoming one...each part feeding the other, osmosis of lovingkindness where that which is needed is provided by itself...the whole body...luminous, like a star in a dark sky. (Ibid)

His meditations written in *Healing into Life and Death* inspired being of service to my family and friends by helping heal those who were ill or dying. I also sent them a

holiday CD containing my spoken words of a few of his meditations, with Mike Garson's beautiful *Reflections* as background music. I modified these meditations with my students when I introduced spirituality and my new term for their powerful soul, *the magical self*.

This miracle of body touched by the magic of a loving awareness, of a clear mind, of an opening heart... (Ibid)

Having used Levine's meditations fairly religiously for a couple of years, I now realize how strong an influence it has been on the creation of this dissertation. Though I enjoyed doing his practices as they brought about much needed relief and even some healings, what I most valued was his creation of what I now see as self-compassionate processes. These seemed to emerge from his Buddhist understanding of the wholeness which can be achieved through awareness and lovingkindness. I also appreciated that his service goals aligned with mine as I saw in his meditations which moved from self-compassion to compassion for all of humanity.

In this body that wishes life and healing to all others who feel these same pains in this same moment. May we all be free of suffering!
 May we all take from our pain a new healing that brings us beyond pain, beyond suffering, to the heart of our true nature, to the birthright of our healing and wholeness!
 May all beings be free of suffering! May all beings be at peace. (Ibid)

Vipassana Meditation

Vipassana Meditation [is] a form of insight meditation in Buddhism, referring to the ability and practice of seeing things as they really are...

<http://www.ghf-web.com/glossary>

Vipassana: In Theravada Buddhism, a method of insight meditation. It aims at developing understanding of the nature of reality by focusing a sharply concentrated mind on physical and mental processes. The meditator comes to understand, through personal experience, the truths of *dukkha* (suffering) [and] *anicca* (impermanence)...

<http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Insight+meditation>

My Naropa Institute one week conference in Colorado on *Infinite Reality* (that a massage client of mine had magnanimously brought me to) included round table discussions with spiritual leaders of Christian and Buddhist religions and many of their classes to choose from. In addition to meeting Brother David there, I also met Sylvia Boorstein at her class entitled *Vipassana Meditation*. It intrigued me and I was especially fascinated by the fact that she was able to retain her Judaism and still practice Buddhism.

What followed was years of dabbling into Vipassana, by going to retreats and listening to many Vipassana audio cassettes. My main teachers besides Stephen and Sylvia were Jack Kornfield and Joseph Goldstein (all four were Jewish Buddhists). Vipassana included two practices that were difficult for me to achieve: focusing on the breath and sitting for long periods of time alone without moving. The Vipassana walking meditation was what I gravitated towards most. It was a more holistic approach for me. It included an earth connection and an active participation with my body. These both helped me to make a spiritual connection, breathing in and out, up and down and throughout my energetic body in motion. I took mindful steps, like Lou taught me in her *stepping over the log* exercise. I connected to my *ruach* in motion, Hebrew for the breath *and* spirit.

Mindfulness is that quality of attention which notices without choosing, without preference; it is choiceless awareness that, like the sun, shines on all things equally. (p. 19)

Goldstein & Kornfield *Seeking the Heart of Wisdom* 1987

Kornfield's teachings on the subject of *mindfulness* sparked my interest. It took me years to begin to comprehend this truth, but his various interactive exercises were helpful. I especially took pleasure in slowly taking apart an orange, experiencing each section with all of my senses. This was a good introduction that I later applied in class.

Though Kornfield and Goldstein wrote the book entitled *Seeking the Heart of Wisdom*, I did not experience Vipassana having a focus on compassion, and I did not find any of my Vipassana teachers to be compassionate to the difficulties I was experiencing as I attempted to be successful in this practice. Like Scientology, Buddhism has ritualized procedures that are not meant to be deviated from. Kornfield's book that he wrote years later, in 1993, *A Path with Heart*, does begin to address the problems of this practice as his sub-title states: *A guide through the perils and promises of spiritual life*.

My studies of Vipassana were valuable to me in life, in the classroom, and in the ways they furthered this study. It increased the development of some of the aspects of my compassion practices, like *stopping, just being* and *awareness*. Also, most of my meditation retreats included a *metta* practice which made my compassionate heart thrive.

My Thay

The next Buddhist teacher who I studied with and who still remains a dear teacher of mine (and the world) is Thich Nhat Hanh. This beautiful and loving Vietnamese Buddhist master, monk, and peace activist affectionately refers to himself as *Thay* (pronounced like a neck-tie). After many years of reading his works, watching his DVDs, attending numerous conferences, talks, and silent retreats, and even getting certified twice in his five mindfulness trainings (where I took a *five precept* vow), I still only comprehend sections of his views and practices of Buddhism. However, his teachings have deeply created positive affects on my personal and professional life. The main reasons why he still remains a teacher on my path is his unique understanding of self-compassion, presence, mindfulness (and the benefits from a mindfulness practice),

transformation, *interbeing* (interconnectedness) and *habit energy* – which are all signposts on my path of bringing more compassion to myself and to the field of education.

Thay and Self-Compassion

Thay's Buddhist teachings advanced the value and possibility of self-compassion in my life. Thay's self-compassionate views that I resonated with the most were the ones that reflected my purposes getting achieved and my goals met. They included: *heaven on earth* can be experienced now; I can stop my compulsive worrying and thinking; I can transform my pain; I can greatly benefit from *watering my positive seeds* and *refraining from watering my negative seeds*; I can take refuge. I began to realize that it was not only an act of self-compassion to deal with and heal my own pain, but it was also an act of self-compassion to cultivate my own joy and create my own true happiness which is at the heart of Daddy's teachings: *happiness is the most important thing in life*.

The Buddha wants to help us get the nourishment we need in order to be stronger... He encourages us to relax our bodies, to embrace our pleasant feelings, and to create joy and happiness for our nourishment. Cultivating joy means to strengthen our happiness and nourish ourselves. (p. 97)

We touch and recognize what is not wrong... In each of us there is the seed of loving kindness... [which] needs to be touched and recognized. (p. 94)

We need this positive energy to help us embrace our pain. (p. 109)

Hanh *The Path of Emancipation* 2000

While being White Tara I felt like I was *on the other side of the veil*, like a child in my GOD */fantasy* world. Thay invited me to live there as a reality - heaven on earth. To do so, Thay spoke the same words as the White Tara's Rimpoche implored: Don't worry! I never realized that these words were bringing me to my path of self-compassion. Not worrying could flow well with a heavenly compassionate educator presence!

Not to worry! ...it can only harm. Learning how to enjoy every moment in your daily life, in a non-thinking mood, it would be very helpful... You can [then] walk in such a way that the kingdom of God, the pure land of Buddha, becomes a reality... It is not a belief. I live it; I touch it in my daily life. This is very healing, nourishing.

Hanh *Taking Refuge in the Island of Ourselves* 2004

They spoke of the *Buddha within*, which is analogous to my sense of my conscious self being reborn (after a physical and spiritual connection with myself has been made) and then choosing to *be self-compassion*. As They can take refuge in the Buddha within, I can take refuge in myself when I am *being self-compassion*. Creating with, or connecting to a place where I can take refuge for my personal myself, and /or for myself as an educator, empowers me to care for my pain and helps me to suffer less.

When you come to the Buddha you show him your pain. You can talk to him and show him your heart... The Buddha is not a thing on your altar. The Buddha is in you.

The Buddha will say to you: "Dear Friend, you have suffered so much, you need a lot of compassion." And you agree with him. You [do] need a lot of compassion... And he will tell you how to generate compassion for yourself. He can help you to generate the energy of compassion from within.... You need to have enough energy to stay firm.

Hahn *The Vision of Wisdom and Compassion* 2004

A major insight I had while reviewing Thay's work was recognizing his emphasis on consciously watering positive seeds and consciously refraining from watering negative seeds. These are both invaluable for being a compassionate educator. Watering negative seeds moves them from what he calls *store consciousness* to *mind consciousness*. This is similar to how Hubbard saw *keying-in* (triggering), mental image pictures of pain and unconsciousness in the reactive mind. Being a compassionate educator includes stopping myself from *throwing my pain* on my students when my negative seeds are watered.

We need to have the time and energy to go home to ourselves and water the wonderful seeds of joy, peace, love, and forgiveness every day. This is

the practice of true diligence. Arrange things in your daily life so that you have time to water your positive seeds... diligence in the form of selective watering... negative seeds should be left alone and not watered. (p. 244 /5)

Hanh *The Path of Emancipation* 2000

For example, I need to refrain from watering my negative seeds of worry, low self-esteem and confusion when I am confronted by my grandson's bouts of crying. Getting frustrated when a student does not seem to be able to learn what I am teaching has also watered my negative educator seeds. Neither of these reactions was productive or self-compassionate and both are potentially harmful. If I had taken the time, as an educator, to prepare myself emotionally by watering my positive seeds before I entered the educational setting and becoming triggered, I could have been free to choose a more compassionate option, like using my positive seeds of care, understanding and oneness.

The energy that pushes us to do what we do not want to do, to say what we do not want to say, is called habit energy, the negative habit energy in us... This energy has been transmitted to us by many generations of ancestors, and we continue to cultivate it. It is very powerful... Our joy, our peace, our happiness depend very much on our practice of recognizing and transforming our habit energies. There are positive habit energies that we have to cultivate, there are negative habit energies that we have to recognize, embrace and transform.

Hanh, *Transforming Negative Habit Energies* 1998

A positive habit energy that I have been cultivating is *stopping* that energy from acting out once I have recognized that I am, or about to be, consumed by it. This positive habit of stopping has become a part of my practices of self-compassion and compassion. Stopping a negative habit the moment I have the feeling that it has (or wants to) become activated can prevent me from harming myself and others in my educational settings. I find it works best to first compassionately stop the habit energy, because it then gives me the space I need to prepare myself for its transformation.

Stopping Habit Energy

Stopping the worry
 Stopping prediction
 Stopping the cravings
 Stopping addiction

Stopping the pain
 Stopping affliction
 Stopping the friction
 Stopping the fiction!

Mindfulness: My Mind Full of What?

I'd like to define mindfulness as the practice of being there, body and mind united - the practice of being fully present, the practice of being fully alive. You have an appointment with life—you should not miss it!
 Hanh *Transforming Negative Habit Energies* 1998

Like Kornfield's *orange meditation*, every mindfulness exercise by Thay seemed to bring out the sacredness of things. Thay's *mindfulness bell* - bringing us back to this moment - was so wonderful that I couldn't resist getting my own bell and ringing it as a part of my daily classroom ritual. I enjoyed all of his mindfulness meditations, but what they meant and why they felt so good was an enigma. Though I was always captivated by its both grounding and euphoric results in me, mindfulness has often been a difficult concept for me to grasp. I thought thinking and going along with my mind was a *no-no!*

Mindfulness is the capacity of being aware of what is going on.
 Hanh *The Vision of Wisdom and Compassion* 2004

How can something named *mind-ful-ness* be *spiritual*? Wasn't my spiritual advancement going to come from *emptying* my mind? And what was my mind supposed to be full of anyway? My first experiential answer related to being present. Mindfulness meant being full of *the here and the now*. Surprisingly, that kind of presence felt similar

to being in a connection with God. It also reminded me of Hubbard's *being in present time*, not in the past or the future.

When my soul emerges, it is like a breaking through of all of my pain energy to see and feel the light. I am too innocent to exist alone...So I must stay as my soul gently and tenderly alert in slow mindfulness. Soul mindfulness replaces habitual action. The Soul does not have habit energy.
My Heuristic Journal: July 22, 2005

What kind of energy was mindfulness energy other than the positive energy I felt as a result of doing mindfulness meditations? How could I intentionally use this energy? Of what benefit could it be? Could it help me to be a better educator? The energy of mindfulness reminded me of the state achieved through TRO in Scn. It was an energy that allowed me to '*just be*,' so it is that same energy that is necessary for the process of self-compassion – which encompasses understanding and compassion.

While creating my compassion practice, I saw that mindfulness was another positive seed to cultivate which could benefit me and then benefit others. The more mindfulness energy I generated the calmer and more effective I became in handling difficult situations requiring focus. I began to realize mindfulness helped me to produce the *stopping* of my mind and allowed for *just being with* this moment and *aware of* everything present in the here and now which created the sense of *being my presence* – my compassionate educator presence. I loved connecting with myself as the mother of my child because I was learning within myself the type of nurturing that could help me to treat my students more compassionately.

The energy of mindfulness is the mother.
Mindfulness is a kind of energy that you can generate.
It is the heat and light you produce by making a fire.
That heat will make the cold... transform.
The energy of mindfulness is embracing the fear.
Your fear, your anger is you. Don't do violence to it.
The baby is you so do not try to fight the baby.

Embrace it tenderly...The energy of mindfulness is the energy of the Buddha...Mindfulness brings you concentration and insight and insight will liberate you from your pain and your sorrow and your despair.

Hanh *Winter retreat_Dharma talk* February 8, 2004

Thay's mindfulness meditations had an element of Taoism, as my experience was birthed by being in, and one with, my body rather than what I experienced in Judaism and Scientology whose healing goals are more ethereal. I found that before I could move into the state of *being self-compassion*, or even make a spiritual energetic, deity, or earth connection, I had to make a physical connection with my body. I call this *just being*; my body relaxes the tension within it. Sighs of release and relief seem to arise spontaneously creating an opening for spiritual connection because my spiritual energy has space to flow through my body. Not making this physical connection as an educator created a disconnection from myself in my classroom, which was a leading factor in my burnout.

Mindful of the depths of my body-mind while being self-compassion provided me with the opportunity for what I call *inquiry* into my body-mind, which is *looking deeply* per Thay and doing a metered *assessment* per LRH. This is an important mindfulness step of self-compassion because I needed to discover what parts of me were in need of compassion. I can receive those parts through inquiry/looking deeply.

Thay's beauty also rests in how he relates to what he discovers in his body. He applied his concept of *interbeing* in a session and this was unlike any other spiritual / psychological session which usually had distance in the counselor / client relationship. Understanding interconnectedness helped me to create more *interbeing* with my personas by *just being with*, and *aware of* them, once I discovered what ailed me.

We contemplate the body in the body... in order to practice mindfulness and looking deeply, we cannot remain as an observer, standing outside the object of our inquiry...when you are mindful of your body... your body

becomes the object of your mindfulness... Your mindfulness has become your body and your body has become your mindfulness. There is no more distinction between the subject and the object. (p. 47)

Since suffering, disharmony and instability exist in our body, we embrace our body with mindfulness. Through deep touching and mindful embracing, we help our body suffer less and calm itself. (p. 65)

Hanh *The path of emancipation* 2000

Thay's value of self-liberation aligned with my path of conscious evolution and my educator goal to be free to sense how to serve. Consciously evolving from the mode of suppressing my pain to the mode of compassionately being with it arose through mindfulness. Without generating the energy of mindfulness I was not able to give myself and others the attention they needed to and transform their pain. Mindfulness increased my attention and kept me from being distracted (which is especially helpful for an ADD-type person like me) so that I could begin to free myself from any barriers to my being a compassionate educator in any educational setting.

We have lost our freedom. We have lost our sovereignty. We are not free anymore. We allow ourselves to be pushed and pulled away from the here and the now. Now we have to resist, we have to recover our sovereignty, we have to reclaim our freedom... Mindfulness helps us to be free from the past, from the future... Mindfulness brings concentration and insight. Insight will liberate you from your pain and your sorrow and your fear.

Hanh *Transforming Negative Habit Energies* 1998

My favorite mindfulness practice was Thay's version of the Buddhist *walking meditation*. His style included freedom of movement and verse. Additionally he included an earth connection which is what I treasured most in Taoist practices. Walking meditation has been good for me because making that sweet connection with the earth and the heavens initiated my finding and feeling my presence, like with Huang's (1989) *Tai Ji Dance of the Five Elements* which I had loved practicing years before. And for me, just moving my body in nature is healing. When I coupled that with taking lovely slow,

mindful, steps and increasing my presence, walking became a spiritual, healing practice.

When we touch the Earth with healing and compassion, we help her heal.
At the same time, we receive the Earth's healing power. (Ibid)

Walk in such a way that we live in the kingdom of God! No thinking, no talking! Bring yourself back to the here and the now – do that with a mindful step... During the time you make a mindful step, you are fully present in the here and the now because your mind has come back to your body... You just need to be concentrate with each step. Walk like a free person – like a Buddha... “I vow to see the pure land in each of my steps.”
Hanh *Taking refuge in the island of ourselves* 2004

There were a few problems that I previously had with walking meditations. They were: doing it with others in a group, keeping up with the group’s pace, and using specific *gathas* (mantra phrases). Thay offered, but did not require, we use his *gathas* and suggested we could make up our own that worked best for us. I now do walking meditation solo while either doing my own self-compassion practice, or using a walking meditation *gatha* I created, which includes all of the elements:

Touching the earth I know the heavens
Touching the earth I feel the air moving
Touching the earth I hear the birds sing [or dogs bark, etc.]
Touching the earth I see the plant world [see the ocean, lake]

Thay is quite prolific in his writings and talks on transformation. I am happy to discover that I had been able to apply much of what I had learned from him. Comparing his teachings with the creation of my practices on self-compassion demonstrated this.

I start by mindfully vowing personal transformation, then making a physical (stopping and just being), then spiritual, then compassionate, then emotional connection which then brings me sufficient wholeness to be able to be present and then I connect to the oneness. I am then free to serve myself and others compassionately. What follows is an inquiry into my body-mind to check if there is a part of myself that is in some sort of

pain. If so, I spend time just being with it, becoming aware of its needs and intentions, giving it empathy, showering it with appreciation and together opening for a revelation of how its uniqueness can be expressed in a way that cares for itself and my whole self.

Healing, transformation happens.

Hubbard summarized the essence of how he saw healing work. First, he brought his client into a positive state validated by an *e-meter floating needle* reading. Then his process aimed at creating conditions for *as-ness* to occur by making a perfect duplicate of the pain, experiencing the situation *as* it really *is*, which *as-ises* the pain and creates the transformation. This, too, aligns with Thay's transformation practice.

The main difference is that LRH tries to get rid of pain and personas, whereas Thay and I embrace our personas who are in pain. Appreciating the overlap between the two of us, I have scoured Thay's works so that I could create an expression of the flow of my own practice by using some of the words of Thay:

The basic thing is you have the vision – a vow of action that can help.
Hanh *The Vision of Wisdom and Compassion* 2004

The first element of the practice is to stop struggling. Just allow yourself to be. (p. 3)

Open ourselves and be here so we can be penetrated by the energy of the bodhisattvas for our own healing and transformation. (p. 1)

We say "hello" to the feeling and recognize its presence. (p. 77)

Embrace each part of your body with mindfulness, like a mother holding her baby in her tender arms. And smile to it. This is very healing. (p. 37)

...recognize, touch, and embrace the feelings you are experiencing. You look into them before transforming them. This is especially important when you are dealing with painful experiences. You have to learn to take care of them in the face of the strong emotion emerging from the depth of your consciousness. (p. 78)

Hanh *The Path of Emancipation* 2000

Allow the fire to continue.

It needs to be embraced long enough to transform.

Hanh *Taking Refuge in the Island of Ourselves* 2004

Experience the pure land even with difficulties and afflictions.
 All gardens have garbage.
 A good gardener knows how to make compost out of the garbage.
 We need to know how to take care of the flowers, nourish them, and then
 transform the flower garbage into flowers again.

Hanh *Winter retreat_Dharma talk* February 8, 2004

The third mindfulness practice of Thay that I have utilized, and successfully made my own, is his *Day of Mindfulness*. It is similar to Shabbat, but he includes doing daily chores. I appreciate its benefits as an educator as it gives me a rest from my normal work mode and offers me a chance to spiritually connect, nourish myself, interact mindfully with everything in each moment and transform any pain in need of healing.

I suggest...that each person should try hard to reserve a day out of the week to devote entirely to their practice of mindfulness... a day during which you are completely the master...such a day is crucial...without it we will lose ourselves quickly in a life full of worry and action... Spend at least a half hour taking a bath... Live the actual moment... Maintain a half smile... Drink your tea slowly and reverently... (pp. 27-31)

Hanh *The Miracle of Mindfulness* 1975

Thay and Education

Joy and happiness are possible, and if we are able to learn a little bit about the practice of mindfulness, we will be able to make life much more pleasant in our family, and also in school and society.

Hanh *Transforming Negative Habit Energies* 1998

I began to use Thay's philosophy and practices, both for my personal educator preparation and for my use as a compassionate educator in the classroom; they helped me to become a more compassionate educator in numerous ways. For instance, many of the practices that I applied to myself I then modified for children and added them to my curriculum, like his mindful eating and walking practices. Interestingly, as White Tara is said to be *born of a tear* of his spiritual deity of compassion, Avalokiteshvara, it allowed

me to easily include being Tara, the *Mother of Compassion*, as a part of the compassionate educator persona I was creating. Also, the more I practiced staying located in my body, being mindfully present, the more I was able to truly listen to, understand, and help to provide for the needs of my children.

Just sit there allowing our body to relax, our mind to be fully present, and the energy of mindfulness compassion will penetrate into our body. Just sit and allow ourselves to be aware of our breath... and to be penetrated by the energy of healing and compassion.

Avalokiteshvara is the person who has the capacity to listen very deeply and to be compassionate and understanding. He is not someone outside of us. We all have the capacity of listening and being compassionate. And if we let the energy of mindfulness to touch it, Avalokiteshvara will be born within us at this very moment.

Hanh *Taking Refuge in the Island of Ourselves* 2004

At my first retreat I took Thay's *Five Mindfulness Trainings* vows, and was given the name *Source of Inspiration*. This was one of my many nudges to becoming a teacher of teachers. The purpose of my practices of compassion is to have a viable tool for educator preparation that can enable educators to be free to sense how to serve. In addition to the general mindfulness practices of compassion, I created one specifically for educator use which I entitled: Educator Preparatory Practice of Self - Compassion (see *All Practice Versions Appendix*). I hope that each of its mini-mindfulness practices will be a source of inspiration for many teachers.

Teacher Thay's Influences on Me as a Student

Thay has inspired me through his genuine lovingkindness, encouraging nature, practical understanding of Buddhist philosophy and his wonderful personal interpretations and stories. Unfortunately, I could not make his (and Buddha's) practices

work well enough for me either because they were incomplete or because I could not correctly apply them. I only knew I could not produce the intended self-compassionate transformational results that Thay knew to be available and that I desired. I was unsuccessful in making his traditional practices effective as a preparation for my classroom. When my habit energy arose I had no practice to help me be self-compassionate.

I understood the value of a mindfulness practice, but I did not seem to be disciplined enough to do his daily practices. I had to find a different way to generate mindful energy that would increase my discipline so I would not fall prey to my habit patterns. I wished that Thay had a written practice for how to transform pain and suffering, because I needed one for myself and for my educational settings. I wound up creating my own compassion practices and these did fulfill my needs.

While writing this narrative review of Thich Nhat Hahn, I decided to experience Thay's method of transforming pain energy as I was experiencing my own practice and process of self-compassion and I had a realization: Thay has created a unique healing style by combining the three Buddhist practices of lovingkindness, insight and mindfulness meditations, *Metta*, *Vipassana* and *Sati*. All of my other Buddhist teachers utilized these only as individual practices. I have found my own way of including all of these three same components for my practices.

This is quite amazing! When I studied with Thay I never truly sensed the fullness of what he was saying, though I enjoyed its effects. Now that I have created my own compassionate mindfulness practices (see *Appendix*) out of my own needs and experiences and out of what had worked for me in each moment (and has continued to

work for me for many years now), I understand how much of my heuristically created practice aligns with Thay's practice.

This is a lesson to me as a student and as an educator. The way that I become most skilled in a subject is by learning the theories, practicing them, dropping them and then creating something new from my experience that incorporates them. When I no longer have to view what is being taught to me as necessarily the only right way or *the* correct information, I can use this current study as a step toward the fulfillment of my gaining any needed knowledge on this subject so that I can be able to successfully use it in life – my view of true education.

If I can then study a subject while realizing that the way it is being taught might not reflect the fullness of this subject or demonstrate how I personally could best utilize the information, studying it becomes less stressful for me. Without the pressure that what is being taught to me is *The Truth* that I have to embody, I will become less anxious during those times that I am unable to fully comprehend what is being taught. This gives me the freedom to commit to understanding the subject in the best ways I know how and experimenting with its possible applications, getting to the meat of the subject without getting caught by in the gristle. Once I achieve the best understanding I can, I will keep this new information stored as knowledge to be potentially drawn upon.

My next step is to explore the views of others who have been known to be authorities on this subject. I want to absorb and experience as much of their truths as possible as well. These may lead me to views opposing those which I was being taught and also deserve my full investigation as a student.

My learning process then proceeds to personal heuristic inquiry. This includes looking deeply within myself to discover my own truth through a courageous and mindful investigation. By staying true to exactly what works for me and what does not, my understanding of the subject becomes real and alive. There is then the possibility of getting a breakthrough understanding. This would come from both a synthesis of my prior studies and a creative expression unique to who I am and how I can best perceive the subject in this moment.

Sensing that this is how I learn best, I can now use this new awareness to become a more compassionate educator. By learning how to get out of the way of those students whose best learning style is similar to my own, I can help them become more successful. It also inspires me to add heuristic inquiry to any curriculum I teach. Discovering how to actually incorporate this into an educational setting could be both compassionate to myself and to all of my students.

My Holistic Spiritual Integration

Each religion contains mystical elements in which the personal experience of direct knowledge is senior to mere belief, with similarities beyond coincidence. (p.2)

Mark Dobson *The Rosetta* 2004

The mystical experience is, by definition, simply the experience of communion with ultimate reality, also called God... (p. 35)

Brother David Steindl-Rast *A Listening Heart* 1988

An eclectic spiritual connection, through the holistic practices of the *New Age*, marked my next years of holistic studies as a student of higher education in what was called on my arrival to North County Coastal San Diego: *God's Country*. My studies were a potpourri of short interactive blasts of Americanized teachings of non-traditional

and heart-based mystical religious sects (which included compassionate inferences).

Sensing that I might have been born a Jew for a divine reason, and opening to Brother David's advice, I included returning to my roots to discover if Judaism might offer what I loved in Buddhism, as was firmly suggested in Kamenetz' (1994) *The Jew in the Lotus*:

“The voice of clarity and wisdom, the voice that speaks to my heart, I'm only rediscovering now in Judaism because I have a much clearer experience of listening to my heart through meditation.” (p. 256)

I reveled in the sacred polyamory of my New Age holistic spiritual sumptuous buffet: Jewish studies were that of the Jewish Renewal movement which included chanting, movement and drumming, attended by a surprisingly large amount of Bu-Jews; Islamic studies were the Sufi mystics' practice of *Sufi Dancing* and singing, led by an American high school teacher; Christian studies were experienced through weekly *Devotional Singing* which was mainly an expression of *The Course in Miracles*; Hindu studies came about from my involvement in American led yoga, chanting, *guru* led truth-seeking groups (*satsang*), as well as *Tantra* teachers' (which I often assisted) *warm and fuzzy* sensual workshops and events; additional Buddhist studies were received through sessions with their *renown healers*; Pagan studies included learning the theories and practicing the art of Witchcraft (even taking on the identity of a *Rabbi Witch*) and doing Native American rituals, led by the *White Man*; Occult studies included attending *channeled* sessions, and learning, receiving and performing astrology, numerology, tarot and psychic readings; eclectic western religious studies was through the Church of Religious Science / Science of Mind (and because of their oneness principle they seemed to have no problem including most of the above with their own spirit / mind meditation treatment twists); scientific studies also became a part of my spiritual studies as quantum

physics married science and spirituality. All of these spiritual / religious practices seemed to dissolve into an intimate New Age brew that I happily got drunk on.

I see the love of God in you, the light of Christ come shining through.
And I am blessed to be with you, oh holy child of God.

Sufi Leader, Mark Seachrist's *Course in Miracles* adaptation of:
I feel the Love of God Within Me Now

That Sufi dance song typified my spiritual direction of opening to the divine in everyone I interacted with. I *got high* by practicing being able to connect and flow from my heart, while honoring and highly respecting each person's essence - a good preparation for the becoming a compassionate educator. But the truth is that this practice was artificially contained as it did not create community for me. I rarely saw any of these people socially; I did not experience the oneness on a human level in my every day life.

Spiritual Integration and Education

During my spiritual tastings, like a child in a candy store, I always had an eye out for what piece of candy would be sweet enough to give to children in educational settings. During those years I amassed many holistic principles and tools that I was able to use as a compassionate educator attempting to create a compassionate classroom.

I daily sung New Age songs I had learned like Robert Frey's *Let the Love in*, Patricia Mikkelson's *Love Grows One by One* and used Karl Anthony's songs for performance themes, such as: *We the children of the world have come to share our love, and bring to you a world we hope for*. Joyfully, the children cultivated and expressed compassionate caring for and to themselves, to their friends and family, and to local people in need.

Once teachers have a framework for supporting the spiritual dimension of their students' growth, they are remarkably inventive in developing new ways for doing so. (p. xvii)

Kessler *The Soul of Education* 2000

With the parents' permission, I addressed the students' spiritual connection by introducing my original term, *magical self*, which replaced any mention of the words *soul*, *spirit* or *God*. This went hand in hand with the concept of each child being a *Carekid* (a person who is cultivating and being compassionate). The spiritual program included concepts that I modified for the classroom such as Thay's smiling bow and the mystical action of *seeing* the presence of the magical self in each other.

My Magical Bu Jew Spiritual Connections

It is always possible to bring a particular God or special type of Goddess "back to life" within our deeper selves... When invoked with respect and confidence...we become empowered with their strength. (p. 105)

Cabot *Love Magic* 1992

That time period seems like it was a spiritual transition from my radical, *peace and love*, trippy, hippy college days to one of *love and light* and oneness. I nurtured my spiritual connection by attending highlighted spiritual events, like *The Whole Being Weekend* which brought all my studies together twice a year with New Age workshops and creative, intimate social interactions. I even attended some *Raves* with my son and his girlfriend when he was in college. My life was a spiritual social party and I was a floating Goddess of Compassion. Under this spiritually evolved goddess veil of Leah (an assumed Bu-Jew identity I played with which used my Hebrew birth name and represented my embodiment of Tara) was a little girl learning to love the world.

The word *spiritual* refers to an awareness of our sacred connection with all of life. Our spirituality is our opening to one another as whole human beings, each different and precious, and our exploring how we can truly learn to love. (p. 7)

Fitzpatrick *Something more* 1991, cited in Wolf, 1996

As I flitted through these studies over many years, I was developing personal holistic spiritual integration. The three main threads that wove my spiritual quilt of many colors were: God had both masculine and feminine aspects; these merged together, like the Star of David forming a *Merkabah* which symbolizes the integration of the masculine and feminine towards our personal wholeness and that of all mankind; it was possible for me to cultivate the elusive concepts of holistic interdependence and interconnectedness.

The holistic view by which we understand life at this time is not a homogenized monism. In the organism there are many interactions going on among the mitochondria, the organelles, the nervous system and the metabolism in the flow of blood and the exchange of oxygen in the lungs, all of which are in a reciprocal relationship pledged to promote the life in harmony for the being...

Sh'ma Israel: Listen, people who can know the Oneness of God
Adonoi Echod: God / the All, is One!

Schacter-Shlomi *New Year's Message* September 11th, 2007

Throughout most of my heuristic inquiry the spiritual connection that I made included a divine marriage within which re-birthing my soul in my heart of compassion. I often used the terms *HaShem* for the masculine divine and *Shekinah* for the feminine divine, *HaShem* the popularized name for my GOD/Conscience and *Shekinah* for Tara.

The Shekinah (Divine) Presence, the feminine aspects of the Godhead, exists in all creative orderings of all dimensions... This is the "Age of the Holy Spirit" where the Bride and the Creator become one. (p. vi)

J.J. Hurtak *The Book of Knowledge: The Keys of Enoch* 1977

Native Americans, Sufis, Taoists, Hindus, Witches, Buddhists and Jewish mystics all recognized both genders of the divine. The Jewish mystical text of the Kabala taught me that compassion (*Chesed*) is a spiritual concept arising from the merging of the divine father (*Chochmah*) and divine mother (*Binah*). It is amazing for me to see how this

paralleled an aspect of my heuristic inquiry's spiritual connection: I, as Tara, was reborn in my heart after the internal marriage of my divine parents: *HaShem* and *Shekinah*.

Chochmah is the active father, initiating principle [and] includes the total idea universe of the cosmos. *Binah* is the accommodating mother - the intention to give birth, to nurture and eventually realize all of the cosmic potential contained in *Chochmah*. *Binah* gives birth to the temporal - the world of manifestation beginning with its highest temporal expression – *Chesed* [compassion]. <http://www.projectmind.org/treeoflife.html>

When Daddy noticed my spiritual return to Judaism, he proudly shared his paternal lineage. We were the Jewish high priests: a *Cohain* (also spelled *Kohen* and *Cohen*). Perhaps as a *Cohain's* daughter, I embodied priestly traits, responsibilities and honors usually bestowed on the sons.

The lips of the Cohen shall keep knowledge, And Torah you shall seek from his mouth, for he is a messenger of HaShem. (Malachi 2:7)

What is a Cohain? ...The Hebrew word Cohen means "to serve." The Cohen Personality: ...Fill[s] a role of spiritual leadership... [Attains] atonement and forgiveness for the people... Traditionally, they have been Torah teachers... Kohanim must feel love for the Jewish Nation and to communicate that love through their peacemaking, blessing and selfless service to the people... Kohanim are to bring joy to others and to the Creator. The roots of zeal, the active expression of deep feeling in defense of G-d's honor, is ingrained in the Kohanim from the time of Levi. <http://www.cohen-levi.org/01whatis.htm>

Kohen's daughter [the holy soul]: "The daughter of a *Kohen* is the supernal soul." ..."*Kohen*" alludes to... *chesed* (compassion), the manifestation of God's loving kindness. <http://www.kabbalaonline.org/Safedteachings>

As a result of my research findings on my Jewish roots I now wonder if my spiritual educator goal of compassionate service was genetically handed-down with the responsibility of my *Cohain* legacy. If so, this seems to necessitate my having a stable spiritual connection and presence. To reach and maintain this height this might require that I master generating mindfulness energy, cultivating self-compassion and that I transform whatever pain energy is standing in the way of my truly being of service.

I now can feel my *Cohain* bond with Daddy and better understand his *Cohain* life of great pleasure and deep pain. His selfless compassionate nature and his tender, sensitive heart got damaged so severely that it eventually killed him because he lacked what was needed to continue to carry out his functions: the possibility for self-compassionate healing and the kind of care and love he gave and needed for himself, especially because of his loss of faith in God and humanity - which was needed to continue to be a beacon of lovingkindness, a true *Cohain*.

As I read more about being the daughter of a *Cohain*, I came across an astonishing passage that seemed to relate to my overwhelming feeling that an *evil* force had been plaguing me throughout the beginning of my pregnancy with Tara, had taken her life and had nearly taken mine twice. Reading this was eerie, especially its potential Kabala *White Tara* reference - Angel *Taharie*.

When lofty souls are about to descend via certain paths guarded by the Angel *Taharie*-I, to be born to holy parents, it can happen that some of these souls are captured by powerful forces of evil (*kelipot*) through no fault of their own. <http://www.kabbalaonline.org/Safedteachings>

The Abandonment of my Spiritual Essence

These years of being Leah, Mother of Compassion, turned out to be the most compassionate time period of my life. But that connection was intensely challenged, and temporarily lost, as a result of engaging in a silent, 6 hour, non-stop, spiritual writing exercise, called *Stream of Unconscious Consciousness*, that I found in a *channeled* book by Bartholomew (1987), *From the heart of a gentle brother*. During this process, a voice from my occluded *dark side* began to force itself into my consciousness and then dominate my thoughts and energy. This persona, that was stronger than *White Tara*'s

presence within, admonished me for being irresponsible by not confronting reality and keeping myself in a protective bubble. He told me I have been living a lie as my embodiment of White Tara was only an illusion. That day drastically changed my life.

I have come to call this persona *my commander*, as his intense autocratic well-intentioned edicts seem to be driven by my master programming. His forceful energy had been fairly easy to avoid when I was engaged in heartfelt, spiritual activities which I kept myself immersed in. When my commander and its pain energy were triggered, I programmed myself to escape into activities that brought me into an alpha state. There I would commune with my spiritual feminine energy and do massage, tantra, devotional singing, Sufi dancing, maintaining my strong feminine spiritual energy. But when I began writing that day, I could not get him to leave. As I wrote, he took over my pen and would not let White Tara come through. He tried to convince me that he was the real me, rather than a persona of mine. I believe I had difficulty resisting him because, at the time, I no longer had *HaShem*, or any other masculine divine archetypes, to balance my strong feminine, so the commander began to take over and I gradually gave up embodying White Tara. Also, it was true that I had been out of balance and needed intervention.

My flighty, floating, loving *heaven on earth* lifestyle became replaced by a grounded, determined *get real* persona which ordered me to confront where I actually was in life, and cracked the whip to get me to start accomplishing my divine goals before I die. I gradually gave up all of my New Age spiritual activities like *devotional singing*, *Sufi dancing*, *Tantra pujas*, astrology, and tarot (though occasionally I would do a Jewish Renewal, Vipassana or Thay activity). Instead, I became super-responsible and went back to college. I got straight A's, graduated with a double major, founded my own school

with a compassion evoking curriculum and successfully began accomplishing my divine goals.

I hardly did the White Tara meditation anymore or used her as my refuge, confident or friend. I basically ignored my spiritual White Tara connection during most of this *commander ruled* period. Although I kept *thankas* (Tibetan deity paintings on silk) of her all over my home, I mostly rejected White Tara's presence in my life.

My Spiritual Reclamation

I felt God-less and Goddess-less. My soul-mate connection with my closest friend and *sister*, Leni, sustained my spiritual needs. When she died I was devastated.

I am dying because my spiritual connection has nearly died and I don't believe I can find anything to heal or replace it. Nothing looks right anymore for my core beingness to connect with, no religion, no faith, and no belief. Nothing feels intuitively correct or gives me lasting solace. I can no longer find meaning through any religion or spiritual group— and yet being spiritual has always been the leading theme of my life...[and]the greatest motivating factor in my success in the world. Now what?

My Heuristic Journal: August 8, 2007

...

After first spending years living as if I was one with the Goddess and then abandoning her and living years of a more normal human reality, my own non-polar truth began to emerge. Of course, a part of me is a goddess. But the truth I realized is that I am a human being - an animal *and* a spiritual being. It is not my destiny to independently live as either a human animal from body-mind consciousness or as a Goddess connected to a spiritual Oneness. It was wonderful to have studied spiritual consciousness; it was the necessary preparation for this next part of my journey. However, I could no longer listen to my spiritual path's teachings that *it alone* was sufficient, or listen to my body-mind's programming that tried to get me to believe that *it alone* was all knowing. Transcending

living as either of these alone, and being the creation and realization of the interconnection of both of these offers the transformation that is my conscious evolution.

As a result of my New Age connections and all of the previous spiritual connections I had made, heuristically and theoretically studying spiritual connection throughout the course of this dissertation has brought about many transformations, but they were never stable. I now believe that is because I did not have faith in a particular spiritual connection and lost the spiritual divine love of my life. This seems to also have been a significant cause for my educator burnout.

The sub-awareness tension of being somewhat spiritually disconnected kept me in a low-level state of constant nervousness, like when I was a teen-ager. The times that I *did* have a spiritual connection I believed in, my life ran excellently (like when I was a child and had a strong spiritual connection with GOD/Conscience or after I lost my child and I had a strong spiritual connection with White Tara). Serious difficulties, like depression and trouble with my heart, arose during the periods in my life when that connection was lost, thrown away or damaged. When I have spiritual connections that I can have confidence in, mindfulness comes more naturally and requires less practicing.

Throughout the writing of this dissertation having a spiritual connection was a major theme as I found this to be a necessity in order to be self-compassionate and compassionate in educational settings. I created various spiritual connection possibilities that coordinated with a variety of gross motor activities, energetic movement throughout my body, chanting sounds, breathing patterns and chakra balancing. They all did their job beautifully for periods of time, but none maintained their success.

During the writing of this section of the narrative I arrived at a new state with

regards to ultimate reality which was prominent and spiritually available.

After years of experiencing great spiritual emptiness, I now feel my relationship with *Hashem* healing me through this narrative. I am re-opening to His presence as a part of me and that is very healing. I have even modified *my sacred sangha* (see *Appendix*) to add my Jewish God. My replaced Daddy as *my universal wisdom connection* and assumed a position an 8th *chakra* position, which parallels Scn's 8th dynamic - God or infinity. Daddy will remain my 7th *chakra* spiritual connection, as His right hand man, His Buddha buddy and my *gentle, loving Daddy*

I can see now that the difficulties I had in my teens were exacerbated by my spiritual dilemma. Feeling powerful while connected to my powerful God didn't include compassion, even though I tried to be mindful of not taking more than my share of miracles that seemed to be regularly showered on me as a child. When I detached from receiving these spiritual favors in order to be less selfish and more compassionate, I reduced my potential power in this world, shifting my persona away from a powerful manifester to a more compassionate, slightly insecure persona.

I am again opening to become personally receptive. The possibility of my achieving true self-compassion seems greater than every before. If I am to make spiritual energetic transformations, I need to truly be gentle with myself. The beginnings of this re-connection with my Jewish GOD, has surprisingly begun to reopen my connection with White Tara, the Buddhist Mother of Compassion. She has become available again through this new practice as the heart connection – *being self-compassion*.

I more clearly understand spiritual connection: When I invoke the Jewish God archetype, I know I am connecting with an energy specific to my group/ my tribe, available through my genetic line. I do not pray or ask for guidance; I am *just being with* it – without needing advice, direction, or input. I can relax into its presence of wisdom and love.

(My Heuristic Journal: September, 2008)

I now feel, and perhaps understand, that the purpose *My Sacred Sangha* (see *Appendix* for latest version) is mainly for *taking refuge in the sangha in myself*, as Thay's monks and nuns always chant. I greatly appreciate these precious spiritual connections who are my sacred friends and teachers. At any moment, in a flash, I can feel their ever-present connection within me when I call on them for spiritual support, spiritual communion and as a refuge to assist in transforming pain energy. Although my truest

spiritual connection is with the Oneness, I need to feel the personal aspects of the oneness which I can get from connecting with gods, goddesses, divine archetypes, anthropomorphic aspects. They represent flavors of the oneness which transforms my *singular energy* view to that of an infinitely colored rainbow. Each aspect of the oneness is a quality which I relate to as spiritual – wisdom, courage, compassion.

Rinpoche (1985) states in the White Tara meditation, “This refuge is my source of protection and shelter in this world... until such time I become a refuge in myself.” I feel I do not have to wait; I can have both; I need both: I can take refuge in *my sacred sangha* as well as take refuge in and be my *neshama*, my reborn conscious self and experience it *living in my heart as compassion* - my part of the Oneness - being self-compassionate to the parts of me and others that have forgotten.

You can remind yourself every day that your neshama, the soul that you are, is pure and good, like a holy spark. No matter what layers of tarnish life's hurts and errors may have layered on, your inner goodness is still shining inside, ready to guide you.

Reb Marcia Prager *The Spiritual Practice of Return*

I can view my personal soul and all of me as a part of the Oneness, and all of my students as a part of the Oneness as well, which means they are me and I am them and relate from the heart, my spiritual center. I understood this in theory, and have even felt this many times. But I now see my spiritual goal is to evolve into it – truly experience all of myself and all parts of everyone else as a part of the beautiful Oneness, so I can be honestly Self-Compassionate, where the *Self* is all selves *and* the Oneness as well: a Oneness which pulses like a *living, listening heart* that I can attune my heart to will lead the way. That is what I am in service to; this is the essence of my spiritual preparation to becoming a compassionate educator.

By listening deeply to the message of any given moment I shall be able to tap the very Source of Meaning and to realize the unfolding meaning... To listen in this way means to listen with one's heart, with one's whole being...a life of divine compassion. ☺ Obedience in the full sense is the process of attuning the heart to the simple call contained in the complexity of a given situation. (p. 10)

Steindl-Rast *A Listening Heart: The Art of Contemplative Living* 1988

Integration of my spiritual path now shows me the potential of having love, as the Oneness, in my heart for myself, ready to share it with, and receive it from, everyone in all educational settings. Mindfulness can be my holistic spiritual preparation that brings me back and helps me in difficult classroom moments. I can remember the chant I learned in Devotional Singing; *there is no separation, only the Oneness of God*. Compassion can be the spiritual guide to remembering that I and all of my students, in our beautiful human forms of pleasure and pain, are always a part of the Oneness. As a compassionate educator I can appreciate each of these unique aspects of the Divine Light, as we study and learn together in peace.

Songs of Peace

Brothers, sisters, all God's children, let us live in peace as One.
Let us share the universal blessings of the earth and sun.
Walk together, talk together, let love fill all days to come.
Let Divine Light shine within us. Let us live in peace as One.

Jai Josephs on CD *Awe* for B'nai Horim: Children of Freedom 2000
(To the tune that I sung as a child: *Lord of every land and nation*)

Studying Compassion-Related Psychology for Transformation

Having had a strong propensity toward psychological processing, I spent years as a Scientologist receiving, giving to others, and running on myself, all sorts of transformational, holistically-based, psychological processes. Then I sought out spiritual transformational processes that had less of an exact *how-to* nature. Once I began

engaging in New Age activities, I investigated other similar holistically based psychological systems, like Gestalt, Psycho-synthesis, Bio-Energetic and Keyes' re-programming. I incorporated all of the many psychological techniques that I had learned into my holistic bodywork practice to help heal emotional and physical pain.

Marshall (Rosenberg) and Me

One evening, a dear friend of mine, Robert Frey, a North County famed Devotional Singer, was opening for a new local New Age workshop and invited myself and my son, who was then 9 years old, to attend. We squeezed into that crowded room and sat up front right next to Robert and the speaker, Dr. Marshall Rosenberg, who would greatly affect both my and my son's life. Marshall, as everyone called him, is an international peacemaker and the founder of the Center for Non-Violent Communication. He presented us with a communication tool he developed that offered a new vantage point on how to free ourselves and others from our pain when triggered - creating peace.

After Marshall gave his introduction, he requested that some brave soul reveal a challenging situation they had with someone. Ryan gave me permission to speak about a minor problem we were having, so I volunteered. I shared about my difficulty getting Ryan to clean his room. As I began recounting my truth, I was shocked when the compassionate *giraffe* puppet on Marshall's hand that he was speaking through was quickly withdrawn, and out popped an ugly *jackal* puppet yelling at me. I was embarrassed and felt ashamed, as I had not thought that I was *being bad* to him.

Jackal: the way that our brains have been programmed for the last million years. We have been educated in a way that makes violence enjoyable...

Giraffe: The language that creates contributing to another's joy.
It comes from the heart.

Rosenberg *Learning to Connect* 2006

Ryan, on the other hand, felt so elated, understood and validated by Marshall that on the break Ryan thanked him profusely for his insights and asked if he would speak at his school and instruct the teachers how to be *giraffes*. Marshall and Ryan arranged with his private school, within days, for an instructional class for the director and teachers of his spiritually oriented Montessori school he attended. Marshall told this story about Ryan for years to come. Ryan continued with this work, practiced it with me, acted in one of their video productions, did workshops with Marshall and in college was part of a weekly study group. However, for some reason Ryan no longer applies Marshall's work.

So much of what Marshall taught I intuitively felt was correct, so I was drawn to train with him when he was nearby, and studied with many of his local psychologist trainers, mainly Holly Humphrey and Kelly Bryson. I implemented Marshall's work in all of my educational settings and brought many other teachers and friends to this study as well. After years of attending Marshall's workshops and those of his protégés, truth be told, I couldn't easily learn and apply his model of Non-Violent Communication.

During my trainings I rarely felt compassion was given to me, and always felt a bit like a *jackal*. However, at my core I knew that this work was highly valuable. I wound up using what worked for me and modified other areas of Rosenberg's techniques to produce greater success for myself and my educational settings. I eventually came to realize that even though Marshall and my work greatly overlapped, there were several differences. There was one that was particularly defining: the development of my practice of compassion demonstrated that I did not want to change anyone, just transform the energy that is out of alignment to create wholeness. Marshall, though also interested in transformation and healing, wanted to accomplish this through change.

Transform the thinking that is the cause of violence on our planet. (Ibid)

Marshall and Compassion

I want to live compassionately
 At each and every opportunity
 I want to give away
 ...the love that's mine to give.
 I want to live compassionately.

Rosenberg, Cited in Humphrey, 1989

Giving from the heart: believing that it is our nature to enjoy giving and receiving in a compassionate manner... (p. 1)

Rosenberg *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Compassion* 2000

What I resonated with Marshall the most was his desire for, and appreciation of, compassion. Though I sadly experienced him as being in deep pain much of the time because of his sensitive heart, I also felt his heart as magnanimous as he openly shared and assisted in miraculous healings when he himself was not too triggered. I recognized that being a *compassionate giraffe* was both a highly valuable educator persona as well as a wonderful way for children to learn how to enjoy being with one another. This could be, I thought, the answer to how to create a compassionate classroom.

While studying the factors that affect our ability to stay compassionate, I was struck by the crucial role of language and our use of words ...what allows some people to stay connected to their compassionate nature under even the most trying times? (p.2, Ibid)

My training with Marshall emphasized learning the language of *compassionate communication* to maintain social and spiritual connections. Whereas my exposure to the roots of communication with Hubbard focused on presence, intention and attention, I now found Marshall's focus to be on language, words and tone of voice. Although Marshall said the word *should* was a jackal no-no, I found myself efforting to learn the *giraffe* words and phrases I should say, and working hard to note the *jackal* words and phrases I

should never say. I guess there was pain in this educational feat that could not get ever get handled within the system. Even though I was uncomfortable with considering parts of myself or others as *jackals*, I greatly appreciated having my eyes opened to the possibility of maintaining communication that was compassionate and non-violent so I stayed committed to learning and cultivating Marshall's communication system.

I have identified a specific approach to communication - speaking and listening - that leads us to give from the heart, connecting us with ourselves and with each other in a way that allows our natural compassion to flourish. I call this approach, nonviolent communication, using the term nonviolence as Gandhi used it.... While we may not consider the way we talk to be violent... words often lead to hurt and pain, whether for ourselves or others. (p. 2 Ibid)

Connection and Interconnectedness

The concept of *connection* that Marshall introduced was a new addition to how to be with another in pain. I learned that connection included connecting with another's feelings, with their needs, and later in his work with their personal energy which is a part of the oneness – connecting as a part of interconnectedness. Having this awareness and acting upon it was important for any kind of processing I was involved with. It was also vital for the health of my relationships with all children as it increased mutual respect, honesty, trust and love.

Connecting was one step beyond what I learned from Hubbard in his TR O practice which produced the ability to *be there* comfortably in front of another. Hubbard's precise technology inhibited me from making the kind of connection that I now see is needed with any person I am helping. Although I knew Hubbard valued communication, I found there to be little room for empathy in a session or in a classroom.

Without making a true connection through empathy, neither my clients nor my students could reach me and I could not reach them. This non-connection prohibited being heard.

Give enough empathy so that you can be heard.

Rosenberg *Learning to Connect* 2006

In my bodywork studies I learned something similar to what Rosenberg taught, but again not the same. I studied *feeling into* another person's body, sensing their energetic imbalances and helping them to return to balance. I accomplished this passively through the *wu wei* style (the action of inaction) of effort (being present and holding two appropriate points on their body), or actively through massage manipulations.

Marshall's use of connection brought about a deeper intimacy than any of these earlier practices. *Connecting* with others made me much more vulnerable and increased my honesty as we had to discover and share our feelings and needs and our relationship to our life force in each moment. Simultaneously, we had the privilege of experiencing our relationship without the confinement of social roles and rules. This opened to a shared sensing of our wholeness and of our interconnectedness with the Oneness.

Be honest in a way that creates a compassionate connection... To connect, to see the divine energy we are all created in... Connect in a way that everyone's needs get met in a compassionate way. Both end up enjoying contributing to another's well being... See that you and that person have the same needs. See your oneness with them. Needs are never in conflict.

Rosenberg *Learning to Connect* 2006

Compassion and Empathy

Initially the word compassion was mostly absent from Marshall's vocabulary. Instead, his main concepts included *non-violence* and *empathy*. Holly Humphrey seemed to have been the first in his group to coin the term *Compassionate Communication* for her work and for the workshops she hosted for Marshall here in Encinitas, California in the

late 1980's. As years went by I heard him more frequently using the term *compassion* and I had difficulty differentiating it from the way he used *empathy*. At one point in time when I inquired as to the difference between these two terms, I believe I received the answer (from Kelly Bryson) that compassion was a part of empathy, or that compassion developed as a result of empathy. Neither explanation resonated with me. It took years for me to clarify this for myself and now I believe that compassion is a *spiritual heartfelt* activity that uses empathy to achieve its fullness. Empathy, to me, without compassion, is often more *analytical-heart* based.

During my investigation of what theme I was going to choose for this dissertation, my heuristic discoveries brought me closer and closer to this current topic. At one time this dissertation was strictly a study of empathy, then a study of self-empathy, and then it transitioned into where this meandering would finally call home: a study of self-compassion and compassion. I found that empathy was a very important part of my practices of compassion when there was pain that needed to be transformed. When I or another was in pain, I oftentimes found empathy to be the exact curative elixir.

Empathy is a respectful understanding of what others are experiencing. Instead of offering empathy, we often have a strong urge to give others advice or reassurance and to explain our own position or feeling. Empathy, however, calls upon us to empty our mind and listen to others with our whole being...We may wish to reflect back, paraphrasing what we have understood. We stay with empathy, allowing others the opportunity to fully express themselves before we turn our attention to solutions or requests for relief. (p. 111 Ibid)

When people are in pain that is when they need empathy the most.

I have borrowed liberally from the *giving empathy* aspect of Marshall's Non-Violent Communication model, and give empathy in a similar way in my own compassion practice when I am becoming aware of the pain of a persona of mine or that

of another. I will be forever grateful to Marshall for his genius in expressing his unique understanding and simple practice phrasing that teaches the concept of empathy quite beautifully. It is especially a gift to someone like me who has been in the habit of giving advice as a means of helping others to transform their pain.

In order for me to be able to *empty my mind and listen with my whole being*, I need to initially practice self-compassion. Marshall addresses this need when he introduces self-empathy, which he came to later on in his work. However, he treats this differently from the way I use self-compassion. Marshall says "We need empathy to give empathy ... [as] emergency first aid" before going back to the situation at hand (p. 110 Ibid). My sense is that self-compassion is essential to knowing how and when to give empathy. I need to first learn how to do it, by learning how to give it to myself. Unfortunately, if I am triggered I do not have the capacity to be truly compassionate to others and thereby can not fully be free to sense how to serve them. When I have dealt with my own personal trigger and understood the core of my pain and how giving myself empathy helped to transform it, I will then be more available to understand this quality and will be better able to truly be compassionately empathetic with another.

I have discovered during the course of my heuristic study, that self-compassion *always* comes before compassion and empathy for another; it sounds personally disrespectful to me to consider that when "we find ourselves unable or unwilling to empathize despite our efforts" that we take this as "a sign that we are too starved for empathy to be able to offer it to others" (p. 119 Ibid). It feels non-compassionate to consider myself as someone who is *too starved for empathy* to be able to give. I do not want to expect I *should* give empathy to another before checking first if I need it myself.

Despite my intuitive heart, or perhaps because of it, I feel the other person's pain so deeply that I quickly jump into giving advice as a *quick-fix* to deal with another's pain; this prevents me from more deeply listening and being truly empathetic. That is why I need to first be self-compassionate before I attempt to be compassionate to another. *Being compassion* first and taking care of my own triggers, makes it easier for me to be present, listen and be compassionately empathetic to another as I am not sitting in my own pain. It will then be unnecessary to learn how to be a *giraffe* and how not be a *jackal* when I have given myself any needed self-compassion.

Over the years, when I found myself trapped by my *jackal thoughts* and tried to apply Marshall's model and implement *giraffe* phrasing I was mostly unsuccessful. I needed to be self-compassionate to naturally transform the pain energy inherent in, what Marshall calls and I am uncomfortable with, my *jackal*. His training model seemed to suppress my personas in pain and instead opt for my imposing *giraffe* language. This could not substitute for transforming my personas' pain, which then made my *giraffe-like* qualities naturally emerge.

Feelings and Needs

Marshall's brilliance showed itself as well in his understanding of the importance of discovering feelings and unmet needs, and the relationship they have with each other when dealing with pain energy. Whenever I was in reaction, I was directed to identify my feelings, and the needs behind those feelings. Beginning to get in touch with my feelings and needs in each moment was difficult because of another mental habitual solution - analysis. Marshall had long lists of feelings and needs that I studied to try to assist me. When I began to understand the mutuality of needs I felt less embarrassed to have them.

Nature has instilled in us a natural phenomenon called *feelings*.
 ...Our feelings motivate us to get our needs met...We were taught to think,
 not to know our feelings and to get our needs met.

Rosenberg *Hearing and Expressing Anger Compassionately* 1996

When we find anyone's needs we will find that we have those needs.

Rosenberg *Learning to Connect* 2006

With regards to *feelings*, because of my visceral nature, I tended to feel various sensations in my body rather than feel emotions. Kelly and I had great difficulty with this as he continually tried to have me get in touch with my emotions. We would both get frustrated as he did not find value in the physical sensation I would express as my current feeling. Over time, this changed and he began to appreciate the importance of sensing within his body to detect the origins of his emotional pain. He now beautifully expresses what I experience in my *awareness of* step of my self-compassion practice that includes giving myself empathy in a more holistic way when I get caught in judgment.

"All judgments are the tragic expressions of pain and unmet needs." so I started to look for the pain in my body... as I lay there giving myself empathy...I start to feel a relieving shift in my body... The shift came as I allowed my awareness of my feelings to lead me into a reconnection with the life force within me. As soon as I am fully in touch with my true need...I immediately feel the beautiful strength of it. (p.79)

Bryson *Don't Be Nice, Be Real* 2004

In my practice of self-compassion, this leads me directly to the personas that are experiencing difficulties. When I can take the time to be compassionate to feelings and needs or anything they want to communicate (I no longer care if they are expressed in *giraffe* or *jackal* language– I accept it all), I can discover and acknowledge a core need that often instantly transforms the pain. However, this may be very difficult to do, as Kelly has discovered for himself.

I want to maintain a clear intention of compassionately connecting with the feelings and needs underneath any blame I hear, whether inside or

outside of me ...many times I get to a place of feeling overwhelmed, and that is when I reach to someone in my community... (p. 90 Ibid)

This potential for overwhelm is why I decided to not try to give that persona empathy without first compassionately preparing myself by making an inner physical and spiritual connection (connecting with my *sacred sangha* within), and then taking on the *beingness of self-compassion*. I am subsequently less likely to need help from the outer community when I have received it from my inner one. If I do find I need additional assistance, however, I have found Kelly to be excellent at sensing and expressing empathy to me once he has connected to my feelings and needs to his satisfaction.

Becoming aware of my feelings and their underlying needs are important, and opening to this possible solution is included in my compassion practices. But understanding and appreciating the pain energy at the core of my needs and its associated programming that is motivating the triggering of both the feelings and the unmet needs, and then finding in what way this program is still appropriate now, seems to be of the highest benefit in transforming the pain that triggers the programming; this is thereby what most successfully liberates me. Becoming familiar with my feelings and needs and sharing this with those that seem to have conflicting needs is definitely valuable and does promote peacemaking. However, self-liberation is the aim of my practice of self-compassion. What follows is then assisting others in liberating themselves in educational settings: being a compassionate educator!

Applications of Marshall's Work in Educational Settings

Observing my own feelings and needs and the feelings and needs of my students, their parents and the school's administration helps me to sense the scope of who and what I am

of service to. Being compassionate to all of these needs that I have observed is then the task at hand. I may not be responsible for getting all of these needs met, but I am responsible for making myself aware of them and being compassionate to them.

When I am about to teach a required lesson, I can acknowledge the needs that my students have in that moment; if I am thus connected with the students, they are more likely to be available to receive that lesson. I can then reassure them that I will help them to get their needs met either before the lesson, after the lesson, or I find a way to incorporate meeting their needs during the lesson.

For instance, if the students have a need for physical activity I can do a round of stretches with them, or even take a run around the school yard, prior to giving an academic lesson. Less optimally, but acceptable, I could agree to give them free play once the lesson is taught. The most enjoyable and effective method I have found is to creatively and compassionately find a way for that lesson to include physical activity – helping them to get their need met in the moment, increasing my empathetic connection with them, and mutually participate in a more alive lesson.

Another important way I can and have applied Marshall's work is by teaching the children to take personal responsibility for their mistakes without making them feel judged, blamed or shamed. This includes not passing down our programming of rewarding their *good* behavior and punishing their *bad* behavior. This is a difficult task for parents and teachers who believe that because they are the authority they should enforce moral judgments. This additionally speaks to not blaming others' behaviors to be the cause of your own pain.

The stimulus is not the cause... Be conscious that whatever people do is never the cause of your feelings... It's not their behavior that's doing it. It's what you're thinking that's causing it.

Rosenberg *Hearing and Expressing Anger Compassionately*1996

I taught many of my classes a song that Marshall often sung, *See Me Beautiful*, which I heard was written by an elementary school teacher. To me it is a song of self-compassion and an asking of empathetic connection. As a prelude to singing this song in his workshop on *Hearing and Expressing Anger*, Marshall said that “when we keep our attention at all times on our needs and the needs of the other person we see the beauty!”

See Me Beautiful

Rosenberg *Hearing and Expressing Anger Compassionately*1996

See me beautiful. See the best in me
That's what I really am and what I want to be
It may take some time; it may be hard to find
But see me beautiful!

See me beautiful each and every day
Could you take a chance? Could you find a way?
To see me shining through, in every thing I do
And see me beautiful!

Explaining to the children that we were learning a song to sing to their parents, I found them eager to practice singing it three times through: During the first they were being their *magical selves*. The second time through was more challenging as they were asked to expose and become the parts of themselves that their parents had expressed a distaste for in some way, their personas in need and pain. The third time repeated the first, giving themselves a chance to show off their pure *magical selves*. This performance gave these young children an opportunity to be *angry* and *bad*, and still express that they are asking for connection, understanding, respect and love during those times. This was very powerful for both students and parents alike.

In addition, I taught Marshall's Non-Violent Communication model to Montessori teachers at a Montessori conference entitled, *Creating a Compassionate Classroom*. During the creation of this workshop was when I officially stopped using the *jackal* puppet as decided that if it invalidated others the way it did me, then it may act as violent communication to them as well. Now I realize that it was not compassionate to the personas of any person who is in pain to be called a *jackal*, as receiving kind words and thoughts are what most needed - compassion – is at that time.

Marshall's work complemented the Montessori program. Although I included it in my curriculum, I couldn't get it to work the way it was supposed to. I modified Marshall's model and created a new model specifically geared for young children and their parents. This included new *feelings* and *needs* lists and a conflict resolution tool for teachers, parents and students with activities that were all a part of a *Working it Out* series I created (see *Appendix*). This material reflected the changes I made for young children, and also reflected the areas of Marshall's work I could not agree with as I could not make it work.

Remembering how Hubbard was so vehemently opposed to any alteration of his technology, I was a bit fearful that Marshall would consider my modifications mutiny. This moved me to present Marshall with a copy of all my new work based on his, when he was the guest speaker at a Montessori conference that I was as well presenting at with a correlative subject to non-violent communication: *autonomy and interdependence*. I sadly never heard back from him. Years later when I reminded him of this, he apologized for forgetting and never reading it. He thought the papers must have gotten misplaced; he was glad I turned his work into something that worked better for me with young children!

After years of concentrating on my own and children's feelings, even creating and fairly successfully utilizing a Montessori curriculum which I called, *Emotion in Motion*, I found that focusing so intently on feelings became a detriment to the classroom. The environment became quite an emotional one and the teachers and children began handling one emotional *crisis* after another. Eventually I found its proper place in my overall curriculum, providing some fun exercises to engage in and using it as needed. As a later Buddhist teacher of mine understood that even focusing on positive emotions could be unwise:

Part of not getting caught in illusion is to give up referencing the way we think and feel. A big part of wisdom is to give up referencing the positive thoughts and feelings...If you buy into sense perceptions to tell you who you are, it's just a matter of time until the senses show their other face, which is the negative side. (p. 60)

Adyashanti, *Emptiness Dancing* 2004

A Meeting of our Minds and Hearts

In 2006, after the last evening workshop I did with Marshall, 15 years after our first meeting, we walked to his car together and I told him that I was researching and writing about self-compassion. He sincerely expressed happiness in my work, saying how much this was needed. He felt remorse that so many people were not really able to be compassionate until they developed self-compassion. I felt a sense of great relief and validation by Marshall's acknowledgment of my work. It was as if we had now come full circle, as I noticed that I honored and resonated with the latest evolution of his work, and at the same time he honored and resonated with mine. After all these years, a beautiful and pure connection was finally created between us - a meeting of our minds and hearts!

Psycho-Spiritual Transformational Studies

It seems to be my basic nature to be process oriented. This has led me to study and work with a variety of cutting edge psychological and body oriented processes over the years. Though all of the processes I had chosen had a spiritual base, I needed one grounded in the qualities of the heart to help me create and develop my personal and professional compassion practices. I feel blessed to have been inspired by aspects of a variety of other psychological processes which enriched my own. These were primarily Scientology training and processing, the Non-Violent Communication model and Core Transformation Work.

After studying with Marshall, I thoroughly enjoyed dabbling into other psychologically / mentally / spiritually oriented approaches to conscious evolution by men like Keyes, James, Covey, Maslow, Jung and Wilber. However, the psychological studies that I began to resonate with the most were those that were infused with facets of the heart and spirit. My later psychologist / teachers, mainly the Andreasens and Brach, embraced a feminine approach to psychological processing that touched my heart and soul like no previous study, since they included the quality of compassionate spirituality which was more akin to my own approach.

Andreas' Core Transformational Work

Core Transformation, a practice created by the Andreas sister-in-laws, was introduced to me by my son who came upon this training and practice while he was at university. Ryan had gotten deeply involved with NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) and these therapists created their work as an extension of their NLP practice. Wanting to

help me with my pre-menopause difficulties, Ryan came home from his university studies at Santa Cruz one week-end with a strong intention. On a beach walk he initiated, we spent hours applying their practice. Although I felt limited by having to fit into yet another box, I was also quite gladdened by the enhanced quality of sincere compassion I was receiving from him and the depth of this work.

My son sent me a copy of their book, *Core Transformation: Reaching the Wellspring Within*, which I then read voraciously and immediately began using on myself. I bought many copies that I gave to mainly ex-Scientology friends that had been process oriented as well, and had even tried to get a session exchange going between Leni and myself, but to no avail; none of the people I introduced this to appreciated it as I did. I later applied their compassionate psychological process on friends and family, and even took on parents of my students as clients with a fair amount of success. Despite the necessity for adherence to a rote procedure (like that of Hubbard and Rosenberg), the self-compassionate flavor that the Andreases brought to psychological processing and conscious evolution was sweeter than any I had ever tasted before.

My experience with personal evolution is a little bit like climbing a large mountain... As you arrive at each "peak" in yourself, give yourself full credit and appreciation for having reached that place, and notice how far you have come... As far as we know, there isn't a "highest" peak on our inner journey...Most of all, remember that this is a joyful, easy, uplifting process, designed to assist you in discovering your own lighting within what you thought was darkness. (p. 231)

Andreas *Core Transformation* 1994

I was also struck by the similarity of our goals. Using my terms, we all wanted to liberate ourselves, consciously evolve, transform our pain energy, birth wholeness, and taste the oneness. We believed this could be achieved through making positive inner connections which required taking the time to diligently practice a compassionate

process. Our purposes differed mildly: their purpose was to be integrated into life and mine was *to sense how to serve compassionately*, which also requires my becoming integrated into life. We were fortunate to all have confidence in our workable processes.

It can become a simple, loving, affirming process you do every day or several times a week. (p. 228)

My goal was to develop a process that went deep enough to the core of our experience to be effective with everything from the seemingly trivial to our biggest life issues. (p. x)

Wouldn't it be nice to have an underlying sense of wholeness... whether or not things are going well in our lives in the moment? ...This... is about developing and maintaining an inner sense of self, well-being, wholeness, and perhaps even a connection with something beyond ourselves, that sustains us in difficulty as well as in times of ease. This inner sense of fullness and integrity, and a strong, resourceful self is available to each of us, and is our own wellspring within. (p. 3 Ibid)

The Andreases and I also have a commonality with regards to transforming pain energy, which is appreciating rather than depreciating and integrating rather than eliminating. We agree that this transformation can not be achieved through inner force or affirmations. Though what I call pain energy Andreas calls *unwanted behavior*, none of us are *trying* to change behavior, though through our processes this does occur.

Core transformation work is not about affirmations or positive thinking. Many of us have tried to overcome our limitations by sheer will-power - simply *trying* to feel or act differently, or telling ourselves over and over that we *will* be different... (p. 3 Ibid)

The main difference between the Andreases and myself in this area is regarding how transformation can best be achieved. I believe when they state, “genuine transformation comes from having full access to our Core States throughout our body” they mean that when the parts connect with their *core states* of being that they are transformed. My experience is that compassionately honoring our personas and having

them caringly co-create integration can bring about the transformation of the pain energy producing programs. I consider core states do arise naturally on their own, but that they are a by-product of this healing process and not a sought after result (p. 76 Ibid).

Process Alignment and Inspiration

Though there are aspects of the Andreases' work that have not aligned with my own, I am grateful for those that have enriched my own understanding and increased the potential for transformation to take place. The four specific ways that the Andreas sisters' processing inspired my compassion practices were their use of personas, inquiry, intention, and appreciation. I have incorporated these with great success.

Andreases Parts / My Personas

Their use of the term *the part* I took to mean as similar to what I called a *persona*. This could be an aspect of my mind, a part of our unconscious mind, a fragmented part of my personality, the personality of a part of my body, a spiritual entity, an aspect of my genetic programming, etc. I also view a persona in pain the same way as I view a troubled student in an educational setting. They can all be consciously connected with and healed through compassion. The Andreases' view of how parts originated was one common to the field of psychology and also aligned with Scientology.

One way to think about inner parts is that when we were young we separated or "split off" a part of ourselves in a time of difficulty or crisis. Once a part has split off it tends to persist in the behaviors it chose as a young child. Since it is separated from us the part doesn't have access to other information and choices we learn as we grow up. In a sense this part remains frozen in time. (p. 169 Ibid)

There are many possible reasons for their existence, but the causes were never important to me. What I valued was that these personas (*parts*) were aspects of me and that I could compassionately transform their pain energy. The Andreases reminded me that it was my job to be conscious of each persona, of its triggered pain energy and of its accompanying program so that I could compassionately heal my educator self. The transformed energy can then be free to be optimally utilized, resulting in integration and increased wholeness, which is what I want to create in all of my educational settings.

It's very useful to think of ourselves in terms of parts...some people prefer to think about this as an "aspect" of themselves. Recognizing and working with these parts makes it possible for us to come to wholeness. (p. 12 Ibid)

Each of our inner parts represents a certain amount of our energy or vitality. When we include all of our inner parts we literally gain strength and vitality. Our energy begins to move in concert, rather than in discord. (p. 101 Ibid)

Inquiry

With regards to inquiry, once I have made my physical and spiritual connections, and have then assumed the beingness of self-compassion (I have found no other processes that have this preparation which I find extremely necessary), I make a gentle inquiry into areas of pain within myself, or recall a recent time that I was disturbed or had an uncomfortable emotional reaction that might still be negatively affecting me. The Andreases and I have discovered that we can find a persona that needs compassion and that a physical, emotional and spiritual healing can then take place. I do not, however, look for areas of myself *I do not like* or seek out my *worst flaws* as this is too non-compassionate. Also, if many personas present themselves at once, I choose the one that is most available for healing or that appears to be preventing the healing of others.

Choose a part to work with. Think of a behavior, feeling or response that

you have and don't like! (p. 16)

We *start* with our worst flaws. We begin with what we dislike in ourselves, what seems least godlike, and then we find God within, even there. (p. 225 Ibid)

When choosing between personas to be compassionate with during the inquiry step, choose the one that is most available to be worked with. Hubbard would go for the one with the largest read on the E-meter which meant that the charge it released indicated potential charge available to be released. That means I choose the persona that has pain energy that immediately begins releasing when I address it. The Andreases do the same thing in their way. My “terrorized girl” became less terrorized and “the terrorist” became more indignant, so I chose the persona of “the terrorized girl” to be compassionate with first, since that produced the best immediate results. (My Heuristic Journal: January 16, 2006)

One of the new additions that the Andreases brought to my compassion practices, and that I have applied when being a compassionate educator, is their *welcoming in* of the chosen part. Their welcoming step included asking questions to help this part be more present and available to be worked with. This compassionate addition touched my heart.

Locate and welcome the part...you can begin to sense where that part of you "lives." Do you feel the feelings most strongly in a certain part of your body? If you hear an inner voice, *where* in the voice located? ...Gently invite this part into your awareness. If the part is in our body, you may want to put your hand on the area where you sense the part most strongly. This can help you welcome and acknowledge the part. (p. 17)

Andreas *Core Transformation* 1994

Underlying Intentions and Purposes

What comes next in my process, which no psychologist seems to include, is *just being with* the persona. I see this as preceding an empathetic *awareness of* the persona, which the Andreases address first. Whereas Marshall's model focused on feelings and getting the underlying needs of jackals (which I found to be too mentally and verbally process oriented, even though he did have a spiritual purpose), the Andreases' focused on

compassionately getting the part's underlying core positive purposes. Their motivation to discover this was especially inspiring in dealing with my own pain energy and that of others. I have modified this to also include asking for underlying intentions, which often works best when engaging in becoming more aware of a part of myself or that of another.

Discover the deepest positive purposes our parts have for us... Finding the positive purpose of each part is the *opposite* of what most people do. We usually fight our unwanted habits and tendencies. Many approaches to self-help have encouraged us to...use self-control, or will-power to overcome our personal weaknesses... (p. 14 Ibid)

Most of us had no idea that when we have a behavior... that we [didn't] like, it is actually our best attempt to get something positive. (p. 35 Ibid)

I am totally aligned with the Andreases aim for finding the core reason why this programming came into existence, which will always include finding a positive intent. However, the way they went about it was a bit too mechanical for me. It sometimes felt like Scientology's processing as there was not enough room for just being with the flow and allowing the intention to arise on its own or with only a little prodding.

There are many possible questions to gently ask in order to become more aware of the persona or another's intentions. Its positive purpose sometimes just emerges while it is venting and I am communing with it. The more I am being self-compassion, the more trusting I am that I do not need to manipulatively try to change it. I do not have to look for a positive intention as when I get to the core intention we both can feel it. I can sense it when I notice an increase in camaraderie, a personal revelations and an availability to now work together for our highest good. The Andreases' style of repetitive questioning (common to Scientology processing and Marshall's model) for getting the underlying purposes, although very good questions, may or may not be appropriate in any given moment with any given persona; I found them then to be too rote and often alienating.

Ask for purpose: ask the part, "What do you want for me by [Xing]? ...Sometimes it takes the part a little while to find its positive purpose... If you do not think the purpose is positive, ask, "if you have that purpose, what will that do for me that you want even more?...keep asking this question until you reach a purpose that *you* think is positive. (p. 17 Ibid)

I asked questions to find a *deeper level purpose*. I noticed that if I kept asking the part, "And what do you want through having that?" the inner part would go to a new level of depth to something more basic and more important. (p. 19 Ibid)

I have added finding the core purpose during this *awareness* step of my practice which I get to as a result of giving empathy. That is similar to Marshall's empathy section of his model. I modified his model by including Andreas's gift of getting the core intention of the program that is motivating the person's or child's behavior or actions. Sensing their value, I then add my expression of gratitude - appreciation.

Appreciation

In my compassion process, feelings and needs were inspired by Rosenberg and getting core purposes and giving appreciation by Andreas. After studying Andreas's work, I realized that often when applying Rosenberg's model, there had been no true integration (connection had not fully birthed wholeness) if the core purpose had not been found and if there had been no appreciation for the job of the person (his *jackal*). The inclusion of my *appreciation* step into my practice directly came from the Andreas's inclusion of appreciation in theirs. The Andreas's went the extra mile of thanking the part; this precipitated a greater opportunity for transformation.

The first step toward communicating with parts is learning to appreciate them for the positive outcomes they want for us....this is the first step in befriending that part of myself. (p. 15 Ibid)

Though it brought me joy to befriend my part, appreciation was often given to it during a section of their process that left much to be desired for both my persona and myself. When the Andreases thanked the part before even becoming aware of what they were specifically thankful for it seemed like a premature acknowledgement. In my practice I have decided not to express appreciation until I become aware of the persona's positive intention for their behavior. At that time I can express the persona's value to my whole self. Appreciation is then not only genuine, it is transforming. It will be unnecessary to *shower* with appreciation because it will be a natural, appropriate, loving connection. Additionally, I felt unnatural appreciating in the canned way they suggested.

Thank the part. Even though you do not yet know, consciously, what this part of you wants for you, you can assume it has some positive purpose. Begin thanking this part of you for being there, doing its best to accomplish something on your behalf. Shower this part with appreciation. (p. 17/18 Ibid)

In my practice, when I discover the core intention or purpose I move into spontaneous gratitude for the goodness of this persona (or student) and usually large amounts of pain energy gets transformed and harmony created. Though we may apply it differently, I highly value the Andreases' compassionate and satisfying use of appreciation, which transforms pain energy. We all realize that this results in a profound presence because *stuck energy* transforms into a higher quality of energetic well-being.

You will find that every part of you can become a wellspring of profound states of well being. (p. 18 Ibid)

Education and Discipline

The process we are all engaging in is *personal* transformation. However, if as an educator I have learned to deal with my own personas and difficulties compassionately I can be

ready to help my students deal with their personas and difficulties in similar ways. The Andreases helped me to further cultivate being a compassionate educator - both in my educator preparation and in my ability to deal with educational settings. Appreciating the positive intentions and purposes of my own personas offers me the possibility of creating a new compassionate disciplinary approach that honors all of the personas of each student, parent and administrator, no matter how *jackal* they may sound and no matter how *bad* their behavior. As I begin to appreciate my own shadow side, I recognize the need of this appreciation for the shadow side of all I meet. As a compassionate educator I want to be able to carry forth the words Marshall sings, *it may take some time, it might be hard to find, but see me beautiful!*

As we experience this within ourselves we begin to know this about others also...over time I have found parts in myself that are like every part I have ever encountered in someone else... Discovering this has given me much deeper sense of being like every other person, and a reverence and respect for each of us. When I recognize and include all my facets... I am whole...each of us has within us the "whole picture" that is all of humanity. (p. 166 Ibid)

Many of the behavior patterns I have seen in my students, and in myself, have come from dysfunction family systems and even ancestral pain causing what Hubbard called *reactivity* that is not any of our faults but that we have to be responsible for. Not recognizing and acknowledging this and punishing my students with blame, guilt or worse, for acting out their automatic programming is cruel. This may create even greater damage in my students and my educational settings.

It has been well-documented that ...certain traits are said to "run in the family" across many generations. (p. 125)

Since the way we absorb patterns from our families is so automatic, it is easy to conclude that we are stuck with the un-resourceful patterns we learned from them. (p. 126 Ibid)

Understanding this, it becomes even more important for me to be mindful not to cross the line and, as Thay would say, *water the negative seeds* in myself or the parts of my students that have been *split off*. This could potentially further alienate the student and lower self-esteem creating worse behavior. As a compassionate educator I also want to be conscious not to reduce the integration of any of my students through my judging and punishing personas as this could potentially create new unconscious personas which would not be in the best interest for them or anyone in our educational setting.

Judgment and criticism from those around us frequently results in parts splitting off... We can all think of times in our childhood when we felt judged, criticized, or not accepted. It may have been... our inability to learn something, our unwillingness to stop what we were doing, our unwillingness to hurry, not understanding instructions... When we judge any of these kinds of thoughts, feelings or actions as wrong, we are likely to try to separate them from ourselves. We unconsciously push them away and pretend they are not us. (p. 170)

We often form parts that are like a judge. These parts take over the role of judge and continue judging us and others, even when... whoever "judged" us are not around...

What we know about how inner splits take place gives us indications about how we can raise our children to be more whole. (p. 171 Ibid)

Instead I can *water the positive seeds* by helping to bring awareness to the positive purposes behind destructive behavior patterns and to appreciate the basic good nature of my student or child while teaching the importance of taking responsibility for their actions. Realizing this amplified my desire to be more empathetic to needs of teachers, parents and children with the hope of working together to create and maintain a healthy balance of freedom and structure. In this compassionate responsible atmosphere, additionally not invalidating our children's' behavior could produce increased trust and a more positive learning environment.

Setting boundaries and limits is very important, and children who don't have adequate limits set tend to be unhappy and incapable of relating well. ...When children are given clear limits without the message that any of their thoughts, feelings or actions are bad or wrong, they do not need to split off inner parts. (p. 172 /173 Ibid)

From Andreas to Brach: Acceptance

When we live from acceptance we tend to respond to the world with kindness and compassion. (p. 227 Ibid)

As I studied the Andreas' work I pondered on the concept of acceptance and what this had to do with being a compassionate educator. I began to realize that if I rejected my own personas as *negative energy*, it was the same as rejecting my students as *bad kids* and visa-versa, thus being a *non-compassionate* educator. As a compassionate educator, I started to see that I needed to find a way to accept all of our apparent negativity so that it would become possible to see any of us as beautiful.

Conversely, if I was in denial of these *negative* parts, per Andreas, and only tried to experience the *positive* aspects of myself or my children, this non-acceptance could create havoc as I would be then denying the possibility of creating wholeness for us all. When I was being all *light and love* as a New Age teacher, it might have exacerbated my crashing over the years because I was living a lie. Perhaps if I had compassionately accepted my un-evolved limited parts, I would not have worked so hard creating my positive *wonder-woman* façade and eventually burning out.

Religious and spiritual people sometimes take the approach of separating from what they regard... in New Age terminology, [as]"negativity." If we separate from parts within ourselves that we call evil, we have inner splits and conflicts. We try to act and feel in a balanced, whole and loving way, even when some parts of ourselves don't want to. This approach results in feeling conflicted and feeling the need to control our negative thoughts, angers and desires, or shove them aside. Yet most of us have noticed that just shoving them aside doesn't work. We don't feel fully congruent in our "niceness". (p. 224 Ibid)

A few years after fondly studying the Andreeses' work and what I thought was the completion of the creation of my compassion practices, I was browsing through Borders and a book just fell into my lap. I was struck by the title as well as the author's name: *Radical Acceptance: Embracing Your Life with the Heart of a Buddha* by Tara Brach. I had already decided not to include any more references, but I couldn't refuse this invitation. Was this work a missing link to the success of applying self-compassion to myself and educators?

Brach is a Bu-Jew psychologist with a beautiful heart. I enjoyed reading about her work, feeling quite aligned with her viewpoints and processes. She combined compassion with mindfulness in her own unique way. Her work seemed to wonderfully apply to educators in pain that need self-compassion.

We free ourselves from the suffering of trance by learning to recognize what is true in the present moment, and by embracing whatever we see with an open heart. This cultivation of mindfulness and compassion is what I call Radical Acceptance... [It] is the necessary antidote to years of neglecting ourselves, years of judging and treating ourselves harshly, years of rejecting this moment's experience... the willingness to experience ourselves and our life as it is. (p. 4)

Tara Brach *Radical Acceptance* 2003

Our overlapping paths touched my soul. Her view of dealing with pain energy, spiritual connection and her inclusion of *taking refuge*, I had never before seen in any psychological writings. She even recognized the necessity to be free to in order to serve, reminding me that if as educators we are fixed on agendas we are not present to the child.

If we accept pain without the confusion of fear, we can listen to its message and respond with clarity. (p. 105)

We might take refuge by calling on the Beloved, on Buddha, or the Divine Mother, God or Jesus, the Great Spirit, Shiva or Allah. We reach toward

the loving awareness that is great enough to offer comfort and safety to our broken being. (p. 206)

We are unable to give ourselves freely and joyfully to any activity if the wanting self is in charge. And yet, until we attend to the basic desires and fears that energize the wanting self, it will insinuate itself into our every activity and relationship. (p. 139 Ibid)

Her understanding of self-acceptance caused me to pause: is this an aspect of self-compassion that was missing and needed to be included in my practice and my understanding of compassion? Brach led me to see that this was indeed so. But where in my practice did it naturally belong? I knew it was related to *awareness* in some way!

Deepen your awareness of the other by asking yourself, “What might this person be experiencing? This inquiry is both active and receptive – you are intentionally asking and investigating, and also opening to whatever is arising. (p. 306 Ibid)

Her active inquiry step was comparable to my step of becoming aware of either my persona’s or my student’s difficulties. My questioning was more like intimate communion. Therefore it would not include a question like *what* might *this person be experiencing* as this not direct enough. I would instead ask: What *are* you experiencing?

Brach’s Buddhist-style definition of compassion I found to be quite lovely. My experience of the need to connect physically and spiritually to assume the beingness of self-compassion greatly parallels Brach’s *two wings of acceptance*: compassion and mindfulness. She added a heartfelt sense to what would normally be defined as *acceptance*. I also aligned with her view of the amazing healing quality of compassion. Her view of compassion is that it encompassed self-compassion: *Compassion honors our experience*. We differed in her advocating being compassionate first and then becoming mindful. My sense is that mindfulness needs to precede and fuel compassion.

Compassion is our capacity to relate in a tender and sympathetic way to what we perceive. Instead of resisting our feelings of fear or grief, we embrace our pain with the kindness of a mother holding her child... Compassion honors our experience; it allows us to be intimate with the life of this moment as it is. Compassion makes our acceptance wholehearted and complete.... Compassion joins with mindfulness to create a genuinely healing presence. (p. 28/ 29 Ibid)

Through my investigation into Brach's exploration of self-acceptance I explored where it belonged within my own practice of compassion. Investigating other Bu-Jews as well, I began to have greater insight. Self-acceptance crux of recovery, it was, as I had intuited, a step on the compassionate path of transforming pain and creating wholeness.

If we have judgments about ourselves, the judgments themselves are locking us in to what we don't like about ourselves. So the path of purification goes through the doorway of self-acceptance. Through acceptance, the mind relaxes; and through that relaxation of mind, we see this incredibly fast flow of change. (p. 115)

Joseph Goldstein *Transforming Suffering* (Dalai Lama) 2003

I found that by *being self-compassion* I could enjoy self-acceptance as a by-product and not an enforced reality. Self-acceptance began to find its impermanent home in my practice. It either became a bridge between awareness and appreciation of a persona or a student, or it revealed itself during the act of appreciation - sparking healing!

My Studies of Psychological Processing

The psychological approaches to healing that I studied were somewhat holistic in themselves, as they revered the spiritual aspect and included an understanding of the body-mind. This is similar to my physical studies like Taoist Tai Chi which incorporated the spiritual when experiencing the elements as sacred, and the psychological through the understanding of yin/ yang which teaches how to create inner balance.

What I have learned through this narrative review of my key psychological studies is that it was important to learn many specific processes. It then became even more important to let go of all of their rote procedures so that I could *just be* with the moment and sense my next optimal action. This includes trusting that I have incorporated all I need to know about transforming pain energy through those psychological processes.

This is similar to what I have learned about being an educator. First I train, then I create an in-depth curriculum, each day ensuring I have prepared a well-thought out lesson plan. In class, as a compassionate educator, I stay mindful and present to the needs of the students and to their responses when I begin to teach. I am willing to abandon my agenda to optimally serve everyone in the educational setting as I open to the preciousness of the moment. Embodying both lesson plans and well-meaning mental processes serve me well as a compassionate educator, a spiritually heart-based persona.

Products of my Holistic Studies

On my journey to becoming a compassionate educator my transformational studies of a self-imposed holistic educational curriculum were invaluable and brought me immeasurable spiritual, mental, physical and emotional wealth. In hindsight I can see that these many diverse vantage points that began to move in concert within me were the seeds that sprouted the meaning of compassion which later blossomed abundantly throughout my educational activities. These studies magically dovetailed into wholeness, unconsciously preparing me to become a compassionate holistic educator.

Studying with these great teachers and tasting their vast array of significant material produced an excitement and motivation within me to fulfill my purposes and goals by serving others holistically. Even though I only had a rudimentary understanding

of my holistic range of studies, I believed I had sufficiently investigated the subjects and practiced the techniques to successfully pass them along. Despite the fact that none of my holistic training was academically oriented or was geared towards the teaching of adults or children, an underlying passion was being stoked throughout these trainings that brought me untold confidence in taking on a grand endeavor that would provide me with a gateway to share and teach the many wonderful practices I had learned. This initiated me as a *holistic mystic* who would inspire children to share my path of conscious evolution through awareness, selflessly entering the material world to be of service.

Mystics are the ones who hunger and thirst after righteousness...the ones who yearn for continued or increased union with...the reality which heals and makes all things new again... [It] involves itself with...the disappearance of the self into mysterious union with God, the Absolute, the Transcendent aspect of reality, the Tao. Thus self-transcendence means letting go of egoistic interests and practical, worldly matters. (p. 7)

Sineta *Ordinary people as monks and mystics* 1986

After reviewing so many of the materials that I have read, I have come to believe that I am a mystic, though not of any particular religion – the deep-rooted mysticism of any religion would probably do! However I am a holistic mystic. I say holistic, because my mysticism extends out to include by body, my mind, my emotions, all life forms and the universe. As my awareness and presence increases I act as a holistic mystic through my spiritual connection, the Oneness... The intention of this connection is beyond both selfishness and selflessness. It is for the purpose of becoming capable of sensing how to most effectively serve the flow of the Oneness in the here and now. (My Heuristic Journal: August 8, 2007)

At that time, all that I believed I required to accomplish my goals was to have a *listening heart* and be a *holistic mystic* who was fired up with the light of compassionate service and the desire to be a channel of increased consciousness. Armed with my holistic studies I felt confident that I could help children fight their wars peacefully, end separation and together return to the Oneness. Even though my marriage was falling apart, I was exhilarated about holistically serving humanity through its children.

My Educator Training

When I completed my Scientology contract and became pregnant with my son, I began my training as an educator. Each of my educator training programs I engaged in had two things in common: they honored the child, and they required the educator be loving and joyful when engaging with the student(s). These educational situations played a significant role in my journey towards being a compassionate educator as they each honored the needs and sensitivity of young children.

Glen Doman: Institutes for the Achievement of Human Potential

Before my son was born I was introduced to Doman's *Better Baby* program by a number of Scientology friends who resonated with this program. From the training information they gave me and the books I then read, my husband helped me to create a plethora of infant educational material. I used these to deliver a multi-subject brain-based curriculum which I began delivering to my baby immediately after he was born and continued it throughout the next many years of his life. This initiated my first formal training and execution of a holistic transformational education program.

Mother as Educator

When Ryan was over a year old we all flew up from Florida to Doman's Institutes for the Achievement of Human Potential in Philadelphia so I could attend his course entitled *How to multiply your baby's intelligence*. Along with other young woman with similar values, I was validated by my modernly un-popular, antifeminist choice - to dedicate myself to being in service to my child as his educator and as a guide towards the

actualization of his potential, stated dreams, and life purposes. I learned how to be my idea of the ultimate mother and eventually became certified as a *Professional Mother!*

71. Mothers are the best teachers.

72. Mothers and kids are the most dynamic learning combination possible.

From: *An Initial Summary of the Facts*
Doman *How to multiply your baby's intelligence* 1979

This intensive, passionate training was more in depth than any I had ever taken throughout my years of university studies. The amount of scientific data (with charts and tables) and the call to recognizing the dire importance of these concentrated studies were similar to those I engaged in on Hubbard's courses. From morning to evening, with coffee breaks that I used for nursing my son, I studied about infant and child brain development and how I could maximize Ryan's potential.

Although there some time set aside to practice Doman's innovative techniques, the training left me both overwhelmed by the amount of work that was in front of me, and enthusiastic about providing my son with everything I thought was humanly possible for his happiness and success. I realized that the main focus of this training was my preparation to assume the persona of *mother as educator*.

Brain Development Activities

I was learning how to take on the responsibility of Ryan's increased brain development. This included his development of physical excellence (based on precise developmental activities and nutritional advice), instructions on how to teach reading, mathematics, encyclopedic information, music, and foreign language, and scientific facts that supported Doman's radical transformational education approach and philosophy on early childhood education. Brain development became fascinating to me.

1. The world has looked at brain growth and development as if it were a predestined and unchangeable fact; instead brain growth and development is a dynamic and ever-changing process.
3. All that we do to speed the process is to give kids visual, auditory, and tactile information with increased frequency, intensity and duration in recognition of the orderly way in which the human brain grows.
23. All tiny kids have a rage to learn, because learning is a survival skill.
26. Tiny kids would rather learn than eat.
27. Babies would much rather learn than play.
33. The ability to take in raw facts is an inverse function of age. (Ibid)

Right and Left Brain Teaching

I was pleased to hear Doman's educational advice during one of his course lectures in 1981. After the *bits of information* have been repetitively taught, he told us to "...do it in reality, wherever it can be demonstrated. This was a massage for the right brain practical side of me. After you and your child study wind and water, then build a raft and navigate it in the river." This was essentially what I had learned in Hubbard's study technology on ensuring there was a balance of *mass and significance*. Doman's *bits* were Hubbard's *significance*; *mass* was physical real-life demonstrations. We were to encourage our child to use their studies to solve problems.

64. ...present your tiny kid with ever increasing opportunity to solve problems of increasing importance. (Ibid)

Genetic Potential and the Environment

Many of my friends did similar Doman trainings, but of this group my son's interest level and benefits far exceeded those of any of my friends' children. I believe that might be due to the combination of my tremendous dedication and diligence with my son's personal aptitude for and interest in such a program. It may have also been because of Ryan's unique balance of *nature and nurture* considering his father's brilliance which

brought him a scholarship to Oxford University. However, Doman truly believes that *anyone* who is educated in his prescribed ways can become a genius.

- 4. Heredity and environment are springboards, not prison cells.
- 5. Our individual genetic potential is that of the human race.
- 9. All intelligence is a product of the environment and our human potential.
- 12. The wildly wide intellectual differences in us are a result of the wildly wide differences in the environments in which we are raised.
- 14. It is the environment of knowledge which begets knowledge. There is no genetics of poverty or of knowledge.
- 35. It is easy to make a baby a genius prior to six years of age.
- 75. Geniuses are made, not born. (Ibid)

Emotional and Spiritual Requirements

The compassionate elements that I learned from Doman's teachings were many. Of course, just giving my son extra opportunity to achieve his potential seemed to be the most compassionate activity that I could ever do for my child. But Doman also had the insight that educators needed to assume certain positive states for successful learning to take place. I was told I had to learn to embody a highly positive attitude and bring this to each moment of service, which meant I was not to teach if I could not create this attitude.

Doman (as well as Thay) was emphatic that teachers, to put it in my own words, needed to free themselves so that they could happily be of service. But how could that be done? Perhaps I could apply what Thay had taught: don't *water the negative seeds* in ourselves. As this could prevent having a positive attitude and thereby learning would be less likely to take place. Doman wanted professional mothers to water the *positive seeds* of joy and enthusiasm. These attitudes would make it possible for learning to *easily* take place. I had to then create these attitudes as a part of my positive educator persona,

finding ways to be my joyous self before approaching my son, and taking extreme pleasure in each lesson I presented.

The cardinal rule is that both parent and child must joyously approach learning... as the superb game that it is. (p. 110)

To almost the precise degree that a parent's attitude is joyous will he succeed in teaching his child. (p. 158)

Doman *How to Teach your Baby to Read: The Gentle Revolution* 1964

It was wonderful to engage in activities that were continually joyful to both Ryan and myself. I came to realize that joy, which was always regarded as a fundamental element of play, was actually vital for the free flow of learning. My husband didn't know if he had faith in this program, but he totally supported it because he appreciated the huge amount of joyful moments that the mother of his child and his son were sharing together.

73. The process of learning is a joyous and intimate one for mother and child.

76. The process of creating a genius is a joyous one.

From: *An Initial Summary of the Facts*
Doman *How to multiply your baby's intelligence* 1979

In all that I read about child raising, Doman was the first teacher of educator training that said the spiritual aspect of joy needed to be cultivated and be a part of the educator's persona. Over time it became clear to me that this was necessary because it met both the emotional and spiritual needs of the child. Intuitively knowing this to be true when considering my own needs as a child, I consciously and happily decided to add this compassionate element of joy to my educator persona.

But how could I be assured of being able to maintain being joyful during each of the 500 or so moments in a day that I would be playing a learning game with my child? My endorphins released during breastfeeding aided me to some degree through my child's first three years, allowing these positive states of being to more easily become

positive training patterns, but I could not rely on this. Though I was instructed to somehow create the states of joy and enthusiasm prior to giving any lesson, educator preparation techniques for the cultivation of spiritual and emotional states vital to the education of my child were not offered.

Educator Preparation

Doman's *Gentle Revolution* did include an understanding of the necessity of at least some of the holistic aspects of educator preparation. It included a physical, emotional and spiritual mindfulness. Doman warned against playing educational games when you were not able to be happily present and give your full attention to the needs of your child. Even though he gave only a few educator preparatory guidelines, the value of holistic educator self- awareness and attentive presence was made emphatically clear.

Don't be tense. If you're not relaxed, don't play the game...a child is the most sensitive instrument imaginable. He will know that you are tense and that will subtly convey unpleasantness. (p. 156)

Doman *How to Teach your Baby to Read* 1964

Eat properly: It is very important that you eat fresh, wholesome foods at regular intervals. This will help you to maintain excellent health and have the energy you need to keep up with the baby... Get enough sleep: sleep deprivation is an occupational hazard for all mothers. 225

Doman *How smart is your baby?* 2006

Tiny Children want and deserve your respect and attention. Tiny children already know you love them, but what they want from you is respect and your undivided attention.

William Gilmore Why Should I Start Teaching My Child So Young?
<http://www.teaching-babies.com>

Doman's Value to Me

Doman's academic, transformational and compassionate theories coupled with my dedicated application of these theories became the solid base upon which my future education of children has rested. His idea of a *gentle revolution* aligned with my desire and participation for the conscious evolution of mankind. Although his teachings became unpopular over the years, by those with views similar to Pearce and Waldorf who denounced the early teaching of academics and the use of *flashcards* as *unnatural*, I still maintain that Doman's work is brilliant when applying it joyously, always being mindful of the momentary needs of the child.

Studying and Teaching Developmental Movement Classes

Years later, when I was working as a massage therapist, I decided to venture out into something new. I found an advertisement in the *Pennysaver* from a business owner wanting to hire someone *who loved children*; I knew that meant me. My interview was successful and I immediately began training as an instructor for her traveling school: Developmental Dance for Preschoolers. Learning the basics of ballet and gymnastics was difficult for me as an adult. Though strenuous it added a sense of grace that I had been missing in my physical demeanor.

During my training I enjoyed assisting her in the many one hour classes she taught each week. She frequently thanked me for being available to be relied upon and for being a compassionate influence on both herself and the students in the classrooms. I was grateful that she was patient with my slow progress in dance and gymnastics. Being

joyous and loving with her and the children seemed to be more valuable to my employer than how well I danced.

When I eventually was proficient enough to run my own weekly classes at a variety of schools and have my own assistant, learning and teaching her varied monthly curricula kept this job alive and fun for quite a while. However, within a year or so, although I enjoyed the movement and the performances, teaching these classes became unsatisfying. I realized that never having the children long enough to create meaningful relationships, and positive effects that I knew were available, was no longer acceptable for me. The thought of being with the same children on a regular basis – engaging daily in transformational service - was now an emerging desire of mine.

Maria Montessori – My Educational Hero

Over the years that I was a student of Montessori, observed Montessori teachers and became one, the word *compassion* was hardly mentioned.. However, as I reflect upon the Montessori teachers that I believed best represented the essence of Maria Montessori herself, I sense that her compassionate nature is the thread that sews together all of her work and principles. It was not until I later ran my own school that I came to realize that being compassionate was the core quality of the Montessori educator persona and used this word in terms like *compassionate communication* and *compassionate responsibility* to help establish the kind of educational setting that Montessori and I both valued.

My Destiny as a Student of Montessori

At a parenting convention in LA, I had my first Montessori experience as one of her books literally fell into my hands when I surprisingly won the door prize: *The Absorbent Mind*. Reading it became a lowered priority as I felt sufficiently satisfied with the educational material I was already using for my 4 year old boy: the elementary school level Doman program and the Calvert School home-study kindergarten program in which Ryan was enrolled. I shelved the Montessori book, *forgetting* my decision to read it.

My next Montessori exposure was when I was searching out an elementary school for my son for kindergarten. Out of the five possible schools we visited was a Walden School with a Montessori kindergarten; it was the only one that could remotely work for him. Even though Ryan was doing long division mathematics and had been reading books on his own since he was two years old, Yolanda, the middle-aged Montessori directress was confident that she would be able to accommodate him, so we enrolled.

This lovely teacher created a beautiful balance in the classroom that was similar to what my heart told me would be best suited for Ryan and his studies. We were fortunate to have put him in this holistic, secure, environment since baby Tara died the first week of his first year of school. Having been 100% involved in his education until then, I was relieved that Yolanda could be trusted, since I was unavailable to keep up with his schoolwork. Suffering the loss of his sister and his parents' attention, I was thankful that Ryan was supported by a wonderful, caring educator who informed us of her school observations, such as the emotional and social difficulties that he was experiencing.

My next exposure to Montessori education was when, for his upcoming fourth grade, Ryan and I investigated educational settings that could be better equipped to

understand and help to meet his needs than the public school system had done. When we discovered a spiritually oriented Montessori setting, Ryan at last felt at home.

There were many things that I appreciated about this school. The first one was that much of his studies could be done outdoors. Another was that his teacher taught him methods of research to meet his own interests and needs. Because of the school's spiritual orientation, he had the opportunity to learn meditation and yoga. The director of the school then recognized Ryan's deep spiritual nature and had him lead those spiritual classes. Additionally, this was the school that was more than happy to have Marshall Rosenberg teach the teachers and the director how to speak the language *of giraffe*.

Unfortunately this school only went through the fourth grade so he had to return to public school for his fifth year, which did not work out well for him. Since his prior Montessori experiences had been great we looked for another Montessori educational environment that for his sixth grade. However, the only Montessori elementary school in this area we found was unsuitable and undesirable to both of us as their freedom/structure ratio tipped way far over toward freedom and was permissively out of control.

The next major connection I had with Montessori occurred as the result of a vision which placed me onto the Montessori step of my educational path. I intuited that my marriage would end within a few months and that I would need to find a new career. As I was washing the dishes and looking out my kitchen window, an image came before me of a large tree with a huge trunk. This daydream showed me lovingly holding hands with young children encircling the trunk of this tree. A wondrous energy reigned over the interconnectedness of the tree, the children and me. Singing a sweet song and giving a full-body hug to the tree, we silently created sacred space, felt the love and were at peace.

This vision greatly impacted me. It told me that I could not only be a teacher, but that I could create my own school that would be heartfelt, earth-based and purposeful. I chose to take this daydream as a possible Shamanic-type *vision*. Feeling my exhilarated grin, I took a leap of faith, threw my life to the wind and decided I would act on this adventurous whim. Opening to a new future, I took giant steps towards making that dream a reality. *I did not have* a college degree, normally a liability in this field, but *I did have* the courage to surrender to this newfound faith in my path of service. This choice seemed to bring back my *magical powers* of old. As long as I listened and followed the guide posts, I felt assured that my actions would be abundantly blessed.

With the Yellow Pages were at hand, I looked up educational training schools. One by one each school told me that I needed to have a bachelor's degree in order to enroll. I did not give up hope and spotted a school with a heartfelt name: *The Montessori Schoolhouse*. I optimistically called this school and found that their trainings in fact did not require a degree. There was even a home study part of the course with lessons and homework assignments I had to turn in during that semester so that I could determine if, as educators, Maria Montessori and I were a good match!

Co-Servants to Mankind

That marked the beginning of an intimate connection with Dr. Maria Montessori, the first female doctor in Italy, a fellow Virgo and an educator soul-mate. Through her work, the books that she wrote, and the training programs in her name, my educator path was inspired. The kinship I had with her was spiritual, heartfelt, emotional, intellectual,

psychological, social and universal. My vision did match Montessori's vision. Aline Wolf (2004) writes about Montessori's vision of cosmic education:

Inherent in the whole study is the interconnectedness of all creation, the oneness of things. (p. 131)

The ways in which this brilliant woman understood and taught about children and education reflected what was in my heart and resonated with my soul. I had devoted my life to giving Ryan every opportunity to be exposed to everything, so that we could note what he naturally gravitate towards and offer him as much training as he desired in those choice areas. I took that as a sign of his unique destiny and of his specific talents that could be *actualized* (a Maslow teaching) so that he could play his particular role in society - enjoying, serving, and *Tikkun Olam* - healing the world. My path as an educator appeared to be that of helping other children in the same way I assisted my own: to serve and heal humanity through its young children with an educational approach that was multidimensional and holistic. Montessori would have shared this vision of educating children in ways that would help them to consciously evolve themselves and mankind.

Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952) believed that each individual has an innate talent. When this is realized, the individual is happy and well-adjusted and can make an optimal contribution to society...To discover his or her own talents, each child needs to be exposed to experiences pertaining to all facets of life.

Tracy Levine *Montessori Education - a Good Choice*
<http://mwhodges.home.att.net/tracy/montessori.htm>

Within the child lies the fate of the future. Whoever wishes to confer some benefit on society must preserve him from deviation and observe his natural ways of acting. A child is mysterious and powerful and contains within himself the secret of human nature. p. 208

Montessori *The Secret of Childhood* 1966

Today, while the world is in conflict, and many plans are afoot for its future reconstruction, education is widely regarded as one of the best means for bringing this about. ... But although education is recognized as

one of the ways of raising mankind, it is nevertheless, still and only, thought of as an education *of the mind*. ...if education is always to be conceived along the same antiquated lines of a mere transmission of knowledge, there is little to be hoped from it in the bettering of man's future...We must take into account a ...new world force, innumerable in the totality of its membership, which is at present hidden and ignored. If help and salvation are to come, they can only come from the children, for the children are the makers of men. (p.15 /16)

Montessori *The Absorbent Mind* translated into English in 1967

We teachers can only help the work going on, as servants wait upon a master. We then become witnesses to the development of the human soul; the emergence of the New Man, who will no longer be the victim of events but, thanks to his clarity of vision, will become able to direct and to mold the future of mankind. (p. 20 Ibid)

Montessori Training

Having loved the home-study section of this Montessori training and done quite well on their essays, I elected to take this training center's fast track. I enrolled in their intensive program so that I would be able to begin my internship in the upcoming autumn. This Montessori training would include everything necessary for me to become certified by UCSD as an *early childhood educator*.

A large portion of the training was demonstrations and practice sessions, so my natural learning style needs were mostly met. Like the Doman's intensive training, I worked hard and fast to learn how to create the materials, teach Montessori's style of language arts, mathematics and science, which was not much different from Doman's style as they both were convinced that volumes of early learning was imperative. Their programs were so similar that for my required Montessori material I was able to modify the Doman's *bits of intelligence* I had made for Ryan.

The additional studies and material unique to a Montessori curriculum that I most enjoyed she named *practical life* and *sensorial*. They were specific for children from 1 -6

years of age. These materials needed to be beautifully maintained and gently offered by an educator with a demeanor of peaceful mindfulness.

What is practical life? My short answer - everything the child does to care for herself and to help maintain the community in which she lives.
<http://montessoribyhand.blogspot.com>

Says Maria Montessori, "Beauty is found in harmony, not in discord; and harmony implies affinities, but these require a refinement of the senses if they are to be perceived." The aim of the Montessori Sensorial is to educate the child's senses [by helping] the child refine his or her experience of sight, sound, touch, taste and smell.

<http://www.montessori-book.com/Sensorial.html>

Transformational Education

The most inspirational aspect of my Montessori training aligned with the reason why I was impressed with Doman: they both had a vision of, and a program for, transformational education. Since my educational experiences through high school seemed so alienating, even with me strong thirst for knowledge, I felt relieved to find systems that could prevent this in other children. Both of these scientist /educators recognized these views which could positively transformation educations in non-alienating ways: they honored and respected each child's need for the timely education of very young children. As Doman called for a *gentle revolution*, Montessori called for a *non-violent revolution*. Their passion aligned with and fired up my own revolutionary mission of educational transformation.

We want to help the auto-construction of man at the right time, so that mankind can go forward to something great. Society has built walls, barriers. These the new education must cast down, revealing the free horizon. The new education is a revolution, but without violence. It is *the* nonviolent revolution. After that, if it triumphs, violent revolution will have become forever impossible. (p. 214)

Montessori *The Absorbent Mind* 1967

Self-Liberation

During my training, I also studied many other educators who shared various aspects of Montessori's philosophy. It was here that I was introduced to Abraham Maslow and his unique stages of development that aligned with Montessori's *sensitive periods*. However, what I most directly vibrated with Maslow's was similar in Hubbard and Doman's philosophy as well: given the right environment, assistance and tools, we can all liberate ourselves and *actualize* our potential. In studying Maslow I found I had another ally. I became even more inspired to be the kind of educator who took on the responsibility to offer to young children what I had been struggling to acquire as a young adult. But this wasn't conscious evolution so much as a movement towards wholeness.

It looks as though there were a single ultimate value for mankind, a far goal toward which all men strive. This is called variously, self-actualization, self-realization, integration ...but they all agree that this amounts to realizing the potentialities of the person, that is to say, becoming fully human, everything that the person can become. (p. 153)
Abraham Maslow *Toward a Psychology of Being* 1968

My Montessori Curriculum Project: *Emotion in Motion*

Even though I did excellently in my written and verbal and practical exams I did not feel assured that I was confident enough to teach my own class. One of the main Montessori instructors of my program thought that I understood the material so well that she offered me to do an internship in a school where the director would be doing work outside of the classroom for most of the time. Even though she felt confidence in my ability, I had to turn her down because I was greatly looking forward to being mentored by an educator who embodied the Montessori philosophy and principles. In addition, I wanted to intern under a director who would support a holistic Montessori curriculum

project that I had chosen to create for my internship. I was fortunate to have the opportunity, and the guts, to get myself hired and mentored by the wonderful Patty O’Dea who turned out to have a similar holistic view of education to my own.

During my Montessori training we were all asked to choose a topic for our one-year internship curriculum project. Without thinking, I began writing these words on the blank page in front of me: *emotion in motion*. Handing in this topic, when I had no idea what kind of curriculum I could possibly create that this would be a title for, was an act of faith.

Looking back at this now, I am amazed at my student courage to create a *sensorial* program for preschoolers that was based upon exploring physical and emotional and social awareness. However, as my understanding of Montessori’s true purposes become clearer to me, I believe she would have happily approved of my program. Some of the purposes of the *Body Awareness* section of my curriculum were:

- To learn to become familiar with one’s own whole body
 - To feel joy experiencing one’s own body
 - To differentiate one’s physical experience through education of the senses
 - To recognize the relationship of one’s own body to other bodies and the environment
 - To explore perception of reality through the five senses
- (My *Emotion in Motion - Body Awareness* document: 1989)

I utilized all of my prior trainings and current literature that I was reading as well as the social activities I was then involved in for the new work I created. For the emotional facet of the program, for instance, I felt the guidance of Zukav (1989) who had said in *The Seat of the Soul*, “Follow your feelings... become aware of the different parts of yourself... the different things that they want” (p. 137). One activity, *Exploring Emotions*, included a class of 23 three to five year olds sitting in a circle, and both

individually and as a group thinking about and sharing moments of feeling a stated emotion; this responses got quite emotionally intense at times. Another activity I created, *What is the Emotional Feeling?*, had the purposes of learning to differentiate the range of one's own emotional feelings and also refining the recognition of the emotional feelings of others (see *Appendix: Emotional Feeling Work*).

When I received my internship project back from my training program's director, I read her praise of my holistic curriculum and was surprised by her view that what I handed in was well beyond anything they had required (unbeknownst to me at the time I had begun to take on an *overachiever* persona). She also wrote that this work was so excellent that she wanted me to deliver an *Emotion in Motion* workshop at the next Montessori conference. A parent of one of my students also thought it was valuable and encouraged me to turn this program into a book for other teachers and parents. I did not feel confident enough to do either, but I did use this program for years at Patty's school where I began teaching. It was a core piece in the Montessori-style school which I later founded and run, *The Caring Adventure Educational Center*.

Montessori Education and Influence

The Montessori training program was so intense that each day one of us had a breakdown; consequently they decided never to deliver such an intensive course again. However, I appreciated this style because though one of my student personas needed to break things down and take them in small morsels, another deeper part of me. This intuitive student of my youth learned best by doing and not by memorizing facts. She naturally understood Montessori's philosophy and could easily apply her techniques.

Being a student of Montessori is a never-ending story for me. I will tell of my later realizations, further appreciation of her work, and the more remote aspects of her program which helped to further my own educator path. These two aspects are her unique educator persona which she called *The Role of the Teacher* and her *Spiritual Preparation of the Teacher* which inspired my inquiry into self-compassion and a holistic preparation of the educator.

Towards Getting Bachelor Degrees

During my Montessori training, and for the following four years of co-teaching and teaching with and for Patty, I was forever preparing myself to be the founder, administrator, director and head teacher of my own school. I laboriously, in my *spare* time, made copies of all this Montessori school's administrative and educational material and took copious notes of various teachers' procedures that I admired. With an eye on actualizing my vision, I was then ready to return to college to get my BA which my *director of my school* persona required of me.

In addition to being my educator persona's requirement, the impetus behind my desire to get a more traditional education was to have a more well-rounded training in education. Acquire a balance to my plethora of holistic studies, led me back to university to get my BA before I opened my own school. Additionally, I had the vision of teaching holistic principles that were grounded in a strong academic program.

Returning to traditional university settings took some adjustment after so many years of creating my own holistic curriculum and engaging in non-traditional educational curricula and settings. My anxiety around test-taking was greatly reduced, but my obsessive goal to *ace every class* was magnified. Since I had a number of successful

careers and alternative studies under my belt, my increased confidence and self-awareness allowed me to be more present in these new classes than I had been in my earlier university studies. Also, being beyond my youthful years changed my teacher/student relationships; I was no longer the scared child under an authoritarian thumb. Learning in a more egalitarian environment was much more comfortable. However, I still got stressed when what was taught was outside my comprehension level especially since my director and educator personas had the additional requirement of getting straight A's.

Goal-focused learning ignores the potential to develop in a non-competitive, non-goal-oriented way...Superiority, arrogance and pride may be the fruits of 'success' while inferiority, disappointment and envy may be the fruits of 'failure. (Christopher Titmus, 1993, p. 111)

Cited in Miller *Educating for Wisdom and Compassion* (p. 32) 2006

Getting my Associate Degree

I decided to first complete my AA at a couple of local community colleges which, for the most part, I thoroughly enjoyed as they offered more unique courses and their smaller classes were fairly laid back. I took advantage of the opportunity to take all of my electives in the arts – which relaxed and exhilarated me because it felt like play and not work. Outside of my Creative Writing class, my favorite academic subject was Ecology. This supplemented my Thai-inspired study of *deep ecology*, which I had learned initially during an Alaskan *Vision Quest* silent retreat. This college course now taught me about the interconnectedness of all things from a scientific perspective which motivated me to combine both aspects of ecology in later science lessons I gave to my young students.

Deep ecology is a recent branch of ecological philosophy (ecosophy) that considers humankind an integral part of its environment... Deep ecology describes itself as "deep" because it persists in asking deeper questions concerning "why" and "how" and thus is concerned with the fundamental philosophical questions about the impacts of human life as one part of the

ecosphere, rather than with a narrow view of ecology as a branch of biological science, and aims to avoid merely utilitarian environmentalism, which it argues is concerned with resource management of the environment for human purposes.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deep_ecology

My University Double Major Degree

After confirming that getting a Bachelor's Degree would make me happy, Daddy encouraged me (and I agreed) to once again become a full time student to meet this goal as quickly as possible. I met with my academic career counselor who suggested I take a new double major the university was offering: Global Arts and Education Liberal Arts. I balked at getting a degree in the arts since I rejected the thought of myself as an artist, asserting to both of us that I was an educator. She scanned my creative dress and told me that of course I was an artist. Since all of my electives were in the arts I already met all the prerequisites for this program. This worked hand-in-hand with the liberal studies program which specifically prepared education students for their teacher credential program. This counselor was compassionate to my *rejected artist*. What a great call!

Global Arts / Visual and Performing Arts Degree

My two years at Cal State San Marcos was a superior university emotional experience across the board. Few instructors expressed the judgmental/ critical non-compassionate attitude I had come to expect in a traditional educational setting. This was partially because all of the teachers from the Global Arts program (whose name changed to the *Visual and Performing Arts* program shortly before I graduated) had to have an FMA degree and practicing artists whose work was currently showing in museums. Most of my teachers did not have a teacher's credential or the negative educator personas that

many professional educators grow over the years. These instructors were all very forgiving, quite approachable, compassionate people that only had constructive criticism. Their educational environments demonstrated a beautiful balance of freedom within limits, and of course they also allowed for a wonderful development of expression of a variety of the creative arts.

My art classes all used the cutting edge creative programs of the early '90s. I created digital art through a variety of computer art programs, created my own musical compositions through computer music programs, made music videos in their night lab, learned African drumming techniques, created many group performances, etc. My favorite course was *The Process of Art*. Every student and teacher in the program, were together for three hours each Wednesday and discovered the process of an avant-garde artist. Then in newly chosen small groups intuition was validated, creativity was inspired and phenomenal art was produced. One group multi-media performance I created was a choreographed production and video based on Huang's *Dance of the Five Elements* made in response to the musical artist John Cage's process and the throwing of Chinese coins.

The arts are one of the ways to move into the dimensions beyond reason, beyond written and spoken words. (p. 28)

Eleniak *The Role of the Arts in the Transformation of Consciousness* 2006

This art program offered the possibility of creative expression in any area of life. With regards to my professional goals, learning computer art gave me the opportunity to create perfected and more creative educational material than I had before when I had been belaboring imperfectly by hand. As for the personal development, I was initially less confident since my improvisational abilities were greatly reduced from the time

when I was a natural child actress. In addition, I felt limited by my *compassionate educator persona* which rarely included either my shadows or those of another.

Despite these shortcomings, the visual and performing arts further refined my spiritual /intuitive sense that had brought forth my visions of a holistic school and an *Emotion in Motion* curriculum. I then capitalized on this art program for personal healing. Intuiting the aspects of me that were not whole, I then allowed my creative expression to be my therapeutic medium for transforming my pain. Though I was not really conscious of this at the time, my three music videos and my digital art compositions were all geared towards the transformation of unresolved suffering – both personal and universal. Creative expression became a new means of healing and conscious evolution.

The idea that individual self-development is an important pursuit is a comparatively recent one in human history; and the idea that the arts are vehicles of self-expression is still more recent. (p. 75)

Storr *Solitude: A Return to the Self* 1988

My three music videos, which I still enjoy watching, dealt with the energy of the pain and pleasure of touch, personas and *shadows*, and food addiction. I also healed another layer of my traumatic Tara birth experience through a series of digital artwork posters where I combined actual photos of the end of my pregnancy, with photos of my baby before she died, with pictures of *Holy White Tara* and finally with the imprinted word *compassion* curved around my bare 9th month huge belly. These artwork products aroused spiritual healings within me unlike any I had experienced through psychological processing. The healing effects magnified when I, though feeling quite vulnerable, allowed my spiritual world and my suffering to be displayed as a part of a special exhibit in the university. My private, introspective experience now being shared with others, strangers, fellow human beings in the real world, was spiritually and emotionally

liberating. To this day, I still have a framed version of one of my Tara poster composites hanging on a bathroom wall; it comforts me.

Creativity is the religious paint of the covenant with God.

Reb Zalman Schacter-Shlomi *How Yom Kippur Resolves Karma* 2003

Although I loved playing in the creative realm and I did get A's in all of my classes, I still did not consider myself an artist, feel talented, or value my products as works of art. I saw myself as an educator who liked to be creative! That is why I found it so strange and extremely uncomfortable when I was encouraged by all of my instructors, and given letters of recommendation by the two heads of the Global Arts department attesting to the fine artist I was, to continue in this field and get an MFA at the California Institute of the Arts.

Although I appreciated the praise, much to my dismay, my video art instructor took me aside and told me that I was talented enough to create videos professionally. He said that he was so impressed by my work that he wanted to take me under his wing and get me some immediate jobs in the field while I was getting my MFA. Being very nervous by the thought of not being an educator and not being of service, I non-compassionately and blatantly turned down his offer. Recalling this now, I am embarrassed by how badly I treated his gracious proposal and appreciation. I was emphatic that it was *self-indulgent to be an artist!* I was an educator with a purpose; teaching was my number one priority; I had to contribute to society through compassionate service.

A part of me refused to see myself as an artist when there was so much work that still needed to be done on this planet, which I felt was best accomplished through the education of children. Being a professional artist seemed to counter being a

compassionate educator as it was reminiscent of my younger phase of self-centeredness which I thought I had evolved out of. I refused to be thwarted from my current mission of transformational education, though I was unaware of that term at the time. I did not want to get side-tracked into any other career, especially one in which I could not conceive of myself positively; it was difficult for me to take on the persona of an artist.

The beauty of what being an art major, taking art classes and having artists around gave to me was a loosening up of rigid responses to the moment, an opening to my joy, an increased physical and emotional mobility, and a freeing up of my enormous wealth of creative expression. I began to realize that this creative expression connected with my spiritual / intuitive sense and offered me a new way of learning and processing information that did not have anxiety attached to it. I could see the possibility of the beingness of an educator including the same quality of trust that being a massage therapist had as my faith in the creative process was renewed. I enjoyed the opportunity of utilizing all I had learned in the arts as fodder for the curriculum for children that I was continually contemplating writing upon graduation.

When I began teaching again, I noted my dramatic expression had redeveloped which brought great variety, humor and fun into my classroom. During those early years of running my school, my creative expression represented my fantasy/ earthly spiritual world as a child. My fellow children students appreciated that I could live in that world with them along side of the realm of increased reality that I was continually exposing them to through their education. Recently, I began to again recognize the importance of living in both worlds, which over time I had forgotten – getting so non-compassionately stuck in reality after I left the world of the arts. I feel its connection to *being compassion*.

Coming from my fantasy universe realm I do not have the stress of having to know anything. Fantasy takes away the heavy judgments of reality... Being compassion is being the fantasy and connecting with reality. Being compassion is being the beauty of the oneness... and the mystery, feeling that connection and love. Then you can deal with the reality of pain, of suffering, and of reality of needs not being met. I want my fantasy universe realm to harmonize with my reality realm.

(My Heuristic Journal: June 2008)

Educational Liberal Arts Degree

For my non-creative Liberal Arts requirements, it was frustrating to have to once again work harder than most of my fellow students in order to get the top grades I felt I needed and deserved. In traditional educational systems I still felt like an anomaly. As was the case with the public school system, most universities are also traditionally geared towards a category of student of which I do not belong: the abstract, reflective, left brain learner. It was painful to try to continually adjust myself to this orientation and be judged by it. My main job became avoiding the stress and anxiety of testing while learning and getting an A in each course I was studying.

This was especially true in my difficult science classes. The hole in my low-level science education had never been filled, so all subsequent college level science classes brought about tremendous struggle. My Geology and Exercise Physiology classes created an exceptional amount of distress. My post-public school science exploration of astrology, Earth based religious study, and a review of the holistic effects of specific gemstones and crystals did not prepare me for Geology; my high school botany class, my massage anatomy training, and my years of engaging in personal exercise programs were severely inadequate training for understanding the lectures, text and scientific journal articles I needed to evaluate for Exercise Physiology.

Older and more mature, I proactively found methods of getting good grades without having to suffer through the anxiety of a traditional educational system's overwhelming final exams in science. Primarily, I was unabashed and received all the tutoring available for both subjects which kept my grades high. Secondly, I requested and was granted permission by my Geology and Exercise Physiology instructors to hand in a major project in their subject, in lieu of taking my final exams, which I could then use as an educator of young children. I am glad to have created those beautiful and valuable projects rather than stressfully studying for and taking the final exams. Although I did receive an A in these classes, I wish I could have found a way to understand many areas of these subjects that had seemed too difficult to ever learn, such as weather patterns in Geology and the Krebs cycle in Exercise Physiology.

I soon learned that this was not the only class I was academically deficient in as I never took Geography, though other students had in junior high school. My self-esteem was then lowered in my Cultural Geography class. I was shocked when I received back the first draft of my first 15 page report and found out it was inadequate. I met with my macho professor who was finally willing to help me. I rewrote this report numerous times until it was at last fully acceptable. Now I realize that I had never been taught how to do college research papers; this disability affected the writing of this dissertation.

As for my educator education, each of my teachers extolled the values of a positive educator presence and were able to incorporate transformational education techniques, skills and attitudes in the classroom and throughout their curriculum. In one class we even graded ourselves, which I did not find merit in at the time because I was so

programmed to seek approval from teachers and to regurgitate material from text books – of which there were none for this class.

For me, however, the pendulum shift went too far over to the left. The Department of Education had taken a *liberal feel good* approach which lacked sufficient structure for me needs. Given the historical educational training patterns of this group, minimum learning seemed to take place, though everyone gave themselves an A. What I did not like about most of my education classes was that they were not serious enough; they were *too* lighthearted, fun, non-judgmental, encouraging, creative - too easy for me.

Applying Baumrind's figure 1 (below) to the style of direction that my educators of educators gave, I found the direction to be minimal. They were *high on warmth* and low *on control*, therefore too permissive, as Lillard (2005) includes in her section on *Level of Adult Direction* (p.267). As far as my needs went, my teachers of education, for the most part, did not hold a tight enough space, establish strict enough guidelines, demand excellence, establish adequate structure or set high enough goals for myself (and perhaps for other prospective educators as well) to further excel.

| | | |
|---------|---------------|---------------|
| | Warmth | |
| Control | Authoritative | Authoritarian |
| | Permissive | Neglectful |

My Doman and Montessori trainings were far superior to all of my university education training. Possibly because I had already been successfully teaching and making educational material for years, despite all of the new university education classes I took, I learned practically no new viable teaching methods. I still enjoyed many classes and creative assignments like multicultural projects and annotating books. However even in

the open class environmental discussions, I could not get enough meat and potatoes to fill myself. In retrospect, I can see that even though the classes were fun, most of what was thought would be useful, I never used with my future students.

When I began to tutor early elementary school students, still not having gotten a teacher credential myself, I was shocked by the incompetence of so many of the young teachers. I wondered if they had received similar university education training during their teacher credential program. Perhaps the lack of high expectations and true educator preparation, as well as infrequent practice sessions, in part, accounted for the high turnover rate of these neophytes.

University Grad

I became a super-responsible student during these university years, got my straight A's and graduated summa cum laude with a BA in Educational Liberal Studies and a BA in Visual and Performing Arts. Throughout my college experiences, like through all of the other practices I had learned, I always kept teaching students in mind. Sometimes, this acted as a deterrent from fully going into the experience for myself as I was learning about it first hand for the purpose of teaching it to others.

My original plan had included the possibility of continuing on to get my teacher's credential which my courses and C-Best test had primed me for. However, for a number of reasons I chose not to. First, it would have meant Ryan spending his last year at home, mostly alone, so he requested I get my credentials once he was away at college. Secondly, my boyfriend at the time (an elementary school teacher) told me I would never be happy with the amount of restrictions imposed upon public elementary school teachers and encouraged me to go ahead and create my own school. Lastly, Daddy got congestive

heart failure days after I graduated and I needed to spend the better part of the next half a year caring for him in New York and New Jersey in the cold of winter. I never got my teacher's credential and wondered over the years if that has been a liability for my career.

Reaping the Rewards of Higher Education

After Daddy died, I returned to Encinitas and with Leni as my needed assistant, I began to develop two curricula programs preparing to open our school that summer. The *conscious evolution of the students* theme of both programs nourished my service goal. One was a Montessori /Doman style academic program. It was fat with a variety of materials and activities for high-potential brain development. The other program was a potpourri of all I had learned from my large scope of holistic higher educational studies finding methods to appropriately apply them and benefit young children. Allowing intuition to once again lead the way, I decided on the school name: *The Caring Adventure*; each aspect of this program had *caring adventures* which evolved from variety of educational studies on my journey.

My spiritual studies helped to bring about my coined term the *Magical Self* whose qualities included being lovable and courageous. Mainly Buddhist and Jewish Renewal philosophy inspired the caring and compassionate nature expressed as we in the school was *sharing our love*. Hubbard's *Eight Dynamics* (eight urges toward survival) aroused my desire to develop the eight areas of awareness that made up The Caring Adventure curriculum. These were viewed in the context of *caring for self* and *caring for others*. Each adventure would explore and increase our awareness of the parts of our whole selves, such as: body awareness, awareness of our family, awareness of our cultural

group (including many of my fellow student projects from my class in *Multicultural Education*) and awareness of the earth (utilizing my multi-dimensional Geology project on Volcanoes and Deep Ecology study).

My New Age studies sprinkled this new program with raising self-esteem New Age inspirational songs and Sufi dances. My Taoist and bodywork studies were utilized in my body awareness program, as T'ai Chi and massage techniques were written in always with the mindful sensitivity and respect that I learned from Thay. I wound up including Dramatic Play and even created the opportunity to have many school performances throughout the school year, even though from Montessori's perspective this was not appropriate for young children. Our *caring adventures* also included a modified version of my curriculum project of *Emotion in Motion*. Rosenberg's values infiltrated this program. I quoted him in the *Discipline Philosophy* document, a part of the *Parent Handbook* created from what I had learned and discovered throughout my studies. I also enjoyed creating other documents, such as *Approach to the Child*, and *Basic Philosophy*.

Our philosophy is based on a profound respect for the dignity and uniqueness of each child. Our goal is to support and nurture the child's natural impulse towards positive growth. This includes our personal caring about the physical, mental, spiritual and emotional well-being of every student.

Through the process of inquiry the children learn about caring, which we define as "compassionate responsibility." Through loving attention and encouragement, children become empowered with ways to search and discover how to care for themselves, others and the environment. We use Montessori based methods of academic education which emphasize individuality and allow for the child to develop according to his or her own specified time table. The pace and direction of learning are set by the child. We trust the child's own "inner guide" and we respond to "sensitive periods" when the child is more open to learn in one area or another...

We maintain a positive attitude towards the children at all times. Procedures are introduced and reinforced through games and compassionate communication. We acknowledge positive actions by stating its positive effect on us. Rather than praise or invalidate their success or failure, we inquire about their responses and acknowledge them. If we see a child having difficulty with an activity, we take note, refrain from invalidation, and re-teach the skill involved...

Discipline is maintained through exercising "freedom within limits" and the application of "Compassionate Communication" skills. We watch, in a non-judgmental manner, for any potential difficulties. With empathy, we encourage self-discipline by assisting the verbal expression of any child's unmet needs. This opens the door to harmony with others.

Ultimately, we believe that by bringing awareness to the child of their "magical" qualities - their true essence - and by directing them to cultivate compassion they will develop confidence in their ability to achieve their life purpose.

(Excerpts from The Caring Adventure preschool's Basic Philosophy, 1995)

Before opening this school, the last educator trainings I took were: an administrator course at UCSD, a few Head Start classes and other classes required by San Diego Social Services, such as Children's CPR & First Aid. Leni and I then set up the school beautifully. Knowing I deviated from much of the traditional material making, I asked a long-time director from a local Montessori school, and Montessori instructor in a local community college, to visit and give her Montessori stamp of approval. Her remarks were quite kind, saying Montessori would have loved what I had done. Having a respectable and inviting Montessori environment, having a Caring Adventure curriculum, and having fulfilled all of my state, county and city requirements for a home run center, (being more than qualified), all of my studies had come to fruition. I was then given government approval to be licensed and to register my first students, ready and willing to actualize my potential as a *compassionate educator!*

Part 3

Cultivating Compassion: Hits and Misses

Believing I had the elixir of compassion coursing through me, I blessed many with my compassionate presence. Unfortunately, also in the name of compassion, I either overwhelmed others with advice or took on their pain, which contributed to making a bit of a mess at times with many of the people dearest to me and with my own creations. My sense is that this was due to ungracefully dealing with my own pain that got triggered by others' pain that I was attempting to be compassionate to.

This section's narratives are then intended to further heal the pain connected to compassionate people and situations. I will engage in, what I have called, my *process of compassion*: presence, awareness, empathy, appreciation and care. Through this process as I cultivate a deeper compassionate healing of my heart, my pain energy can be transformed, giving me more creative energy available to be a compassionate educator.

I am writing this section to bring awareness to the areas of compassion that have worked well for me, the areas of compassion that I have learned from others dear to me, and the areas of myself as a compassionate educator and friend that still need to be cultivated. But how can I determine if I have cultivated compassion from someone or something? What method can I develop and use to adjudicate my deficiencies of compassion and then increase the areas of compassion I am deficient in?

While reading Lillard's (2005) recent Montessori book for the narrative review I could find no mention of the term compassion. Upon doing an index search for similar terms in different sections of the book, I found three educator abilities that I could attribute to a well-meaning compassionate persona: warmth, sensitivity and control.

When brought together I experienced these as an interconnected construct, a compassionate persona triad, that when cultivated could increase compassionate actions.

As I began to play with these terms, I surprisingly saw that within any situation needing compassion, these three abilities could be examined for quality and quantity. For example, I recently viewed a painful situation that occurred when wanting to be a responsible mother. Inspecting my actions at the time and noting how they related to these compassionate abilities, I saw that as my sensitivity to my son's pain increased my own pain multiplied, decreasing my warmth and increasing my control over him and the situation. This realization immediately began to shift the balance of these abilities, increasing a feeling of compassion both to my son and myself. Cultivating these abilities can then bring about greater awareness and a potential for greater compassion.

I am now assuming these terms (warmth, sensitivity and control) make up an action triad of a compassionate persona. Therefore, this section will contain the stories of myself or others cultivating their compassionate personas and also include an action triad assessment within these following narrative inquiries. In addition I will use my process of compassion to further my cultivation of compassion which will assist me in fulfilling my goal to successfully become a compassionate educator.

The Action Triad of a Compassionate Persona: Compassionate Cultivators

(See *Appendix* for the creative expression Part 3)

Cultivating compassion includes learning about my warmth -
 The warmth of the autumn warm colors within me
 Each lovely tone of my warmth rainbow blends into the other
 The deep warmth, the vibrant warmth, the gentle warmth

The blue green purple tones express my sensitivity.
 Violet indigo is my intuitive sense.

The blues are emotional sensitivity.
The greens are my sensitivity to life.

Cultivating compassionate control
With white, grays, black, dark brown and dark red-purple
White is very little control.
The grays have more willingness to control
Black is total control.
Dark, rich colors temper control through warmth and sensitivity.

Result of my Creative Expression Relating to my Experiences of Cultivating Compassion

I viewed the outline I made for Part 3 of my narrative and then created my *Part 3 Cultivating Compassion* creative expression (see *Appendix*). While representing each story of the upcoming section with the *action triad* in mind, I began to see the same pattern, as my above example, repeat itself through all of the associated major situations. This particular program was triggered by an accelerated sensitivity which then reduced my warmth and increased my control. When attempting to be compassionate during a painful situation, my high sensitivity threw me out of control triggering me to stay stuck sensing my great pain; this dropped out my warmth, as my heart could not bare to be open to any more pain. My warmth then got substituted for an increase in control. This same scenario held true for every sub-topic creative expression in Part 3.

I found that when a person I was highly sensitive to, and to whom I felt great warmth, was in great pain and complained about it, I could not cope with the amount of pain that I then begin to feel inside of me. Unable to contain these overwhelming feelings, I attempted to fix the situation by controlling my environment in order to stop the pain as soon as possible. My modus operandi for transforming the pain was giving advice. Advice with the intention to control, and with reduced warmth, does not

necessarily feel like compassion to another, even if it is emanating from great empathy. I became, in those times, more like a traditional educator than a compassionate one.

When I was not able to be compassionate, when someone else was not able to be compassionate to me, or when my compassion was not creating positive results, I can now see that one or more components of this compassionate action triad was either absent or not in an optimal balance, in myself or in another. This compromised the actions of my compassionate persona. This action triad helped me to view both my compassionate persona's success and which of these compassionate abilities needed to be cultivated to elicit greater compassionate action.

It was again very painful to sense that I had hurt, in some way, all that I wanted to be compassionate to as I was attempting to cultivate compassion. I was the one that needed to be compassionate and was mucking it up. This is probably why, after all of the earlier attempts at a dissertation topic, only when I began to research self-compassion and begin to deal with my own pain compassionately, that I was finally free to truly begin my cultivation of a compassionate educator persona.

Cultivating Compassionate Friendships

(A tribute of those now departed)

Many personal relationships have helped me to cultivate compassion. In gratitude, I have created legacies of compassion for Daddy and Tara through my earlier narrative stories of them. Other dearly departed friends who acted as my compassionate educators that I would like to also hereby leave a legacy for are: Cal, Leni, and Silk. Each of them, through their infinite understanding and expression of compassion and love, has taught (and continues to teach) me aspects of compassion that I am still cultivating.

Considering a compassionate educator persona to have the action triad of warmth, sensitivity and control, I will open to which, if any, of these compassionate abilities my precious allies have helped, or are helping, me to cultivate. The extreme sensitivity of each of these dear friends has resulted in their experiencing far greater pain than most, be it their own pain, or that of others, especially mine. So I hope that by now feeling some of their individual pain and better understanding their personal needs, I can cultivate an even deeper sense of compassion. I thank these extraordinary beings for gracing me with their own unique style of compassion over time, both in every day life and when I was in need.

Cal Eliot

I remember his goodness most of all... and no being could ever be remembered for anything greater.

(Mark e-mailed this to me October 26, 2008 [Cal was Mark's best friend])

When I was 14 years old I met Cal through his close friend Mark (who was then dating a close friend of mine) who brought Cal to my girlfriend's birthday party in my old neighborhood of Brownsville on leap year, February 29, 1964. Hanging out with Cal that first evening, I was surprised at how much I appreciated our unique connection as I was reclining on a couch and he was sitting on its covered rail above me. On an outward social level we sarcastically bantered back and forth with a sharp intelligence I had not found that satisfying in anyone before; on an inward emotional level I felt tenderly touched and cared for in a way similar to that of my father - but with a sexy, romantic tone. Though I had decided to not interact again with any other of Mark's friends, a bond had been made with Cal that was so deep, I eventually stopped *playing hard to get* and gave him my phone number.

Cal was always wonderful to me and treated me with the utmost respect bordering on reverence: I was his muse, his goddess. We lived far away from each other (Canarsie to Sheepshead Bay over an hour each way by two city busses) and neither of us had a car, so being in each other's physical presence was unusually irregular. My relationship with this 17 year old brilliant (Mensa society member), fascinating (surprisingly knowledgeable on most any subject), existential poet developed mainly during hours of amazing daily phone discussions and loving expressions for nearly two years before he was *drafted*.

Our connection stretched my intelligence, philosophic convictions, and spiritual values. Though most saw him as jovial and a bit outrageous, I found this coffee-house *beatnik* to be highly sensitive. One emotional color I was drawn to in him was his sense of the *beautiful sadness* in life; this resonated with own emotional difficulties at home, in school and with puberty in general. Within a short period of time Cal became my compassionate confidante. He was highly attentive, wrote me beautiful romantic poetry, inspired excellence, truly seemed to care about all of my serious and foolish utterances, increased my consciousness and tenderly opened my heart.

Challenging Transitions

My partner, my soul mate, my savior and prospective professional writer, took the spring semester off from his junior year of college to get his feet wet working in the Random House publishing company at 18 years of age. Although Cal returned to university in the upcoming fall, when the government's draft personnel discovered he had stopped school for those few months without declaring himself "1A" he was summoned

to two years in prison or two years in the Army. Though he was a staunch pacifist, this was the most difficult decision that this teenager ever had to make as he seriously worried that a prison sentence might mar his career. The moment he told me his final decision is indelibly imprinted in my memory. I recall being in the kitchen on the phone hearing his definitive decree and moving into silent shock; Cal told me that despite what his parents said, he would like me to support his decision to endure a two year stint in the Army. Surrendering to my not being privy to his destiny, I gave him my support. Our lives together and apart would never be the same.

...

Before continuing the writing of this section of the narrative I decided to get tangible external input to supplement my memory: I reviewed the letters that acquaintances of his had written me over the years for compassionate references; I retrieved and organized into chronological order my hundred or so remaining letters that Cal wrote while he was in the Army; through the Canarsie grapevine I found a way to contact Mark, his dear friend who introduced us to one another, and apprehensively called him. The collaborative external input made this narrative more complete and allowed for a greater transformation.

This was the first time I had been able to read Cal's letters and maintain my sanity. As a matter of fact, this reading was unlike any I had ever done before as now meeting my mate with needed compassion in mind made a huge difference. One sorrow that took some dealing with was the anger and sadness I felt for allowing myself to be convinced by my step-mother to let three times the amount of Cal's letters that I retrieved to be incinerated. Clutching onto the letters I will save for the rest of my life, I feel

blessed that I could connect to Cal once again. The story of our lives together and independently came alive, my memories merging into the reality of Cal through his elegant communications.

Uniting with Cal's friend Mark (who I had not been in contact with for 45 years) for the purpose of this tribute and him writing a paragraph on Cal's compassionate nature, turned into my receiving Mark's openhearted compassion towards me. He made himself available by phone for many hours and was surprisingly spiritually in alignment with my own perspectives and practices. His appreciation of this legacy created a new bond between us. I felt that Cal was the conduit; through Mark, Cal could begin to be present with me again. Mark's kind views balanced some of my unresolved memories and helped me to better deal with my guilt.

Pain and Suffering

I have always had tremendous pain when remembering Cal. Reading his daily letters began to bring back the same feelings. Desiring a positive relationship, I saw my habitual reaction to the angst expressed throughout his letters as hopefully being transformed through compassion. Yet, as I recalled my 18 year old boyfriend being ripped away from his secure home in Brooklyn and his junior year of college for his first Army stint in Fort Carson, Colorado on November 22, 1965 in the midst of many young men dying in Vietnam, I was struck once again with deep pain and longing.

Danny Boy

(Words & music by Frederic E. Weatherly)

Oh Danny boy, the pipes, the pipes are calling
From glen to glen and down the mountain side
The summer's gone and all the roses dying

'Tis you, 'tis you must go and I must bye

But come ye back when summer's in the meadow
Or when the valley's hushed and white with snow

And I'll be here in sunshine or in shadow
Oh Danny boy, oh Danny boy I love you so

www.kovideo.net/lyrics/e/Elvis-Presley/Danny-Boy.html

Cal's writings to me were a sprinkling of his poetic beauty, humor, personal critical analysis, love of life and righteousness. He clearly shared what the bulk of his written expression was: "I am writing a flowing wave of compliments to you and curses to the Army" (December 5, 1965). One third of his letters expressed his anger and disgust verging on depression at his circumstances (wishing he could *re-write his life* and be graduated from college). Two thirds of his writings were intense love letters, repeatedly proposing marriage (admitting that until we met he did not think he would ever marry) and speaking endearingly about envisioning my being the wonderful mother of our children. Unfortunately, his growing, painful dependency became a burden hardly possible for this 15 year old girl to bear. I am now beginning to more compassionately realize that Cal used me as his angel... as his refuge... since it was too difficult for him to remain being a refuge onto himself in those dismal times.

One never realizes how much home and the most wonderful girl in the world can mean until they are both unreachable. (C. Eliot: December 2, 1965)

I'm trying, though very ungracefully, to tell you that I love you and will never be able to live without you. (December 4, 1965)

Darling, don't you realize that just receiving something that you touched recently makes my entire day? (March 10, 1966)

Don't you understand that I love you so much that I am wracked by a burning desire whenever I allow my mind to saunter down the paths of the past and future happenings? (March 14, 1966)

I hate to admit it but you are the first person I have ever needed. Without you I could be in the most populated city in the world and still be lonely enough to kill myself... darling if I loved you any more my servitude would be terminated and turned into slavery. (March 8, 1966)

I can only survive by dreaming of holding you again... I was never a dependent person, but now I realize that without you I float aimlessly through a sea of misfortune. (August 2, 1966)

It was not easy for me to receive that new type of love. But, of course, my greatest pain came from feeling Cal's pain deep inside of me. My hyper-sensitivity was drowning me as his pain was now my pain and I did not know how to tolerate that much dissonant energy. His blatant expressions of prophecies of doom were like bullets in my own heart.

I'm in a class right now about how many medics get their heads blown off because of their own stupidity... medics who panic have less than three seconds to live in combat; but if you hang loose and don't sweat the small stuff your life span can be enlarged to 38.5 seconds... (March 8 1966)

The way I had tried to control my overwhelming pain was to slightly distance myself from the source of my pain, who was then Cal. His situation and communications unconsciously triggered despair and death over and over again. Along with hating high school and my parents continuing to bitterly quarrel with threats of breaking the family apart, my anxiety attacks began, which further triggered Cal. My stress further multiplied with each new ruddy, red sanded letter from Vietnam. It was very difficult for me to deal with him being in the service as every one of his letters further depressed me.

Courage

In addition to those personas of Cal that were pessimistic, his basic courage continued to shine through. He became a chaplain and helped those in spiritual and emotional need; he succeeded grandly in all of his medic trainings and activities to help

others in physical need. Now realizing that my own courage had been quite limited when I attempted to read his war letters while maintaining an open heart, I can especially honor Cal's amazing bravery and his vow of service.

Do you realize I am going to be in the only branch of the service that saves lives rather than takes them? (C. Eliot: March 4, 1966)

Your boyfriend has just been awarded the Presidential Citation for National Defense... I've turned into a celebrity overnight... I'll be the highest ranking medic in my platoon. (July, 16, 1966)

My dearest darling, today we engaged the Viet Cong... As a medic I worked like a dog but thank God nobody was injured badly. I've just finished patching up the last of the casualties [don't tell my folks]. I'll be home; this I can guarantee. There is nothing in the world that will keep me from seeing you again. I love you, of this I am sure of, and if you'll still have me I will prove it to you by cherishing you for the rest of my life... Today I saw hell, but soon I shall taste the fruits of heaven. Please be there. By the way, chalk up the 'combat medic's badge.' I am one day closer to home. I shall always love you. Cal (February 9, 1967)

You want me to level with you. OK, here it is. I'm a medic therefore I'm a target. I've been shot at many times and I've killed two men in defense of a patient. Yesterday I was hit by shrapnel from a hand grenade; chalk up another purple heart. I'm a good medic and I know my job, but unfortunately I'm not God and four people have died in my arms. ...we have to go to an Italian dinner at one of the guy's homes in East Meadow Long Island, Joe Grande. He almost bled to death and he credits me with the save rather than giving the credit to God where it rightly belongs... I'm fine and I love you and I shall remain in both forever. (February 18, 1967)

Sorry, I haven't written lately, but frankly I've been too busy and too frightened to write... I was willing to bet that I would never see this day. Two weeks ago today Joe Grande died in my arms. He was hit by our own artillery and we worked on him for 1 hour 45 minutes. God-damn, it was heart-breaking. Don't be mad but I put your mezuzah in his pocket. I felt that maybe God would help.

On the 12th two companies were surrounded and they moved all of the medics... I turned a corner running to a patient and all of a sudden all hell broke loose. Bullets were hitting all around me and the guys said all you could hear was me yelling "Give me some cover, these mother f...ers have me pinned." Well, we're out of it now and all is calm. Don't sweat it. Just chalk up another purple heart and a bronze medal. (March 14, 1967)

All is well; I'm still kicking. I love and miss you. Seven more days and I'll be able to write you. I love you. Cal. (March 15, 1967)

[This was last letter I have -one week before he was killed]

Over the years misinformation about how Cal died was replaced with facts. I always believed he was killed in *friendly fire* but in my recent research I find that he died in battle. Though accurate information became gradually apparent, my ability to confront these facts lagged behind their availability. It is not until now that *I* have been able to finally have the courage to review the actual circumstances of Cal's death.

During the war, the Plei Trap was heavily used as an infiltration route and base area, connecting at its northwestern end with the infamous Ho Chi Minh Trail. The area is a torturous place with some of the most difficult terrain imaginable - steep mountains, mist-shrouded valleys, dense jungle coverage. The low-lying areas are overshadowed by rugged mountains, and daylight temperatures soar above 105 degrees. In 1967, potable water was scarce, but insects and other pests - including the enemy - were plentiful. The Plei Trap had a nickname - the Valley of Tears...

<http://www.virtualwall.org/units/PoleiDuc.htm>

"We were supposed to be a blocking force against a small unit of NVA that had been spotted by a Recon Team and spotter plane. We choppered out to an LZ on the 21st and proceeded to march towards the NVA force. ...Next morning we set out for the final position and were ambushed by a Battalion sized NVA outfit. The battle started around 7:30 AM and the heaviest fighting ended around 4:30 PM. Lighter fighting continued after 4:30 PM while the choppers were getting the wounded out."

John Nelson, SP4, A/1/8: <http://www.virtualwall.org/units/PoleiDuc.htm>

Like all of the other names on the wall, these 2,096 medics / corpsmen made the supreme sacrifice for their country. Some died while trying to help or save their fellow man.... [with] courage and supreme sacrifice.

<http://www.1stcavmedic.com/Medic-Corpsman.htm>

I was scared that Cal would come back dismembered and disabled as he would often warn me about and that at 17 years of age I would have to marry and care for him as an invalid for the remainder of my life. And, of course, I was also petrified that he would die and I would lose my love forever. I had lost *my* courage. When he died I was

devastated. My fear was that my inability to stay compassionate had killed him. The 21 gun salute at his funeral made me feel I was reliving his death. With uncontrollable passion, I wanted to go into the grave with him.

But if he come and all the roses dying
 And I am dead, as dead I well may be
 He'll come here and find the place where I am lying
 And kneel and say an *Ave* there for me

And I shall feel, oh soft you tread above me
 And then my grave will richer, sweeter be
 For you will bend and tell me that you love me
 And I shall rest in peace until you come to me

<http://www.kovideo.net/lyrics/e/Elvis-Presley/Danny-Boy.html>

After the funeral, when I was beating myself up with guilt, my friend Harriet told me she was visited by Cal who told her he was trying to connect with me. Fearfully, I created time and space for this meeting. Using his courage, I opened myself to receive him. I felt his beautiful presence now freed of his pain and more compassionate than ever. Though I still had great bouts of guilt throughout the years, each year I re-read some of Cal's letter and took time for our next round of healing, some of which I journaled:

My Tribute to Calvin Eliot Schwartz SP4, A/1/8

09 December 1946 - 22 March 1967



Thank you for sharing your pain and love with me.
 It let me live in peace...

Thank you for your incredible caring and loving and support.
 I'm sorry that I was frightened by my fears and didn't fully reciprocate.

Thank you for your atheism converted to spirituality,
 A medic and the chaplain – my mentor!

Please forgive my cowardice, vanity, ignorance, non-confront.

Please accept my apology – I lost my way and was so very scared.

I greatly appreciate the compassion you had for your men, your family & for me. You are a god.

I'm sorry that you might not have gotten to do your healing.
You seem to have done incredible *mitzvahs* in the war, so
Perhaps your healing was done.

Thank you for your insights, understandings, judgment and aesthetics.
Thank you for having been alive and touching my soul,
For your tenderness in that touch – for your sensitivity

You said, “I shall love you for a myriad of eternities.”
And I shall love you forever, as always, I have.

Oh Cal, dear one, you don't need my love. Love yourself. You are so special, Spec4. But you have my love and respect and admiration.

You were perfect for me and I did not want to see it.
If had not made myself blind, I could not have bared losing you.
I now feel and know the blessing of our relationship.

(My Personal Journal: August 30, 1990)

Compassion from Cal

In these times everyone needs comfort and would welcome a hand to hold
Compassion is the fire that burns the hurt that pains the soul
And though my eyes are so polluted by the sight of lost desires
I can see you standing by

Joan Armatrading *Lovers Speak* 2003

I had not comprehended the extent of Cal's compassion until I spoke with others and re-read his letters. Hearing dear friends tell their wonderful stories reduced my pain as I began to focus on Cal's endearing qualities. His compassion then astounded me.

...All of my impressions of Calvin's life expression can easily be seen from the perspective having been many forms of compassion — toward me as his loyal friend, toward our group of friends... and toward his parents and sister. He was never mean or disrespectful toward anyone in any way I ever witnessed.... no, he was just a beautiful, kind soul and a gift of light to the world for every moment he was given on this plane... my pact with Calvin was to be upbeat, brave and victorious always. And so, in

my inner dialogues with Cal that began right at that emptiest of moments we danced instead in pure light and joy, determined to reunite at the chosen time when the great misunderstanding of any and all separation is finally revealed for the illusion it is.

Mark Rubin e-mailed to me:10/31/08

Like me, the part of compassion that Cal was lacking in was self-compassion. He cared about everyone and everything else. I am beginning to understand that his personal hyper-sensitivity brought him the same pain I had been experiencing. If he had cultivated this skill, I believe he would have been in a lot less pain. His compassionate wisdom was way beyond his 19 years and I was blessed to receive his compassion for me, my family and my friends. He did tend to give a bit of advice, but in a way that worked well for me. Cal helped me to transform the pain I had with friends and family through appreciation – appreciating my highest intentions despite my pain.

If I sounded gruff on the phone, please don't think it was because I wanted to. I was very upset that my mother upset you and was upset herself. (December 4, 1965)

Please do not feel bad if the letters are scarce for the next week as I have been appointed the chaplain's assistant and will be giving bible classes to officer's children during most of my spare time. (December 5, 1965)

I am going to be the greatest ally to humanity the world has ever known. For this I am going to need your help. (March 16, 1966)

The adjustment to singular life is probably very difficult for your parents, but they probably know what they are doing. It's now up to you to make it easier for both of them... your sister's welfare is now in your hands. Take care of her...If you take the time you can be the guiding light to the right path ...I am very sorry to hear about your rift with Harriet. The loss of a friend of her caliber is a great one...sure she's involved with school and boyfriend but does that sound any different than all of the time that she sat and helped you with both your problem and me? ...Think of all the pressures relieved from your mind by a mere phone call to Harriet's familiar voice. Is she asking too much to expect you to do the same with her? ...I will be with you for all the 360 minutes of hell (during the Regents exams); I hope that when you get nervous you think of me and are

calmed by the thought of my love, the love that you have had for the past 2 ½ years ...I will be a good provider or die trying. (October 4, 1966)

Compassion and Education

Cal was especially compassionate to me with regards to education, always reminding me not to worry about exams, acknowledging my suffering and encouraging me to find my way to work within the system. The educational system seemed to have compromised his development when they pushed Cal ahead 2 years in school. He foresaw so many of the emotional and spiritual problems of testing and grading and believed their resulting difficulties could all be fixed through transformational education.

How is school? Going back to it must have been difficult considering you didn't finish all of the homework that was due...The purpose of your present schooling is to give you a taste of what you would like to choose to do for the rest of your life. Don't blow it by not caring. I did, and now that I've wandered for quite a while I've finally realized my mistakes and see what I want to do... Please, don't do it to yourself... Today I re-read some of your letters and you are on the decline as far as your attitude towards school goes. Just please, find what you want and I know you will attack and devour it soon after your quest begins. (April 22, 1966)

Through the rise in academic standards, NYC will no longer have children, but merely 'college trainees'. Building blocks and jump rope, which teach comradeship and the American way to the younger child, will become obsolete and nursery school will begin with a lecture to the 4 ½ year olds about the importance of the college boards... people will begin to feel inadequate to others concerning academics by age 6, and the honor system which is on the decline now, will be a thing of the past. This resentment will lead to early delinquency.... responsibility causes growth, granted one should have the responsibility of his actions at an early age.

But should a 12 year old high school freshman be responsible for his actions whereas one might be of normal childhood frivolity will cause him to hate himself for the rest of his life? Wouldn't this cause a bitterness in the aforementioned 12 year old and cause him to look for a better system? ...work to replace and improve upon the inadequacies that were left to us by our ancestors. If the American heritage is to be above all others, the heritage is to work for this distinction...stay out of the minds of men; don't be physical; appeal to the benevolence of their hearts. (April 26, 1966)

Action Compassion Triad with Cal

My compassionate persona with Cal ebbed and flowed. I kept my warmth alive as best I could, given the fact that I was overwhelmed by my hyper-sensitivity to his and my own pain. Eventually experiencing him mainly as in pain and my resulting pain was not compassionate to either of us. I needed to have included more sensitivity as mindfulness, needing to cultivate more compassion for both of us. Our warmth and sensitivity had overlapped and was beautiful, but then without controlling the sensitivity to our pain, it began to destroy us both. Too much sensitivity began to wipe out my warmth; too much warmth made me less sensitive. Without the wisdom to consciously initiate positive control, as in Thay's suggestion to *not water the negative seeds*, my habitual self-defensive programs caused stultification which reduced my warmth and sensitivity and positive control leaving me suffering with no compassion.

Increased Compassion and Self-Compassion

For decades I have been cycling through the healing of this major, horrible loss. What I have been realizing through this re-connection with Cal, in light of compassion for myself and for him, is that we do not need to suffer. Our suffering, in fact, prohibited my compassion.

When I experienced compassion as sympathy I was taken over by Cal's suffering which prevented me from assisting him to transform his pain energy. Sympathy resulted from my speaking to Cal as his pain, feeling his pain and feeling terrible about all of his pain - thereby increasing the pain and even pitying him. My efforts towards self-compassion, at the time, were taken over by my suffering. This resulted from considering

myself a persona in pain, focusing on the pain of this persona, and feeling the terror in the pain - thereby increasing the pain and even indulging in self-pity.

For transforming pain energy, a purpose of compassion, I needed to stay connected to Cal's spiritual, human goodness that was always underlying or along side of his pain. That is how I could have helped him to transform his pain. Just as I received compassion from Cal when he saw me as beautiful, reminded me who I really was, and at the same time was willing to acknowledge my pain as real, I could have perhaps been a source of inspiration for Cal as I had been for him in the past. What changed?

Cal needed nurturing but I was not free to give that to him since it was his behaviors and situations that were the main triggers of my pain. That is why I was not free to sense how to serve him compassionately and creatively. I was not connected to my own spiritual essence so how could I connect with his? Though I didn't realize it as the time, what I was in dire need of was self-compassion.

During this inquiry I began to apply self-compassionate and compassionate tools that allowed me to feel the child-like joy of the essences of each of us even while in our pain. It then became easier for me to be free to empathize with each of our painful situations without being swallowed up by them. If I had known about self-compassion I could have dealt with my own pain compassionately and been able to be more available to be the constant loving presence he wanted from me. Whether that would have saved his life or not, I will never know.

Through this narrative inquiry I can now perceive this loss as gain. I can hold him now; I have not lost him. Perhaps it is that I have found him at this depth with my soul for the first time. My heart is opening to Cal in a gentle but powerful way. Freer to sense

how to serve him, I am able to contentedly share a common space and stroke him with a warm, loving smile.

In my sacred sangha I experience Cal in my power center. He is in my gut as a courageous soldier who can ground as well as stimulate me. Feeling him within me I can now take refuge in him... in his passionate Sag belly fire.

I thought Cal's simple error cost him his life, but actually his life was full and complete, outside of writing the great American novel and being married to me of course! Perhaps he already did both or neither were his destiny. Being compassionate to him now means not holding him as the dead soldier any longer. Being compassionate means feeling him very much alive and well.

Cal! I never stopped caring about you while you were gone but your pain, my reaction to your expression of your pain consumed me over time. You served beautifully, I am very proud of you and I love you more than ever. Thank you for teaching me unconditional love, expanding my philosophical capacity and being a beacon of courageous compassion.

Soul-Sister Leni: Our Compassionate Reunion

Try to remember the kind of September
When life was slow and oh, so mellow...
Try to remember, and if you remember, then follow.
(From: *Try to remember* in *The Fantasticks* by Tom Jones)

Following my compassionate memories of the closest person to me in my life, Leni Eisler/ Rudder/ Gisselle from when we first met this lifetime in September 1969 through the healing of my reactions to her death will comprise this narrative section. It will be marked by some sweet verses from four CDs I created in her name (assisted by my earlier dearest childhood friend, Harriet, in New York) one year after Leni *passed over*; these were a tribute to Leni, a gift to her family and friends and acted as a self-

compassionate healing practice for me. The songs from those CDs that I have chosen for this piece poignantly symbolize our unique compassionate friendship and will be my main storytelling guide for this section. This music was an emotional expression that was a part of our bond - like the above song which came from the off-Broadway play that I saw many times and that she performed in during her earlier teen years.

I invite Leni with me on this sacred journey, as a spiritual guide. Stocker (1997) in *Sacred Stories We Live By* wrote of “inner companions” that could be used to assist in our storytelling. This aligns with the *Tarot of the Spirit* (Eakins 1992) reading *from Leni* (in spirit) on her last birthday which stated “your inner guides are waiting to serve you” (p. 275). I then open for this to be a shared recounting of our life together (both our compassionate hits and misses), an honoring of Leni’s eternal metaphysical nature and of my recognition of her continued compassionate presence. We will unfold this mysterious union through having *one foot in the real world and one foot in the fantasy/spiritual universe*.

College New Yorkers

Leni and I met initially with our semi-tough Brooklyn veneer personas puffed up in defense— not from our compassionate hearts! Our mutual dear friend, Dennis, who related so similarly to each of us, felt delightfully compelled to have this introduction happen on my first day at Pace College. He was quite confused and disappointed when he felt how cold we were to one another, as he had not understood that each of us wanted to still steal that extra bow from him.

There’s no business like show business like no business I know.
 Everything about it is appealing; everything the traffic will allow.
 Nowhere could you get that happy feeling when you are stealing that extra bow.

Even with a turkey that you know will fold, you may be stranded out in the cold.
 Still you wouldn't trade it for a sack of gold; let's go on with the show!
 (From: *Annie, Get your Gun* in *There's no business like Show Business* by Irving Berlin)

Our next enforced connection was when we found ourselves in the same car on the F Train coming home from school. This time our mutual *overly-confident actress* personas spoke to one another as we discovered that we were both trained for, acted in and loved the theater— especially musicals. During these initial conversations our sensitive hearts still protected and hid our warmth, so we went on *with the show!*

It was not until we were being in our *helper* personas and assisting our respective boyfriends in making a *deal* in the college cafeteria, that our compassionate selves began to emerge. Leni's generous spirit became apparent as she offered me her trust while encouraging me to not pay her up front. Her kind and uncorrupted gesture opened my heart to her; what an amusing beginning to a special friendship.

The next fall our sensitivity and control aspects of compassion emerged when we joined the protest marches together. Our fellow college students were getting hit with PVC pipes by the *hard-hat* construction workers. The grief in our hearts fired up our activism as we vigilantly carried our signs in this first war we shared. Leni's quest for peace, verses the many violent protesters, revealed a purity and strength of character that struck me. Though she protested the war, she was compassionate to both sides.

There's battle lines being drawn. Nobody's right if everybody's wrong...
 Singing songs and carrying signs. Mostly say, hooray for our side.
 It's time we stop, hey, what's that sound? Everybody look what's going down.
 (From: *For What it's Worth* by Buffalo Springfield)

During this turmoil, I was attacked by a girl in the dorm because we had both been gravely lied to by her boyfriend. In a state of shock, I unconsciously took the elevator and was met by Leni when I left its doors. After what felt like being horrifically

betrayed, an angel suddenly appeared before me in my great hour of need. Her glowing presence, infinite listening ability, comforting warmth, surprising sensitivity to my situation and wise advice offered me the highest quality of compassion. Her loving intimacy created a sense of security that I would always feel in Leni's presence when I was in pain and that inspired and encouraged a loving compassion in me for her as well.

When the truth is found to be lies and all the joy within you dies
 Don't you want somebody to love? Don't you need somebody to love?
 (From: *Somebody to Love* by the Jefferson Airplane)

You were the one who stayed to listen when nobody else was there.
 You were the one found what was missing when I couldn't find a prayer.
 You offered your hand, opened your heart, and whispered your wisdom to me...
 I knew I'd see an angel before my time had come. Wouldn't you know - you were one!
You Were the One by Michael Stillwater

Freedom to Energetically Flow like Water and Express our Fire

Sometimes I feel like a motherless child - a long way from my home: Freedom!
 (From: *Freedom* by Richie Havens)

When I had yet another devastating relationship betrayal and stopped school unbeknownst to Leni, her strong intuitive sense and heart of compassion drew her to find out my number and call to offer me empathy. I was stunned that she knew something was wrong and could relate to and understand the level of pain I was experiencing. Though I was, at the time, being a hermit and speaking to no one, she got through to me. I discovered that she too was hardly mothered, as her mother had been in the Holocaust as a beautiful teenager and had vile experiences she could never recover from. Both of us felt we had to mother our anxiety-ridden mothers who had never grown up.

On the verge of a nervous breakdown, I went off to the south of Spain for a week with my estranged mother who left me there indefinitely with a room and a return ticket

home. When I returned a month later, Len and I once again communed – this time on an even deeper level. As we both had decided not to go back to college for the spring semester, she invited me to go to Israel with her and live on a kibbutz. I was now beginning to trust her intuition and compassion. So although I was in an exceptionally unstable state of existence, I accepted her invitation to share this unusual adventure.

It appeared that Leni and I have elementally been Water/ Fire. Our sensitive waters can flow when we connect deeply within and touch our fire. Astrologically, Leni's main signs were all fire: sun in Leo, moon in Sagittarius and Aries rising. Our fire converged in the realm of Sagittarius as this is my rising sign. Our mutual longing for adventure in different realms created the ease to travel together.

The moon represents the feelings and nurturing; the ascendant ...is how the native relates immediately to the world around her... [You] may share similar interests in philosophy and higher learning... great travel mates!

Re: Sagittarius moon and Ascendant compatibility February 10, 2008
<http://sagittariusrising.tribe.net/thread>

We both experienced an exceptional sense of relief from our pent up energy when we gave ourselves the freedom to stop school and to discontinue society's patented future we were being designed for. Maintaining compassion for others required the self-compassion of gaining true freedom for ourselves. Being in touch with led by our emotions, our water, we were then fed by our fire.

I won't grow up; I don't want to go to school
 Just to learn to be a parrot and recite a silly rule...

We won't grow up; we will never grow a day
 And if someone tries to make us we will simply run away

And never land will always be the home of youth and joy and liberty
 I'll never grow up, never grow up, and never grow up. Not me!

(From: *I won't grow up* in *Peter Pan* by Caroline Leigh)

When we freed ourselves by running away to Israel, a unique interdependent caring relationship began. We effortlessly fell into Leni being my mouth and I being her eyes. She spoke Hebrew to all of my relatives who I had never met before and I attended to her in and around the ocean when she needed to remove her contacts. I initiated interesting social adventures and she introduced me to the spiritual concept of reincarnation she had learned from her dad who had been a Hassidic rabbi; both of these had frightened the other a bit, yet we relished in each other's abilities and wisdom.

It seemed we stood and talked like this before.
We looked at each other in the same way then, but I can't remember where or when...

And though it seems that we have met before
And laughed before, and loved before, but who knows where or when.
(From: *Where or When* in *Babes in Arms* by Rodgers and Hart)

Our meeting seemed to have been fated, but I was still reluctant to believe in past lives. However, she *proved* its possible existence when I irresponsibly hypnotized her by *giving her a dream* on the road late at night when we were trying to *hitch* a ride back to the Kibbutz and was interrupted during an awkward moment. When we arrived back to our room Leni fell asleep while our male friends were there. After having so much difficulty waking her up, I then realized that she was stuck in an incident of drowning when she had been a captain of a ship. Beginning to honor her spiritual wisdom, I became extremely compassionate to Leni's triggered situation and became devoted to her healing.

In Israel we discovered that we both loved Paris and French creative expression in all its forms (she kept the French spelling I created of her first name). The Parisian culture seemed to relate to what metaphysically we were both coined as: *11's* in numerology and *fire/water* elementally— both exemplifying huge energy systems needing direction and release. One day we allowed ourselves to move our blocked energy and go

out of control in our kibbutz bedroom. We jumped on the beds chaotically and banged on the walls freeing the immense dispersed energy we had locked up inside. This was actually a very self-compassionate activity for both of us as mutually expressing our *craziness* transformed our pain energy. This sparked a deeper energetic bond between us.

We're on a carousel, a crazy carousel, and now we go around, again we go around
 And now we spin around; we're high above the ground
 And down again around, and up again around
 So high above the ground; we feel we've got to yell,
 We're on a carousel, a crazy carousel...

And the whole world madly turning, turning, and turning 'till you can't see.

(From: *Carousel* in *Jacques Bret is alive and living in Paris* by Jacques Bret)

We both loved this French song which expressed the fast, wonderful, yet sometimes chaotic, energy we felt inside. Leni later played this song at her wedding for me to dance to as her Maid of Honor. During my freely spinning across the dance-floor the video captured my falling to the floor in joyful laughter. Though I loved that sort of freedom, I was not responsible with it as I was less than conscious of my physical body.

Conscious Evolution

When we returned from Israel, Leni and I became partners in our conscious evolution, exploring many evolutionary options: joining the Jefferson Starship, training in biofeedback, becoming a Rosicrucian and studying Kabala. Stumbling upon Scientology together, Leni joined me in opening to this as the next possible step on our spiritual, philosophical, psychological and professional path. When we first arrived at the mission our intuitive connection was first realized when others were uncomfortable with our communication; we were told that we spoke very few words to express our ideas to one another, which made it difficult for others trying to make sense of our conversations.

Our entire summer we spent studying communication and LRH's meditation techniques. Studying to 8 hours a day expressed our newfound devotion. We coached each other rigorously on what I have discovered to be the foundations of compassion: *stopping, awareness, just being, focusing, listening, acknowledging and presence.*

Though this was interesting and fun, we wanted the carrot that Scientology offered –total freedom! In the fall we both returned to college to see if we could find this through our majors, mine psychology and Leni's philosophy. However, after one semester we both quit and committed to the both psychological and philosophical spiritual path of transforming pain energy through Scientology and become free – Clear!

What if I could really fly and all along I have been walking in my sleep...
 What if all the words they taught me and all the books I read
 ...don't mean a thing in the end?

...Maybe some day we can put out all the fires that terrify and blind us
 ...and clear away the smoke, maybe some day.

We've got to free our minds, free our hearts, free our souls.

(From: *What If* by Peggy Lebo [who Leni was later a devout patron of])

Then we became auditors, spiritual counselors trained in listening. Leni was my best auditor as she *duplicated* me better than anyone else I had ever met, second to Daddy. Duplication, empathizing with exact precision, was based on listening and Leni was a model listener. It was Leni's amazing duplication abilities and empathetic expression which made her such a great auditor and friend.

Once we became mission staff members in Greenwich Village, we practically lived in the mission. Though we thought we would become more connected, this new life alienated us. Since our new views caused us to abandon most friends and distanced from many family members, hearing that Leonard Cohen (a musician we became idols of in Israel) lived near us and sung of *going clear* brought us both great solace.

New York is cold, but I like where I'm living;
 There's music on Clinton Street all through the evening...
 And Jane came by with a lock of your hair.
 She said that you gave it to her, that night that you planned to go clear.
 Did you ever go clear?
 (From: *Famous Blue Raincoat* by Leonard Cohen)

Leni and I were living together in Los Angeles when she went *clear* and continued onto her *Operating Thetan* levels. Physically and emotionally, she had notably changed; but what was most significant was that her scope had greatly increased and her visionary consciousness was in the ethereal realm. I later took the same spiritual training and processing, achieving the similar states of consciousness we had sought after.

On a clear day, rise and look around you and you'll see who you are
 On a clear day how it will astound you
 That the glow of your being outshines every star
 You'll feel part of every mountain sea and shore
 You can hear from far and near a world you've never, never heard before.
 And on a clear day, on a clear day, you can see forever... and ever more.
 (From: *On a clear day you can see forever* written by Alan Jay Lerner)

Motherhood and Creating an Extended Family

Our expanded states of consciousness were greatly challenged when we returned to the mission and were given our respective divisions to run. Like me, Leni was not easily understood when she was in her highest truest state. We became disenchanted with the mission and they became disenchanted with us; Leni took a leave of absence to have her second child and never returned. I remained until my contract was complete. During that time period I had to move in with Leni as she was the only person in our mission who was compassionate to me for my choice in leaving a relationship with the mission's director to get engaged to a British auditor who I later married and created a family with.

In the world of Scientology, neither Leni nor I were ever fully understood and therefore we were not truly respected in that environment. Additionally, most of our birth family members could not relate to us as Scientologists. So the self-compassionate action for us was to move. Since we no longer fit in NY, we opted for a new place that could feel like home. Having fond memories of LA, we dreamed of creating a new life there.

All the leaves are brown and the sky is grey. I've been for a walk on a winter's day.

I'd be safe and warm if I was in LA. California dreaming on such a winter's day.

(From: *California Dreaming* by the Mamas and the Papas)

Compassionate to one another, we moved on from our group, from our birth family and from our homeland - from New York to California. When we arrived in Los Angeles eight years later we were quite disappointed. Our dream world had vanished.

Oh, it only seems to show that you don't know what you got till it's gone.

They paved paradise and put up a parking lot,

(From: *Paved Paradise* by Joni Mitchell)

So we left our once beloved city and found a place to call home an hour away where we could create happy families - two houses and land on the same lot. Outside of the smog and newly accumulated allergies, it was the perfect place to mother our young children. Our families merged when we became God-mothers to each others' children. Neither of us had a positive role model for mothering, so we devoted ourselves to the task of learning how to be compassionate educators and mothered our children, our husbands and each other. During my pregnancies, Leni provided my needed motherly care.

Now free from the present influence of our mothers allowed us to become quite different mothers than the ones we were blessed with. We attempted to be more compassionate to our children, having our own unique balance of warmth, sensitivity and control (Both sensitive in many arenas, Leni with a bit more warmth and me with a bit

more control). Of course, we did not realize we were not free from our mothers' personas that resided within us. As mothers, even with all of our good intention, we were still deficient in the elements of the action triad warmth, sensitivity and control— because our mothers' had been deficient and we had not yet made peace with them.

Growing up in my household, I had never experienced receiving guests or family over for meals or learned how to be hospitable. Leni taught me this aspect of compassion by example. Anyone crossing her doorstep was treated with warmhearted generosity - even when there was little money— and cared for as one of the family. Leni was always cheerfully busy doing something for someone in the family – which besides her family of five included me and my family. Even her son Adam remembers that “She was the cool mom,” Rudder said. "Wherever she went people would seek her out. She just had this presence about her that was inviting" (Sisson 2006). I learned from Leni what it meant to be ready to be compassionate to the needs of all who entered your home.

Consider yourself at home. Consider yourself one of the family.
 We've taken to you so strong. It's clear we're going to get along.
 Consider yourself well in. Consider yourself part of the furniture.
 There isn't a lot to spare. Who cares, whatever we've got we share!
 (From: *Consider yourself in Oliver* by Lionel Bart)

Although we were dedicated mothers and loved our children dearly, our husbands and none of our children had the fire energy that we possessed, so it was more difficult for our family to appreciate us or be as compassionate to us as we were to them. We were wilder and more adventurous than the any of our kids. The inner smile that we shared (that no one could quite figure out) was a way that we maintained the empathy for one another that we so desperately needed and immensely enjoyed.

After Tara died, both families began to fall apart. After Leni supported me through my laparoscopy the next year, her husband got into a massive car accident which greatly increased all of our stress. Both husbands experienced huge financial difficulties which added to the families' internal and external stressors. As mothers and educators of our children we were in trouble and experiencing holistic ill-preparedness.

Lady Madonna, children at your feet, wonder how you manage to make ends meet.
Who find the money when you pay the rent? Did you think that money was heaven sent?
(From: *Lady Madonna* by the Beatles)

Our solution was to move; so after we explored many locations, both families decided to buy homes in the coastal San Diego town of Encinitas. All four adults were burned out and experiencing all the signs I had discovered in educator burnout. We had *emotional exhaustion, physical exhaustion, pain and ill health*. We were also experiencing *alienation, depersonalization and devalued personal accomplishment* which caused us to leave our area; moving did not heal these conditions.

For the greater part of our relationship I asked Leni for more compassion from Leni than she asked from me. During the last years it reversed, however I wasn't as compassionate to Leni as I wished I had been. Having not yet healed from Tara's death and experiencing the pain from my soon to end marriage I was not free to sense how to serve her. Because we no longer lived right next door I was not cognizant enough of the severe difficulties she was experiencing. Leni's anxiety attacks which she told me about triggered my own earlier attacks and I hid from that reality. Only when we discussed this years later did I realize I wasn't there for her as I did not have room for her or my pain; I profusely apologized for my lack of compassion. She realized her part was that she had had difficulty admitting or asking for needed help, whether it was emotional or physical.

Caring and Teaching Together

Gisselle was active in the Encinitas-based Coast Kids Theatre, where she worked as a backstage manager for about 10 years. Longtime friend Mary Kelly Guerin said she watched Gisselle work with a generation of young actors, bolstering their self-confidence before they stepped onstage.

"She would tell them, 'What you've got is good enough, you're going to do fine,'" Guerin said, adding that her own children benefited from her friend's compassion.

"My daughter told me, 'She's the one that really gave us courage to do what we needed to do,'" Guerin said. "She was just such an important person for these kids to have."

Paul Sisson - *Staff Writer North Coast Times* September, 2006

As compassionate teachers, Leni and I were partners both during our home-school days and then again many years later after she left the Coast Kids Theatre. Beginning in 1995, Leni then assisted me in creating and running my Caring Adventure Educational Center and its curricula. I initiated both of these educator programs and Leni willingly went along with me. Assuming I had the most knowledge as to the best ways for these programs to be run, and being driven by my #8 aspect of “you are the big boss type with executive abilities” (p. 144) expounded upon in numerology, I became the leader of our educational programs (Javane and Bunker, 1979).

I was applying Hubbard’s (18 Feb 1972) policy letter explaining *The Top Triangle* in Scn’s symbol, KRC: knowledge, responsibility and control. I now see I did not compassionately recognize Leni as a teacher when I then jumped in and took on most of the responsibility and was consequently in greater control. Hubbard points out the negative outcome that could follow when using KRC less than compassionately.

It is hard to fully know something or be responsible for something over which you have no control; otherwise the result can be an overwhelm.

Fortunately, Leni took on her own comfortable degree of KRC, and never went into a state of potential overwhelm as our core beliefs about education were very similar: we both valued Scientology's *study tech, assists* and philosophy towards child-raising, which were basically compassionate methods of child development that honored the child's personal path; we both did Doman's Professional Mother Course and applied their program with our children which offered lots of opportunity for brain development because we had wished to assist our children in reaching their potential. These systems were in place in our own homes before we began our combined home-schooling program.

For the home-school we divvied-up the subjects to be taught: I was in charge of reading, writing, and multi-cultural events; Leni was in charge of math, movement and art. Having four planets in Virgo, I was very detailed oriented, over-prepared lessons and tended towards being a perfectionist. Leni liked *being in her flow* and *going with the flow*. We found we worked best when we worked independently and joined for field trips, holiday events and other social functions we created.

When Leni agreed to assist me in creating and running my own school after I taught for many years and got my degree, I spent many weeks in preparing our collaboration by teaching Leni the Montessori system and figuring out how she could be my academic back-up. Our values and purposes were aligned and we had the same big picture, but I held myself personally accountable for the children achieving specific academic standards before graduating our program. Leni helped in ways that I suggested. Our standards were much higher than that of the public school system and we ensured academic success for all our students. The Caring Adventure curricula included a large quantity of creative arts, much of which Leni led under my direction. This curriculum

(and our discipline philosophy) stayed true to both of our belief systems throughout, except for the inclusion of Rosenberg's *Compassionate Communication* model which Leni was never comfortable with and which I eventually revised for children.

Reviewing our relationship as co-teachers in both educational settings, I see that I was definitely in charge, more controlling and less flexible than I would have liked to have been. Leni was much more compassionate to my goals and purposes than I was to hers. My warmth, sensitivity and control ratio toward Leni in these settings came up short in the areas of warmth and sensitivity, even though Leni remained strong in all three of these with me.

My main difficulty was in the area of the arts. I was uncomfortable with Leni's free-flowing creative approach with regards to her art projects, as they definitely did not meet the standards I was brought up with in Montessori settings. I was worried that they would not meet the parents' standards as well. Leni seemed to be violating Montessori's methodology of *paying attention to details* and keeping a particular final product in mind.

When Leni's creative expression projects with the children triggered me, I often dealt with my triggered pain energy non-compassionately – both with myself and with Leni. I was insensitive to her needs and insights in this arena, provided little warmth and even unfortunately invalidated her, which I am sad to say, must have stifled her natural creativity and lowered her self-esteem. Even though I had participated in the unfolding of the process of art in my college courses, I had not sufficiently embodied this to trust that this was a positive approach for children. At that time I did not value the process of art that she was offering and I only focused on the product being aesthetically sufficiently pleasing. Although I wanted the children to add their particular creative flavor and artistic

preference, I was stuck in needing the children to have a known goal and learn specific skills that would produce that known goal. The possibility for the students' personal transformation through art that Leni's approach offered could have been realized if only I had dealt with my own triggered pain energy... And also there was the problem of ego:

My mom's conceit ruffled my feathers and embarrassed me whenever she bragged about herself in public. It is her Aries rising ego that she is so proud of... I realize that I have suppressed Leni's Aries rising nature - cut her off, disrespected and corrected her when she triggered this. I sometimes experienced Leni as ...coming from *her* ego, being non-humble, and acting without thinking. WOW! I put down my mother and Leni, though I can sense the same in me as a little girl... I was comfortable with my superior skills and aptitudes in many areas in my childhood. Just saying the word *superior* about myself now makes me *uncomfortable*... I believed in myself and in my capacity to win... even received awards for being a natural leader and not exactly humble. (My journal: Dec 1, 2004)

The other area that I was critical of in Leni was her free-flowing and sometimes self-centered approach when dealing with parents. Leni shared stories and situations about her personal life and her personal successes with her own children during parent-teacher conferences, comparing them to the students in the classroom. Leni's *Aries rising* ego again triggered the suffering I experienced with my mother. She would often just blurt out whatever came to her mind, having little or no filters. I also suffered from the same malady, which made this stand out as I was learning to control myself then and had been during my prior educational settings and as a massage therapist.

I was sometimes uncaring and lacked warmth when I cut Leni off in these conferences when I sensed her communications to be out of line. I had not confronted how Leni's self-centered approach mirrored my own painful superior attitude which I had not successfully dealt with when we were teaching together. This reminds me of those *overly-confident actress* personas that stood in the way of our initial meetings. They

related to our insecurities common to *11*'s: a strong sense of confidence *and* insecurity! This reminds me of Millman's (1993) numerology advice for *38/11*s which could help me utilize my huge energy system by evolving into a more compassionate, inspirational educator through my ability to become a more constructive, empowering authority.

...*38/11*s must eventually get in touch with and express their feelings and sensitivities, overcome self-doubt, and deal with 8 energy and issues related to repressed anger toward authorities so they can take on their own authority... Their lifework, in whatever form it takes, involves...directing their considerable power and energy to creative contributions that uplift and empower those around them, helping others find their own source of energy and inspiration (p. 142).

All in all, however, it now appears to me that the school was very successful because both Leni and I had spent years in holistic preparation which allowed our complimentary compassionate strengths to work well in our classroom. Leni's main forte as a compassionate educator, as I now perceive it, was her powerful intuitive sense coupled with her straightforward connection from her heart. This produced a heart of wisdom capable of the highest level of compassion. Whereas I found myself being responsible to stay sensitive to the entire environment and use positive control, Leni took responsibility to be sensitive to each person and bring a wonderful quality of warmth to each child and parent. Also, Leni trusted that the best for the child will emerge. Even though that's what I stood for and believed intellectually, I felt I also needed to offer many new opportunities for specific aspects of personal growth. The combination of these aspects of compassion resulted in an honoring of the needs of the whole child.

Cultivating Compassion as Women in Relationships

For both Leni and I, it was much easier to know how to mother than to *wife* and that took its toll on all of us. Leni put her conscious evolution and sexual relationship on hold while she was mothering. When the children were growing older, we were least able to demonstrate compassion within our home life. Perhaps this was because neither of us grew up in a compassionate household or had ever cultivated and established a self-compassionate base. Leni in particular did not receive compassion from her family for her suffering. Like me, Leni waited until her relationship with her husband was unbearable before ending it. Our husbands were on the prowl, causing us devastating pain; but were unable to, as Scn would put it, *make it go right!*

You're out on the street looking good, honey,
 Deep down in your heart I said you know that it ain't right,
 Never, never, never, never, never, never hear me when I cry at night.
 Honey, I cry all the time!
 And each time I tell myself that I, well I can't stand the pain,
 But when you hold me in your arms, I'll sing it once again.
 I'll say come on, come on, come on, come on and take it!
 Take another little piece of my heart now, baby.
 Break another little bit of my heart now...

(From: *Piece of my Heart* by Janice Joplin)

Leni and I had a fairy tale image of ourselves as women that we had not yet become, but hoped to be. It was similar to how Leonard Cohen imagined his beloved *Susanne*. We admitted that we both had a *Mystery Man* that we had never met but secretly hoped would manifest one day. We wondered if he was a spiritual connection, our masculine side or a man to meet. This masculine divine archetype that we anticipated the arrival of throughout our lives fulfilled the Leonard and Suzanne romantic prophecy.

Suzanne takes you down to her place near the river
 You can hear the boats go by; you can spend the night beside her
 And you know that she's half crazy but that's why you want to be there

And she feeds you tea and oranges that come all the way from China...
 And you want to travel with her; and you want to travel blind.
 And you know that you can trust her for she's touched your perfect body with her mind.

From the onset of our friendship, I turned to Leni for support and advice with all of my relationship problems. I sought out her exceptional wisdom and she always made herself readily available to listen compassionately to me no matter where or when. After her children were in college, she ended her marriage and began to take her life back again, which her children abhorred. It was now my turn to compassionately be there for Leni as she was newly exploring herself as a woman and her relationship to men. I, sadly to say, was not nearly as effective in that role as she had been with me.

Leni's ability to listen and be present was far greater than mine, indicating her superior ability to be compassionate. I once again was willing to be in control and be sensitive to her, but my lack of confidence squelched by warmth. Additionally, my lessened ability caused me to substitute this deficiency with encouragement and too much compassionate advice and platitudes. I had little faith that my compassion alone would be sufficient to help Leni transform her pain and get her needs met. The following musical dialog between two of Leni's favorite singers tells the story well of my advice-giving, my less-than-optimal style of compassion towards Leni in the realm of relationship:

Leni:

I'm scared, so afraid to show I care. Will he think me weak if I tremble when I speak?
 ...Maybe he's in love; I'd feel like a fool. Life can be so cruel. I don't know what to do.

Me:

I've been there, with my heart out in my hand.
 But what you must understand, you can't let the chance to love him pass you by.

Leni:

Should I tell him that the sun and moon rise in his eyes?

Me:

Reach out to him and whisper tender words so soft and sweet
 Hold him close to feel his heart beat; Love will be the gift you give yourself...
 Touch him with the gentleness you feel inside. Your love can't be denied.
 The truth will set you free. You'll have what's meant to be; all in time you'll see.
 (From: *Tell Him* by Celine Dion and Barbra Streisand)

Soul-Mate Compassionate Friendship

Despite my truly infrequent ill behavior towards her when co-teaching, my occasional triggered frustration, and inflicting my advice upon her, Leni and I stayed committed to our unspoken vow to be empathetic and we were quite loving and respectful toward one another. We were dedicated to relating soul to soul in a relaxed, philosophically intense, rich and playful manner. Like Daddy, Leni naturally spoke compassionately while she took me in through her soft, wise eyes and heartfelt grin.

Leni would surprisingly note that very little pain ever got triggered between us. No matter what the other person did or said, we customarily perceived and felt each other's basic good intention underlying our actions and cared more about maintaining a continual heart connection than arguing or making each other wrong (as we found ourselves doing more than we had liked with our immediate family and some of our other friends). One unique kind of compassion Leni and I provided for one another was that of assisting each other in seeing the other person's blind spots. We helped each other to be observant, to be self-aware and to not indulge in self-pity. These compassionate acts were always performed very lovingly while together staying spiritually connected. Also, I was blessed with a soul-mate friend who possessed an extraordinary listening ability that she exercised prior to any potential analysis, transforming my own Virgo analytical tendency.

Deep listening, compassionate listening is not listening with the purpose of analyzing or even uncovering what has happened in the past. You listen first of all, in order to give the other person relief, a chance to speak out, to feel that someone finally understand him or her. Deep listening is the kind of listening that helps us to keep compassion alive while the other speaks... During this time, you have in mind, only one idea, one desire: to listen in order to give the other person a chance to speak out and suffer less... Other things like analyzing or understanding the past can be a byproduct of this work; but first of all listen with compassion. (Hanh (2001) *Anger Wisdom for Cooling the Flame*, p.93)

Leni always stabilized me merely with her intuitive presence, so I considered her to be grounded. However, it was more like she was universal and intuited how to hold her position in the universe. Just being in her spiritual space and hearing her voice on the telephone while working through a problem, totally relaxed me. Eventually just listening to her talk about anything – even her relationship issues was healing for me. No matter the subject of the conversation, it calmed me to be near her.

It's not the pale moon that excites me that thrills and delights me
 Oh no, it's just the nearness of you.
 It isn't your sweet conversation that brings this sensation
 Oh no, it's just the nearness of you.
 (From: *The Nearness of You* by Norah Jones)

There are some verses from two songs that Leni loved that express the quality and depth of compassionate friendship that Leni offered to me.

Lean on me, when you're not strong, and I'll be your friend, I'll help you carry on...
 If, there is a load, that you have to bear, that you can't carry,
 I'm right up the road, I'll share your load, if you just call me.
 (From: *Lean on Me* by Al Green)

When you're down and troubled and you need some loving care
 And nothing, nothing is going right
 Close your eyes and think of me and soon I will be there
 To brighten up even your darkest night...

If the sky above you grows dark and full of clouds
 And that old north wind begins to blow

Keep your head together and call my name out loud
 Soon you'll hear me knocking at your door

You just call out my name and you know wherever I am
 I'll come running to see you again
 Winter, spring, summer or fall, all you have to do is call
 And I'll be there, yes I will; you've got a friend!

(From: *You've Got a Friend* by Carole King)

No one has ever looked out for me the way Leni did. She saw that I gave and gave and she did the same with me when everyone else was just willing to take and take. No one else has ever understood me better and enjoyed me more than Leni over time. She showed me who I was and helped me to connect with my essence. No matter what I said or did she always understood and appreciated that I only meant well and appreciated me for it. This was true compassion.

I would like to share some of the dear sentiments Leni wrote to me in a few greeting cards I found from her. As creativity is intricately woven with compassion, this first one is a section of Leni's wonderful hand-made card she gave me when we taught together, and is an expression of her cultivation of soulful compassion towards me:

I Appreciate Lesley

...the way your eyes squint and sparkle when you smile
 ...and the way your heart shines and shares
 ...and the way you help all us little children grow; the way you trust.

You have been a gift to my life
 Thank you for your inspiration, wisdom, care, nurturance, love, play & listening.

...

From a Mother's Day card:

I want to acknowledge you on this day for being the best mother, daughter, [wife?] sister and friend. With all the love in my heart, Len

...

From a Valentine's Day card:

My dear friend, I feel truly blessed that you have come into my life and stayed this long.
 Thank you! My heart is always open to you.

And I know when my heart closes to the world you remind me to stay open.
Love, always, Leni

...

From a Birthday card:

My dear friend, always and forever I am so grateful that you are in my life.
And [I] am so full of pure love, joy and happiness for you.
May the light always dance in your heart and shine in your soul

Leni's Philosophical Values & Attitudes that Cultivated Compassion

Self-Awareness

Go within and scale the depth of your being
From which your very life springs forth
(Rainer Rilke)

Release and Relief

So laugh when you can and cry when you need to
When there's nothing left to do – set it free!
Lay it down and rest your weary head... It's crazy, a crazy, beautiful world!
(Peggy Lego)

Love

Just shower the people you love with love. Show them the way that you feel.
...Things are gonna be much better if you only will.
(James Taylor)

Celebration

What you doing on your back? Ah! You should be dancing, yeah! Dancing, yeah!
(Bee Gees)

...

Bring your good times, and your laughter too.
We're gonna celebrate your party with you...
Celebrate good times, come on! It's a celebration!
(Kool and the Gang)

Mystery

I've looked at life from both sides now, from win and lose and still somehow
it's life's illusions I recall; I really don't know life at all.
(Judy Collins)

Metaphysical Comfort

In the arms of the angel, fly away from here...
You are pulled from the wreckage of your silent reverie.
You're in the arms of the angel; may you find some comfort here.
(Sarah MacLauchlan)

Blessings

May good fortune be with you; may your guiding light be strong!
 Build a stairway to heaven with a prince or a vagabond.
 And may you never love in vain, and in my heart you will remain forever young...
 (Rod Stewart)

Lasting Friendship

[Leni's song for us]
 Can you imagine us years from today, sharing a park bench quietly?
 How terribly strange to be seventy!
 Old friends, memory brushes the same years, silently sharing the same fears.
 (Simon and Garfunkel)

Transition with my Soul-Sister

Sit by my side, come as close as the air; share in a memory of gray.
 Wander in my words, dream about the pictures that I play of changes...
 Green leaves of summer turn red in the fall to brown and to yellow they fade.
 And then they have to die, trapped within the circle time parade of changes.
 (From: *Changes* by Phil Ochs)

Once Leni left her husband and for the first time in her life was living alone, she fell into a slump. Incessantly sleeping, experiencing the pain of the loss of her marriage of 32 years, she became exhausted and absentminded. Empathetic, I covered for her errors and gave her a lot of slack when she frequently forgot to bring her projects to school and stayed very lethargic. Compassionate to her unexpected depression as she took on her newfound freedom, I frequently bailed her out of difficult situations.

It became time for Leni to stop teaching and create her new life. The first step was her healing, and that seemed like a challenging long haul for her. A year later her daughter Danielle, my god-daughter, who moved in with her after just graduating from UCSB, replaced Leni in my school and ran the arts program that year. They shared some meals together and became running partners; then Danielle left Leni for San Francisco.

I was, at the time, at the onset of my own burn-out and we both were in physical and psychological distress. The joy that Leni and I had shared freely was waning. It was difficult discovering how to bring back the joy while experiencing the suffering so much.

My home/school then had a flood and got moldy. As Leni had done many times throughout our lives together when I was in trouble, she took my partner and I in to live with her indefinitely. She had magnanimously helped others this way as well. Her friend Mary was quoted in an obituary write-up that she recalled explaining to Leni that she was briefly living in a motel with her three children and did not know where to go next.

"She didn't even ask any questions. She just said, 'However long you need to be here, you are here.'" (Sisson, 2006)

We taught together for one more year as the second flood told us it was time to end this program for now. While my house was being repaired, living with Leni was extremely good for both of us. We needed the unconditional compassion that we both provided for one another and we so very much enjoyed the pleasure of being in one another's company. Then her younger daughter moved in upon her graduation; this greatly increased Leni's stress. To deal with our pain, I began working heuristically with self-compassion and Leni got more deeply into yoga, astrology and numerology. On the last day of school, our final performance, Leni and her production shined for all to see!

The next year our mutual compassion grew as we both continued our individual healing processes. We offered each other the wisdom of what we were learning and embodying. This year marked my commitment to developing a workable practice of self-compassion while needing to be emotionally available to Leni more than ever before.

Relying on my self-compassionate practice instead of Leni when I was triggered required an adjustment period for the both of us. Because of her great capacity to be with

my pain, her total presence, her empathy, her wisdom, and her love for me, Leni had been the one who had primarily dealt with and helped me to transform an inordinate amount of pain energy for over 35 years. She always came up with just the right solution for me until I began using my self-compassion practice and she became a yogi. Leni then began advising me to *take a breath* whenever I got triggered, which had never before and still did not work for me. Another reason I rejected this was that I was trying to fend for myself. I no longer wanted to do a prescribed process or take advice from anyone. I asked her to please just send me back to my practice when she realized I was triggered.

At first Leni felt torn and even abandoned as she began reminding me to be self-compassionate when I was triggered. But since she realized that this could be a positive way of helping me, she tried hard to remember my request. At first, this created a bit of a schism, but eventually - after I tried out her process and she tried out mine - our harmony was restored and we once again utilized each other to make our lives more successful.

Find any moderate exercise that I can do daily as a routine after work with Leni – practice and exercise. (My journal: January 5, 2005)

It was great to have the vow by my bed at night. Leni told me to say it at night as well, so I brought my index card upstairs to bed with me... It has become the... focus of my meditation. (January 30, 2005)

I will be with Leni because she broke a date just to be with me. I am still creating my life based around others' needs of me. I am at least aware of it, but this means that I have not changed my life that much. At least I am writing this down; that is self-compassionate! (March 11, 2005)

I allowed Leni to give me orders today as I was having difficulty with my *commander* persona running me and not allowing my body to get the care it needed, by putting *care for my body* on the back burner. (May 24, 2005)

My heart was racing because I was trying to figure out what I was going to say to Leni about once again getting a place that she may not be able to afford. I was experiencing emotional pain energy. (January 16, 2006)

As my soul-sister, Leni did *Feng Shui* on my home. She said I had done well already, but a few areas needed more work... The main area of *fun work* she wants me to do... is take apart the cabinets in the kitchen and get rid of what is old... what is not enhancing my health. (February 9, 2006)

Leni moved onto my cul-de-sac early spring of 2006, and we spent quality time with each other many times every day. I loved her condo creation, which was more aesthetically pleasing than any other home she had lived in. Leni herself had not looked physically better since she was in her early 20's. She turned herself into a blonde, worked out every day creating the body she had dreamed of, was in a fairly good relationship and was taking wonderful care of herself physically, emotionally and spiritually; she looked beautiful! Leni also had created a new, quite successful, career for herself: becoming a personal coach. She even changed her name to reflect her French vibe: *Leni Gisselle!*

I talked her into doing a stock market program together to free us up financially so that we could do our life's work without having to worry about money. As we worked together each morning I found myself getting more and more frustrated with her as she did not seem to be focusing on this project even though she was fairly well versed in it and wanted the independence it could provide. Little did we either of us know at the time that she was quite ill.

Leni suggested, and I agreed, that we put off our financial coaching until September, as I was in the midst of creating a last minute wedding for my son and his fiancé, I was quite shaken up from just having been in the midst of a war in Israel with my daughter-in-law's family and I was wiped-out from the process of turning my partner's condo in Hawaii into a turn-key vacation rental within two months time while still working on this dissertation. As Leni was not getting over her bad cold and cough

and I was not recovering from my exhaustion, I suggested that she take some time off from her personal coaching work to give us the time we needed to heal.

When I spoke to Leni a couple of days later, I got the notion that I should take her immediately to the hospital, even though Leni and I rarely sought traditional medical diagnosis or treatment. She refused my suggestion, but I finally persuaded her to let me take her to the local clinic. Even though I had just seen her the day before, when I picked her up from her home I was shocked: she was pale as a ghost and could barely walk! The clinic sent us to the emergency room as her blood count was so low, which Leni initially resisted. After a series of blood transfusions, tests, scans and biopsies we were told that Leni had Stage 4 lung cancer, along with probable cancer in her adrenals and uterine.

The next month, Leni's last in this lifetime, was horrible for all of us. The doctors and nurses gave many false diagnoses which continually threw us all for a spin and caused much unnecessary suffering. Our holistic doctor friend Laura, who was one of Leni's employer's, put her on an intensive program which seemed impossible for Leni to carry out, even with the round the clock care from friends and family. During this time period it was exceptionally challenging for me to maintain my own self-compassion. Doing my practice before I saw her throughout each day saved my own life and helped me to maintain a modicum of openhearted presence that she well deserved.

However, staying emotionally connected with her was tearing me apart as I couldn't bare the thought of her dying. This was exacerbated by her refusal to have anyone around her who did not believe that she was going to find a way to heal herself. I began to realize that if I continued to feel my pain without taking the time to transform it, I would become overwhelmed, which was already threatening due to the amount of pain

Leni was forced to experience. My compassion for her initially directed me to apply any of the many healing and dying techniques that I had studied over the years, but she politely refused them all; I realized that she was right: none of them were appropriate!

Leni helped me to prepare for being Master of Ceremony for my son's California wedding and was still able to advise me on my table décor I brought her to see, but at the last minute she was rushed back to the hospital for another blood transfusion and was sadly unable to attend her God-son's wedding, even in a wheelchair. The next day I wept at her bedside refusing to take my planned one week vacation so I could savor every last minute with her; her doctors told us she may have only another half a year to live.

My angina attacks were increasing and Leni was adamant about my taking a break to take care of myself. She assured me that she now found a way to deal with her pain, which meant she would now be able to heal herself. Then she lovingly chided me to leave saying, "I'm not going to get better and have you not be here because you died of a heart attack! Now go take a vacation and get strong; I'll need your help later."

Leni stayed compassionate to me while fighting in every possible way to stay alive till the very end. She even decided to undergo chemotherapy which she had sworn never to do and which resulted in kidney failure. I tried everything possible to save her life or have her be at peace with her death, but, in the end, there was nothing I could do!

If I could, I'd protect you from the sadness in your eyes
Give you courage in a world of compromise
Yes, I would, if I could!
(Ray Charles)

A few days before Leni died, the pressure of a brain tumor caused her to become so delirious that she was unable to recognize any of her ten close friends and family in her room. Leni then turned to me saying, "You're my sister, right?" I was so thankful that

our hearts and souls were still connected even if my fears and her physical condition reduced our emotional/spiritual connection. Yes, it was true: Leni was/is my soul-sister!

On the day of her death, I accompanied Leni in the ambulance on her trip home. She was dumbfounded that she was dying and she could only say repetitively, “Why?” I remembered my partner Stephen and I had sensed that perhaps she needed to be free to do spiritual work on a different dimension; that seemed like the only viable possibility worth sharing with her. There was so much I wished I had said, but all I could do was try to be loving and strong in these speechless moments. Leni was pronounced dead on September 5, 2006, twenty minutes after she was lied down in the room beautified for her by her beautiful daughters. Her family said their final good-byes and she expelled gobs of blood after her *last breath*.

Then our friend Lisa and I went to Leni, each holding a hand of hers. The Hospice nurse asked us whether she should write down the time of death as 8 or 9 after the hour. Leni then connected energetically with us once more as she took two more final breaths, making the time of death an *11*, now her birth *and* death number: a completion! The room surprisingly got brighter; my heart lightened; her spirit enveloped our neighborhood with beauty and love. Leni was free of pain at last!

...

One month before she died – before any of us knew she was ill –I wrote these words of appreciation on the last birthday card I would ever give to my dear soul-sister:

This wonderful time in your life marks your Leo courage
 And your Sag sense of adventure
 Your beauty is increasing as your self-confidence is smiling through.
 Thank you for your continued openness, love and depth of friendship.
 You are a treasure in my life.
 I wish that this treasure that you are brings gifts to all of those around you.
 You are 2 B appreciated! With love and smiles and forever friendship!!

It confused Leni that she could not heal her body through her self-awareness and spiritual connections. She had been a day to day inspiration of compassion for others and now was compassionate to herself by utilizing her strong intention to continue her human existence; she had inherited strong *survival genes* from her *survivor* parents! But maybe it *was* her time. I hope Leni *had* achieved her spiritual goals - truly completing her life. Ethereally, I hear Len compassionately singing these verses to me as she passed over:

I love you in a place where there's no space or time
 I love you for my life – you are a friend of mine
 And when my life is over
 Remember when we were together
 We were alone and I was singing this song for you
 (Leon Russell)

....
 Think of me, think of me fondly, when we've said goodbye.
 Remember me, once in a while. Please promise me you'll try.
 (*The Phantom of the Opera* - Andrew Lloyd Webber)

...
 Though I know I'll never lose affection for people and things that went before
 I know I'll often stop and think about them, in my life I love you more.
 (The Beatles)

Healing through Self-Compassion after Leni's Death

The following year was quite challenging with regard to maintaining my spiritual connection and a positive philosophy about life and death. That Leni still became fervently ill and died although self-compassionately engaging so deeply in so many spiritual practices, self-healing techniques, daily exercise, healthy eating and used her strongest intention to desperately try to survive, made my plethora of personal care-taking techniques (including many New Age spiritual techniques, my focus on good health and my own practice of self-compassion) seem useless and even acts of self-betrayal. Living in a veil with no spiritual connection and philosophy as a refuge, my

grief process vacillated emotionally between enormous anger, weighty sadness, and immense confusion leaving me in a state of oblivion.

Although I had handled my Candida the year before Leni's illness, self-compassionately caring for my body with the help of my self-compassion practice (losing 40 pounds and mostly eliminating my hip problem), my stress brought it all back. My condition was reverted by Leni's sudden illness and death married with my hyper-focused responsibility towards my partner, my son, and my family. Laden with grief over her loss was accompanied by my new role of care for her three adult children (she made me their God-mother for just this possibility) and the responsibility for the disposal of her possessions, brought forth an imminent depression marked by my gradual weight gain. Applying my self-compassion practice seemed impossible as it became suppressed by the revival of my *workaholic package*, keeping my emotions at a manageable distance at the expense of my health and well-being. My compulsive control seemed to help me to not fall apart.

My workaholic package also got me to work full-time creating a new business for my partner, right on the heels of Leni's death. Then my first grandchild was about to be born who I was not emotionally ready for. Anticipating a baby in my life, especially my son's, triggered the birth and death of baby Tara since I was grieving Leni's death. This workaholic package led me to take on the care of my new grandson 3 to 4 times per week. Carrying him with my newly increased weight caused my hip problem to return.

When I received individual Hospice grief counseling, I asked my therapist to help me return to my practice and to somehow resume *being self-compassion*. She greatly valued the practice and successfully assisted me in using it to heal myself. When she left

Hospice she transferred me over to a highly qualified, spiritually oriented, counselor who was additionally an art therapist. This was a gift which allowed me to personally explore an intuitive thought that I had written down as a note to myself the year before and just recently found: *Self-Compassion through Creative Expression*. Over the next two years, my self-compassion practice utilized creative expression, and (see *Appendix*) truly helped me to transform so much of this pain energy and brought about many new realizations.

I did my initial practice of self-compassion, my mindfulness set-up practice, in the same location it got created years ago as a meditation mantra. I realized this when I lit a candle – creating a sacred space. The room was set-up quite differently then, as it was a school at the time, but the White Tara *thanka* is in the same place and I am still sitting on my tattered golden leather recliner, now with my cat Silk by my side. It is filled with Leni's presence [her hutch, her photo, her revolving lit crystal rainbow] increasing the spiritual presence of this newly experienced sanctuary. The practice seems to have come full circle. It is a refuge once again, so I can *become self-compassion*. (My Heuristic Journal: November 15, 2006)

I am now using this set-up practice as a preparatory meditation... [it] acts as a sanctuary representing spiritual connections with the beings who have been most compassionate to me in my life: ...on the left side of this altar is a photo of Leni ...the right side on the altar has my father's inlaid wooden box containing personal items of his life; above is a *thanka* of White Tara. These material symbols enhance my ability to manifest my spiritual connection which grounds my entire practice. (November 21, 2006)

I have been feeling the pain of the world as a weight upon my shoulders... All of my philosophies have been shook up and blown away... Yet self-compassion as a practice remains. As a result of Leni's death, the only philosophy that has begun to emerge is that of non-attachment and non-desire. I am so serious and depressed. How can I open to pleasure without desire and attachment? Perhaps I can take pleasure in the ordinary, while being aware of the pain in the world and in myself. (December 28, 2006)

Maintain *just being with* the grief before investigating its significance and its relevance to my emotions and needs. Stuck, suppressed emotions surface during the *awareness of* step of the process. Awareness is the recognition of the feelings and needs. Expressing it with *empathy* brings added appreciation; paraphrase what's being said or make sure it is exactly right by checking in: "Have you been feeling so sad because you have not

had anyone appreciate you the way your friend Leni did?" Years of non-appreciation and of being misunderstood got revealed along with the grief of the loss of Leni. The loss opens up new levels of grief that I now need to be compassionate with. (January 15, 2007)

My *destroyer* persona has been stopping me from going to the doctor, filling out my paperwork for my medical insurance, the paper work for the blood tests - all similar to what happened with Leni! It is a resistance to finding out – to knowing if anything might be hurting my body. Our destroyer's positive intention can unwittingly kill us! (February 8, 2007)

Dealing with pain energy seems to fit with Keyes, *up-level your wants to preferences* [wants and needs]... I wanted Leni's family to be different after she died; I wanted her birthday celebrated differently; I was pushing to get my *needs met*. I have to change my view of *needs*, otherwise, when I don't get (what I consider to be) my needs met I am in pain because of my human survival programming. Now, when something is not going the way I want it to and I notice I am in pain (as I am tell myself *I need* it to be a certain way) I do not have to expect someone else to change or even change myself. I can move into *acceptance* that this is happening, and then return to my practice! Thanks so much for this lesson! (July 21, 2007)

I found Leni's essential oil bottle today, that I took after her death, in my medicine cabinet when I looked for something to help me deal with the anniversary of Tara. It had the Virgo affirmation: "I let go of impossible standards; I am compassionate with myself; I am devoted to health; I heal myself and others." Having been afraid to stand in abundance and health, I now see doing so would in some way fulfill Leni. (September 13, 2007)

This part of me that is feeling a real missing of Leni and hurts so much, doesn't want this pain to be transformed. It resists my transforming this pain as it feels I am being disrespectful and not compassionate to her by not feeling this pain. I can honor her by just letting it be and watching the transformation happen. So sometimes it is better not to include in my vow *transforming pain energy*, as it could prevent me from doing the practice. If I am feeling sad or depressed, and people are trying to get me out of it, and the practice of self-compassion offers me to transform it, I won't *try* to transform it, I just want to be with it compassionately. (May 5, 2007)

It's amazing to do my practice of self-compassion regarding the loss of Leni – she's actually really alive! (July 5, 2007)

As Leni was dying and after she died, I lost my dissertation partner! ...I have been using my practice and creative expression, art therapy, to help me get through this devastating loss. My practice helped me immensely, both when I was alone and also when I was in therapy. (March 23, 2008)

I used creative expression self-compassionately to transform the pain energy of Leni's death. I did that for each part of the practice; it was not a mental process, but a drawing of a persona's experience. This is now an option when the pain energy is too powerful for processing. (April, 2008)

I felt it disrespectful to feel joy when I was grieving; it was like I was dishonoring Leni, even though another part of me knew she would want me to be joyful. If I was connected with her in joy it would be an honoring of her! ...If being joyful relieves suffering, and if that is the intention of compassion, then ... joy can be an avenue of compassion. (April 18, 2008)

Talk compassionately like Leni and Daddy did! They took everyone in with a grinning, playful smile from their heart. (April 19, 2008)

Leni was my closest spiritual connection. I became spiritually lost for the years following this soul-mate's death, as I had not realized the degree of dependence I had on Leni's presence and how it defined my spiritual connection - the core of my practice. There was no way I could understand or figure out how to be alive without Leni, my *conscious evolution* partner. It was so spiritually lonely without her; I now understood what friends who were worried about me had said after she passed, that we were attached at the hip, that we were twins; we belonged together.

When Leni died any spiritual hope I had died with her. I thought for sure that I would be dead soon after her death, since we had been traveling along the same path, moving to the same locations for nearly 40 years. Though still alive, without our spiritual connection I was stuck in limbo, awaiting my hour of death and our reunion. When medical tests concluded that I was basically fine, I was amazed as I felt I could no longer function in this world.

I am dying because my spiritual connection has nearly died and I believe I can't find anything to heal or replace it. Nothing looks right anymore for my core beingness to connect with: no faith, no belief! Nothing feels intuitively correct or gives me lasting solace. I can no longer find meaning

through religion – and yet spirituality has always been the thread of my life.... the greatest motivating factor in my world. (August 8, 2007)

I began to be tempted to have Leni as my spiritual connection in the spirit world, but that was scary. Using Tara as my spiritual connection had been excellent for a while, though later I realized it had been at the expense of my wholeness. Experimenting with ways that Leni could remain in my current life through spiritual connections caused my mind to admonish me, claiming that I would just be making this all up and that a spiritual connection with Leni was unreal, “she is dead and I am alone”. When I became willing to equally be in both the real and the fantasy realms, I attained the freedom to explore and discover various possible current spiritual connections that I could have with Leni.

When considering my divine feminine archetypes, I experienced Leni as my angel. Sometimes she represented wisdom and lovingkindness, yet other times I felt her as my divine earth connection. In my Sacred Energetic Sangha that I often now use to make a physical chakra connection, she is in the sixth chakra as my *intuitive constant guide*; for the part of my spiritual connection that makes a *wedding within*, I often utilize Leni as my divine feminine archetype: *Earth Mother*. When she was alive I thought I did not need Leni for my self-compassion practice, and now, after she is physically not present she has become an intricate and vital part of it. In these roles Leni is available to give me the empathy I may need, always recognizing my true positive intentions.

Spiritually connecting with archetypes and people who have loved me that are on the other side (Tara, Dad, Cal, Leni), make it safe for my self consciousness to re-emerge while being supported. (March 14, 2007)

Tara is in the heart; Leni can be my feminine earth connection uniting with her ideal masculine heavenly lover - both can be my angels in their union. Tara joins the trinity bringing all the compassion into my heart - and I get a re-birth. (March 24, 2007)

I have been fearful of writing this narrative piece. Doing so, I now sense this has been a healing for both Leni and myself. Through compassionate listening to dreams, family, dear friends and Leni herself, I am transforming my pain and becoming renewed.

Leni's story may end at the cemetery where her family came to from NY for her unveiling nearly two years after she died. Just like her brother said at the unveiling, "No matter what was happening, Leni always had a smile on her face." That smile was cute, just like my father's. It came right from her heart. That smile was even on her face even during her own illness. What an inspiration! Love you Leni! (My Heuristic Journal: August 7, 2008)

Appreciate each moment even if I am not grateful for it. Appreciate the moments I do have here. I feel this directly from Leni. (June 11, 2008)

I *spoke* with Leni after having an intensely real dream of her:

"Hey Len, It was fun to be with you in this dream. You were a free spirit; we were free spirits together... it was wonderful to share any amount of time with you again... Did you have a message for me in that dream?"

"I wanted to tell you that I love you and want you to do well. Keep my love with you. I will love you always. Take care of my children; they need your help, even when they don't ask for it. Trust me, trust you, and you will feel we're still in this together, signing off. Len" (August 31, 2008)

I just received a short journal that her son Adam brought to me when I told him I was writing about his mother. Reading her words about the man she was with when she got ill and died, brought her close to me again. I just loved being with her, listening to her, feeling her circulating through my heart - her words, expressions, habit pattern, all mirrors of my own. It was so relaxing to share this common reality, this strong bond!

Her quiet daughter Danielle sensed this possibility of relationship with her mother throughout her life, which was a gift she had after her mother's death. Danielle's beautiful eulogy, that she had me read for her at Leni's funeral, speaks of Leni's silent wisdom, which marked the essence of her compassionate style. My self-compassion has

brought me to embody a similar spiritual wisdom to that which Danielle spoke of as she recalled her mom's story of their connection that was created when she was an infant.

I remember how her face used to light up every time she shared this story with me.
 I used to sit quietly in my stroller – not crying, not talking –
 But just smiling with my eyes open - taking in the world.
 There was a special connection my mom and I gave birth to during these mornings,
 One that allowed us to be together and in our own worlds simultaneously,
 One that spoke the world when no words were spoken -
 A connection that was and always will be beyond this world
 Now that my mom is gone,
 I feel so blessed to know that we can still have these moments.
 As I walk through the rest of my life,
 I know my mom will be quietly walking beside me—
 Both of us in our own worlds, both of us together
 She an angel - and me, the daughter of an angel!
 I love you mom and I know you will always be with me.

So this is the healing paradox: I have learned to be self-compassionate and not rely upon my dearest Leni who is dead and gone and whose loss I will always mourn; however, I no longer have to suffer this loss because I can always remember to accept the opportunity to bask in Leni's energy and receive her warm, intuitive guidance and show my appreciation with acknowledgment whenever I need a friend on my journey. Every day times arise when I sweetly tell Leni how much I love her, as I hear her say:

I will remember you. Will you remember me?
 Don't let your life pass you by. Weep not for the memories
 (Sarah MacLauchlan)

Winter, spring, summer or fall, all you have to do is call and I'll be there, yes I will.
 You've got a friend!
 (Carole King)

During my depression and healing, a mutual acquaintance (who is a high school chemistry teacher, a Buddhist teacher and a prolific spiritual writer) told me in a *spiritual reading* that Leni and I had more lifetimes together than anyone he had ever known. It was comforting to consider that I could meet Leni again in the physical realm. But

possibly our newly created compassionate meeting would be in a *tactile* spiritual realm, because Leni and I were both working towards this being our last lifetime here on Earth.

His spiritual reading corresponded with a song written by Stefani Valadez (published 1996), a close friend of both Leni and myself, *Once Again, Another Time*, initially written for baby Tara. Stefani compassionately dropped her life and devoted herself to me for a week after Leni's death. It had been wonderful to have someone else who could unconditionally care so deeply about me again. Stefani's song (that can at once be expressed both from and to her) tells the story of my new relationship with my soul-mate, sister and friend Leni, which was healed and consciously evolved through my self-compassionate practices.

Time it isn't yours - it isn't mine it just goes by
And I see the love in you, the love in me, so peacefully

The gift of friendship and loyalty I give to you, so happily
In health, strength and easiness I welcome you; you feel like family!

With love and warming hearts when we're apart on our own journeys,
I care and I'll be here and we will grow, still I will know you...

...time can not be the thing that keeps people out of touch.
My memory lets me hear your voice say, "I love you so much."

Time, once again, another time!
Time, once again, another time!
Time, once again, another time!

Silk – My Slow and Deep Compassionate Earth Connection

The depth of your soul so regally present
Acknowledging me as you sweetly mouth "Hi!"
Modeling how to receive the earth's lessons
Being Compassion whenever I cry

Satin was the cat from the litter that Ryan talked me into bringing home to replace his father when we were first separated. As we were leaving with our new pet, I thought that Satin might want another of her kind. So I compassionately chose Silk as well to keep her sister company. Never having had any cats, and always having being a bit afraid of them, I was surprised I agreed to having even one kitty, but did so as a compassionate compromise with my eight year old son who was missing his dad and family life; a cat instead of a dog seemed like the lesser of two evils in a condo. Although being a pet owner put a damper on my social life, hampered my freedom and cost me a smelly home, though reluctant to take them in, I never regretted this decision.

These two black kitties were so cute and slept with us each night, Satin with Ryan and Silk with me. I became quite attached to Silk who kept me warm as she curled up around my neck as my scarf. Even when she was a baby, I experienced her calming force and deeply relaxed into her energy field, stroking her while we both fell asleep. I then took pleasure waking up each morning to her sweet, pleading eyes asking me to feed her.

Satin was frisky and playful while Silk was warm, reserved and independent. Never having had a pet for very long, it was not until caring for these animals that I understood that their personalities and emotions were quite real and strong. I experienced this personally the first time I had to leave them with friends who *cat-sat* when we took a vacation. Silk and Satin told us that our abandonment of them was unacceptable by urinating on our Oriental rug and hiding upon our arrival, the earliest of many similar acts expressing their pain energy. Within an hour, Satin returned to her playful self, but Silk lingered, taking her time to heal before she felt safe to open her heart to me again.

Ryan wound up being allergic to cats, so although he had sworn he would be solely in charge, they ultimately became my responsibility. Initially I complained about this new circumstance, but soon it became my secret joy to have these young ladies with me under my care. They became friends of mine who were dependent upon me for their physical survival because they were domesticated, but otherwise were independent creatures who shared my home as a part of my family.

Silk's strong, gentle presence enlivened me, and her emotional sensitivity both challenged and nurtured me. However, it wasn't until I sat crying with a boyfriend when we were having problems in our relationship, that I realized that Silk's presence and sensitivity fueled her compassionate nature. I benefitted from her comfort and healing energy. Snuggling up besides me, she could look deeply into my eyes for eons without blinking. Her ability to sense my pain, her decision to care for me, her willingness to be present and *just be* with me in my pain, was remarkable. Silk's level of compassion quite unexpectedly relaxed me deeply and helped me to once again regain my composure; she would offer me this compassionate comfort throughout our time together as needed.

Being compassionate to both cats' needs, I guess I tended to be a bit too lenient at first, baring the brunt of their foibles, but then we all learned how to better accommodate one another. As the school was run out of my home, Silk and Satin were there, loved and respected by the children. But it was Silk who was unenthusiastically willing to have me hold her in my lap for a few moments as each child would practice gently petting her. This seemed like Silk's effort towards creating an interdependent relationship.

While I was heuristically exploring self-compassion techniques to help me heal my heart, Silk offered her assistance. Sometimes she held herself as a place of refuge for

me and helped me be more compassionate to myself. Other times I consciously involved her in my Mindfulness Set-Up practice by bringing myself into the state of *being compassion* before mindfully attending to my *life-care acts*, including attending to her. Caring for Silk's needs when I was mindfully present taught me about my own life.

I want to bring my heart back to good health, have it love itself! Silk touched my heart deeply as I nearly cried. I now can give the deepest painful spot the empathy it needs until it can be loving and compassionate to itself. (My Heuristic Journal: March 17, 2005)

Upon awakening I... felt heavy, sad and disturbed by events in my life... I needed the spiritual loving feminine heart connection... Feeling this energy in my heart brought me to smile... I was now ready to respond to Silk's meow as I connected with the water element and drank some for myself, gave some to her and watered the plants on the patio. (October 6, 2007)

I wanted to go full steam ahead on the thesis work first thing in the morning, but Silk made me get up and feed her. It looks like I can learn a great deal about self-compassion from my cat! (September 12, 2007)

I was made fun of and chastised by many, especially my most recent mate, for treating my cats like humans and giving them the run of the house; I wondered if I was overprotective and not exerting enough control. So as my mate did not like animals sharing a home with humans, the cats had to learn to not sleep with me, and eventually had to learn how to sleep on the patio to keep peace in the house. It was difficult trying to be and stay compassionate to all involved, and my heart broke attempting to keep my kitties warm outdoors, but eventually we seemed to make it work out, or so I had hoped.

Just one year after Leni died, I awoke to find neither cat at home. My mate and I madly scoured the neighborhood all day and put up *lost cats* signs, but to no avail – neither cat could be found. The next day we received a call that remnants of Satin's 18 ½ year old body was found and we realized that coyotes had jumped onto our patio in the

middle of the night, killed Satin and ran off with her body. Eventually, I discovered Silk hiding behind stacks of paper under my desk; she had managed to escape the throws of death for the time being, but was terribly traumatized. Needless to say, from that day on, Silk slept indoors; when outdoors she never left my side.

Silk had already been having some kidney and heart problems, but due to my not having worked through my own distrust of the medical profession and my not having been able to find any vets that had a natural approach.

I was confused and blocked and therefore did not give her problems adequate attention. When Satin had become jaundice after eating grass that had been sprayed with toxic chemicals many years before, the vet had given her up for gone in a few days. I compassionately nursed her back to health with holistic products and love, so I had hoped to be able to do the same for Silk.

Decide on whether to take Silk to the vet; minimally *call* the vet.
I temporarily handled Silk and the vet situation. I will lie down in the parlor so... I can be near Silk when I am working. (March 7, 2005)

A month after Satin's death I was to go to visit my family in New York. Like with Leni, I was reluctant to leave as planned since Silk was still not herself. After my mate reassured me he would take good care of her while I was gone, I agree to go. During this week there were deadly fires in San Diego causing me to extend my trip and creating much physical and emotional stress for my family at home. Upon my arrival, I sadly, fearfully, saw Silk had taken a definite turn for the worse. Part of me regretted having left her, similar to how I felt when I returned to Leni after my needed vacation. Had I been self-centered, selfish, or self-compassionate? It was difficult to assess this honestly.

After going to Silk's vet and hearing her diagnosis, I was frightened right down to the pit of my stomach! She expected Silk to be gone within two months unless she got surgery, which was not advised at her age. How could I bare another great loss so soon?

Blurred by my erratic emotions, and therefore not able to think clearly, my *hyper-responsible* persona, cousin of the *workaholic*, took over. This persona was so validated by family and friends that it made me trust it as the most efficient and compassionate way of being during times of trouble. However, I began suspecting that it was actually non-compassionate, as it was superseding my un-dealt with emotions and preventing me from being my true presence that I so dearly longed to share with my beloved ones.

After spending much time researching how to deal with Silk's kidney and blood pressure problems, I spoke with the head of my vet group about what I could possibly do to help Silk... She said... enjoy her!

I remembered that was what I had hoped to do with the last three close people that I had seen through their death – only I never got to truly accomplish this while they were dying. What could I do differently now?

I became aware of a persona I went into this morning, the same I was being during the dying and death of Leni, my partner's mother, and my own dad. It is my non-stop *compulsive do-gooder*, who needs to research everything ensuring the exact right thing will be done. It is also the *super-woman*, as during my father's dying months my step-sister compared me to the Ever-Ready battery commercial: the bunny that never stops.

I had believed that the horrors of the inefficient care surrounding my father's death prevented me from spending sufficient quality time with him at the end of his life; I tried to be different with Leni - but the same scenario unfolded...The pain energy that got triggered as I was losing the two most important people in my life, and who I depended upon the most, seemed to precipitate my programming. The *fear of losing them* pain energy seemed too great to deal with so the *hyper-responsible* persona took its place - caring for them in the best way possible, not trusting the doctors to do their job, and tending to every spoken need of my dear ones. Though an effective worker, it did not let me *stop* and *just be*. That is what I mostly missed at the end of these loved ones' lives... *just being with them!* Can I focus on this act of compassion now? (November 29, 2007)

During the last year of Silk's life I was committed to making this death and dying a more compassionate one. Silk received my total devotion while I dealt empathetically with the continuous pain energy that emerged both within me and within her. *Just being* with Silk while *just being* with myself compassionately was the challenging feat at hand.

I feel my interconnectedness with Silk. We have this strong, beautiful loving connection. My heart is in pain; the pain is tied into the loss. I feel fear and grief connected to losing Silk: the loss of our connection and loss of her life. In my gut is my nervousness – not knowing if I will be able to do right by her. I can not sense how to serve her and she is depending upon me to do the right thing. She just wants me to stay with her, be there for her and have compassion for her and the suffering she will be going through. Maybe I will not keep on taking her back to the doctor. She could just die on her own. I have to learn how to deal with my own suffering that I am afraid is bound to arise while I watch her die. (April, 2008)

I began to connect with my body to check if it had any needs. But in order to be able to do an inquiry and take care of the need, I had to be present inside that part of me that was crying out for help. Presence is needed for inquiry. Being present to what is exactly happening in my leg, to the pain, as well as being present with what is happening with Silk can be difficult; it requires great effort to be present with both of our pain... which I need to do before I can serve, Compassionately I have to sense our needs by observing – observing because I care about her and myself. (July 1, 2008)

The value of my heartfelt connection with Silk strengthened and became more evident with each new dying day. As I was now paying infinitely more attention to her, I began to learn indispensable lessons from her that were already increasing my success in my compassion practices. For Silk to maintain her incredible earth connection, she was continually mindful, practicing *stopping* and *just being* as necessary. Taking her time to experience each moment fully, Silk was inspirational in her degree of sensitivity and control in her environment, and warmth for me, the major aspects of compassion.

Silk embodied an energetic flow that I longed to be connected with and had only experienced with Daddy – one that was *slow and deep*. When she would intuitively lie

upon the area of my body that was in pain, as I relaxed into her energy, wholeness would return to that area. Her compassionate healing presence had been a blessing in my life.

Silk's sensing is true awareness. She goes to *stopping and just being* and then makes an earth connection... Her feminine divine connection moves into a presence that seems to be from the heart, though she may experience *heart* quite differently. She then looks at me and is really being present with me... She recognizes I have a need and she is being with me in my need. She has awareness of what is going on with me. She does not care how much pain I am in; she is capable of just being present with my pain. The more pain I am experiencing the more present she is. The fact that she is totally honoring me is her type of appreciation. I honor you, Silk!

...Silk is consciously and mindfully connecting with my body, the earth, spirit... it's a beautiful thing... Silk is holding the space. But who is holding the space for Silk? (July 8, 2008)

I have been Silk's caretaker and *family member* for nearly 20 years! In her life and her death, Silk has been a teacher of self-compassion. She sees what is needed and then without any hesitation attempts to get that need met. For instance, when she is hungry and I am sleeping, she gently touches my eyes to wake me up, since she is dependent upon me for food and water. She has been very patient; she's not antsy. She is steady and can stay for long periods of time just being present without needing to do anything but observe. She is building her resources because as soon as anything comes up, she is ready to respond – like jump up and go where she needs to. It is very important to have an animal long enough... to be able to connect to their essence in the last leg of their life. Another lesson that Silk teaches me is that when I want to be present I can move into the *awareness of stage* of my practice: observe and listen deeply to be present!

Silk is teaching me the profoundness of non-verbal compassion. In my sadness, she looked intensely into me and put her whole leg and paw onto my forearm. I then put my hand under her chin; she responded by laying her head on my hand and touching my forearm. I then allowed myself to just be with her, with any and all of her suffering, and relaxing into her was a total relief for my whole body. Through her compassionate presence she taught me how to deeply relax my own body. Thank-you Silk!

The energy of Silk is like the slow and deep energy of my father that was very relaxing for me as a child. It touches that part of me that few people ever do. I always want that in my life; I need it. It is one of being there silently with the pain, snuggling up to me and *just being with* me – holding the space while interconnected. I felt totally comforted and cared for; she transformed pain energy for me. Silk gave me the chance to learn about

stillness and depth of interconnectedness. This is what I needed to learn and she was the perfect teacher of this style of compassion. (July 9, 2008)

Silk lived far beyond the time that all of the doctors predicted, and they encouraged me to continue doing what apparently had been working so well for her. However doing home Hospice, which included forcing down medication and restraining her while injecting her with saline fluids, caused too much suffering for both Silk and myself. Once we stopped those measures we were both much happier. Then I needed to look for a series of signs as described by Silk's regular vet and the euthanasia vet I was encouraged to contact if I wanted Silk to be able to die at home. Silk never conformed to any of the series of signs I was to be looking for that would tell me she was ready to die.

Eventually, the vets encouraged me to euthanize Silk before her suffering became unbearable. They said nearly everyone, including them, puts their animal down too late. I communed with many euthanasia vets. When I noted some of the signs I was warned of, I could not put her down. Would I be able to sense the time that was not too early or too late? How could I kill her? My final conversations on the phone with both vets were quite compassionate and helped me tremendously. They each expressed confidence in my intuition and ability to know the right time; I stayed vigilantly connected in each moment.

Silk is totally dependent upon me now. If it is right, I want to give her the blessing of not having to leave this world suffering and be at peace. It is so difficult to know if it's more compassionate to prevent her suffering and minimize her discomfort by euthanizing her or let her continue to stay alive. We are mind and soul melded, so it is one of the hardest decisions I have had to make in my life. I hope to make the decision in the right time.

Silk and I are from the same soul. She is so in my heart – we breathe the same breath. She looks deeply into me, and connects with me at my core – as I do her. I love how she feels through her body. Her energy heals me. Killing her feels like it is killing a part of myself!

I need to be self-compassionate so that I can be free of my own pain and suffering, so that I can be free to sense how to serve her... to give her the compassion she has given to me... standing by me with presence. I see the part of me that won't let go is the little girl that is attached to her.

As she stares intently into me I do not know how I can take her life away. ...she looks up at me naively inquisitive. She is like an innocent little girl who wonders if I could help her stay alive or die. (July 9, 2008)

The question of whether to let people suffer, even ourselves, and how that relates to compassion is an issue I have to address. (July 11, 2008)

Finding peace with helping Silk finally let go was my journey. But it was difficult for me to get past the thought that I was killing her, especially since the Tibetan Rinpoche I saw after Tara's death had left such an indelible mark when he told me not to kill anyone. I shared this with Tara's father who began to comfort me when he said the Dalai Lama himself would let her go as a compassionate act of kindness, since in the wild she would already be dead. So I stayed riveted for any signs that might show up that would bring forth the peace I needed to know when to give Silk the final lethal injection.

I couldn't in good faith put her down today although everything was in place. I tried hard to remember her troubled body and the further problems that would arise very soon. Everyone tried to convince me that now was the responsible compassionate time. Could my perceptions be skewed by my pain energy? Did I need to once again be self-compassionate and free myself of all of the pain and attachments I had so that I could be truly free to sense how to serve her needs?

Compassion may include killing – ending a life before the pain and suffering becomes too great. This can be most difficult when it is the life of someone you are very close to. It can be nearly impossible when the being can not verbally tell you that they are ready to die. (July 10, 2008)

An *animal communicator*, who my vet suggested I call, worked exclusively with helping animals to *cross over the Rainbow Bridge*. She soothed me as we spoke daily of questions that no one else dared ponder upon the answers of, like: "Is Silk staying alive

for me?" She compassionately stayed available these last days of Silk's life and validated my perceptions as to how to take Silk through her last moments alive here on earth.

It astonished me how in Silk's dying she was still able to stay compassionate to me. Though she was barely moving and her breathing was quite labored she stayed focused on my every move. She flowed me her love and took care of me even in these dying days. I realized that Silk was one of my daughters and we were helping on another.

Compassion today, the day I plan to assist in the peaceful passing of Silk, meant both the feminine heavenly Tara compassion and the feminine earthly Silk compassion; the first is expansive and light and the second is grounded and deep. Thank you to both of my daughters.

Silk sees and feels me crying about letting her go, and she comes into the kitchen to console me. It is a tacit empathy. The fact that she is totally honoring me is her type of appreciation. She is truly caring for me. Amazing, she is compassionate to the very end! (July 11, 2008)

Though the euthanasia vet came over and sensed this was the time, and a friend of mine agreed and did a beautiful, closing meditation with Silk which she responded peacefully to, as the vet was about to give her the final injection, Silk got up and walked into the kitchen for food, an action she had not done for a week. I took this as a sign from Silk that she was not yet ready to go. We re-scheduled Silk's demise for the following day. My partner had to go out of town for work, but he prepared Silk's gravesite in the garden in front of my home, right next to where we buried the remains of Satin.

That last day of Silk's life was incredible. Another friend came over to take photos, but Silk had retreated to her cat house on the patio - seemingly about to die on her own. All now encouraged me not to wait much longer or the projected seizures would begin. The animal communicator did not think Silk would make it through the night and

prepared me emotionally and logistically with everything I needed to deal with her death at home alone. I now knew Silk and I together would be able to handle this challenge.

I stayed with Silk every second throughout the night – just being with her and loving her – as I had been working towards doing with this dying process. I stopped forcing any medicine into her and instead gave Silk salmon, her favorite food, as her final meal. She had not eaten and barely drank for days; it was her *last hoorah!* Settling her in the environment I prepared her for, we stayed physically connected all through the night.

The next day Silk would go into and then leave her patio retreat. Many moments seemed like they were to be her last. I gave her time to be alone with her process and then she would come out to commune with me once more. Seeing Silk not resisting, and even at peace, with her dying gave me the sign I needed. The animal communicator said it would be any moment and agreed with the vet that giving Silk the injection, reducing her inevitable harsh suffering, was the most compassionate action I could now perform.

I realized that conscious evolution could be an evolving away from having to suffer to learn. Silk did not need to suffer; I could now help her to die. (July 12, 2008).

My dear daughter-in-law supported me through Silk's final departure, while my son took care of my grandson – who loved Silk very much, but at 1 ½ was too young to be present at her death. Due to a weird turn of events, Silk actually got to have what could be called a near-perfect death. From a dear friend who knew Silk well since she was a kitten, she received Native American earth prayers and visions of her sister by her side. Gratefully, Silk got to die outdoors, on a cushion on my lap, while I caressed her.

As Silk was dying, when I made my true physical connection, she piped up as if to say thankfully to me, “Ah! You're here!” (July 12, 2008)

The vet validated my being in tune with Silk, saying that Silk had been moments away from dying on her own and experiencing inevitable suffering. She was blessed in her death with the life she led: slow and deep. Our sacred burial freed her body. Traveling the distance together in love, Silk was peacefully in the light!

I gave myself fully to Silk the past couple of weeks from my waking moments to sleeping with her at night, hand-feeding her anything she could eat, and giving her water and medicine and as much love as I could. [I now need] recuperation. (From a letter to my mentor: July 13, 2008)

During my ensuing recuperation from the last few months' build-up of post-stress and this last surprisingly compassionate dying process, the spiritual connection I had been making during my compassion practice began to change. Instead of relying on divine masculine and feminine presences making a *wedding within*, I felt the urge to include those close relations of mine that have *crossed over*. Like in the Native American tradition and the White Tara meditation, I can surround myself with ancestors and family members that have compassionately cared about and for me, like Daddy, Tara, Cal, Leni, and Silk - even my grandmothers. Self compassion includes not allowing my mind to talk me out of maintaining my strong connection with Silk, even though she has crossed over, as she could remain as my slow and deep conduit to my earth connection.

Creating this narrative on the life and death of my precious cat Silk has been both tremendously demanding and rewarding, as had been the writing of the previous legacies. Fortunately, the lessons that I learned through Silk's passing became available for me to apply to myself. As my emotional and physical pain arose, I took more time to *stop and just be* and transform this energy as compassionately as possible. My hope is that this reveals a conscious evolution on the horizon of my compassionate behavior with the suffering of all that are so very dear to my heart.

Cultivating Motherly Compassion

...the maternal instinct is not confined solely to females... but it is found in both parents... “Maternal instinct” is thus a generic definition given to the guiding instinct that is concerned with the preservation of the species. (p. 201)

Montessori *The Secret of Childhood* 1996

The *maternal instinct* is marked by compassion. As the Dalai Lama (April 15, 2008) said during the Inter-Spiritual section of the Seeds of Compassion conference, “Everyone’s real compassion for others is from [their] mother. The real teacher [of compassion] is your mother.” Although, and maybe because, my mom was not very in touch with her “maternal instinct’ or compassionate nature during her children’s growing up years, and perhaps because I was so appreciative of the nurturing aspect of responsible parenting that I was shown by Daddy, my maternal instinct seems to have strongly developed. This has been fortunately and unfortunately marked by my *38/11* tendency towards sensitivity and hypersensitivity as well as confident security and insecurity.

The two relationships that cultivated my motherly compassion was with my younger sister (5 ½ years my junior) and with my dear son. My third effort towards compassionate mothering was with my own mother. However, though my sensitivity was strong, it was rarely accompanied by warmth, tenderness and sympathy and usually ended up in arguments; therefore, I will not consider this as compassionate mothering.

My motherly compassion towards my sister was initiated due to her having had an emotionally, and frequently physically, absent mother as a child and young adult. I felt the need to try to fill this void – despite my own lack of mothering. When I became the mother of my son, I found myself applying what I had learned in the caretaking of my sister, at times even calling him my sister’s name. Upon reflection, I can see that my

successes and failures in my motherly roles were similar in both relationships, as were my compassionate strengths and weaknesses.

With regards to the action triad of a compassionate persona, the compassionate aspect that I emulated from Daddy was warmth from my heart, a tender caring. The control aspect of compassion is what I inherited from my mother. Both of my parents were sensitive, and this was multiplied within me. The negative aspects of their sensitivity complicated my natural maternal instinct by infusing it with ancestral emotional dramas: defensiveness, ill-temperedness and tantrums from Mom; concern, worry and heartbreak from Daddy. I became a nurturer who went into reaction when my form of motherly compassion was not well received.

Dependent on me for nurturing and care,
To share and advise, I will always be there.

But when you don't listen or show gratitude,
My self-esteem lowers; we end in a feud.

I want to help when aware of a need.
Just *be* sensitive and give warmth to me, please!

The creative expression I made with oil pastels and watercolor for this section, *The Ups and Downs of Compassionate Mothering*, showed me the chronology of my emotional connections with my sister and son: the mountains and valleys, the blissful heaven and utter hell of motherhood throughout my life. A regrettable aspect of this story is that when my well-intentioned words (meaning to help them attain their highest survival potential) fell upon deaf ears or triggered defensiveness, I - *the cultivator of compassion* –reacted to my own triggers and gave no true compassion (though mistakenly believed I was). My huge desire and effort to be of loving service to both my son and sister were compromised by my own unhandled childhood pain energy.

Being a Motherly, Mothering, Big Sister

Our Childhood

I was happily an only child until I began kindergarten and discovered that Mom was pregnant. Within weeks before my sister was due, half-way through my first year of school, kindergarten, I was thoroughly excited to move from our miniscule apartment to a grand seven room home with a huge lavender bedroom. This felt especially wonderful as this was a room prepared just for my new baby sister, Elyse, and me to share. My being old enough, there was no need for sibling rivalry; I loved being the big sister and helping Mom care for our baby, who I immediately felt great warmth and sensitivity towards.

At the end of the following summer (on our family car ride home from our last summer bungalow vacation) my maternal instinct first arose. After reading what I happily felt was my best 6th year birthday card ever (which included a beautiful necklace), I decided this present was a curse when it dawned on me that it came from Mom's *boyfriend*. I became furious, but remained silently upset not wanting Daddy, who was driving, to be hurt by this betrayal. My heart broke for my dad and this triggered me to be quite resentful of Mom. The driving force to control this situation became coupled with a sense of protectiveness of my baby sister that I had never before experienced. It initiated a special bond between us that was palpable.

Our life changed when Mom decided to get a full-time job and send my sister off to nursery school once they accepted her at 2 years old. Mom remembers Elyse crying and crying each morning not wanting to go to this center. Daddy met my sister each early evening when she got off the school bus; I was forlorn seeing our tiny little girl so lost.

Elyse then began getting recurrent fevers, so while Mom was working in Manhattan she had Grandma and Bubby care for Elyse. At last, when the pediatrician told Mom, “This is her way of saying she wants you to stay home” Mom quit work. My sister happily was able to stay home, though Mom worked every day creating a travel business on our enclosed porch. Mom remembers nothing more about my sister’s childhood. I believe this is possibly because being a career woman blocked her minimal maternal instinct.

During our early childhood days I created various opportunities for the family to enjoy special time together. Our favorite (except for Daddy) was *family performances*. In preparation, I put myself in charge of teaching my sister a gymnastic feat, dance or vocal piece (while trying to be sensitive to her skill level) for us to practice and perform, as a joint effort. My recollection of those times is of sharing many fun-filled moments.

When my parents began their full-time business together, we had to move behind the new office; my sister and I were miserable. After having a terrible fight with Mom when I was 12 and my sister was 6 years old, I decided to run away from home. The only glitch was that I had to decide what to do with my sister. I recall packing a plaid round suitcase and Elyse looking on sadly. If I was running away, she wanted to go too! I compassionately agreed, although I sensed it would hinder my great plans. After we walked together about a block or so, I knew my sister was not capable of traveling with me, yet I also knew I could not leave her alone at home without me. Feeling the need to do what was best for her, I surrendered and turned around for her sake and brought us back home; this was probably my first sacrifice as a motherly big sister.

As Teenagers

You were a disciplinarian and a nurturer.
 You were there keeping me focused, keeping me in line.
 In a nurturing way, you were protective of me and made sure I did the right thing... You were the only source of control besides Daddy... I had no one telling me what to do, so you felt you had to... You made sure I did well in school... Your mothering was sometimes a pain in neck, telling me what friends were good or not good for me. But you also helped me... (*She laughs.*) “Wait till Daddy goes to sleep before you climb out the window.” (From interview with Elyse on my *mothering* of her: December 14, 2008)

Once my sister and I moved in with Daddy, after Cal had died and I had dropped out of college, Mom rarely mothered us and Daddy was hardly home. Both of our parents’ worked days and evenings leaving them unaware of many areas of their daughters’ lives; their absence caused us to be minimally parented by them. So, during these teen years I felt the need to take on a more active parenting role which led to my inquiry into how to be responsible while simultaneously being kind.

As soon as I sensed my sister’s gentle spirit was hardening and causing her to be attracted to teenagers who were also experiencing a troubled family life, it provoked a strong impulse within me to put her successfully back on a positive track. For instance, when Elyse told me she had decided that she no longer cared about her grades (although she had been getting straight A’s until this point), and decided to transfer from an *academic* to the easier high school *commercial* route that her new friends were taking, I felt it was necessary for me to begin to take on the responsibility of the mothering role of my younger sister. How to do this compassionately remained an enigma.

I got triggered by how my mother brought my sister up... her emotional abuse is a sensitive area for me. (My Heuristic Journal: June 7, 2007)

Assuming a motherly role necessitated my having a role model to learn from, and that is exactly what I did not have. Consciously choosing to not treat my younger sister

with the frenetic, demanding energy of my Mom, I was frequently at a standstill as to how to handle the situation of Elyse taking a direction in her life that seemed to me to be quite non-optimal for her. I found Daddy's gentle method to be insufficient when I tried to apply his disciplinary approach in these matters. Becoming authoritative with my sister was met with a degree of reproach such as I had never received from her; it hurt quite deeply. As I tried to find effective ways to compassionately help her, my ignorance about how to set appropriate boundaries was met by her suppressed anger; she lashed out at me. Our relationship took a downward turn which never got fully resolved.

I increased my mothering role for a while, until I myself took a major turn for the worse. My sister and I both now independently taking drugs made me incapable of caring for myself or her. A new relationship developed as we commiserated and shared the 60's sentiments. I no longer attempted to control my sister and this was positive for both of us.

A wise mother knows: it is her state of consciousness that matters. (p. 53)
McClure *The Tao of Motherhood* 1991

When I got involved with Scientology I got *straightened out* and my life got infinitely better; I longed to share this with my sister. My father said this was not for her, although he acknowledged that I had become emotionally strong and healthy again. With the tools I was amassing, learning to be present while *granting beingness*, I was now able to motherly help my sister in a new way. When Elyse was a senior in high school and felt lost regarding her future, I was empathetic and helped her to discover something that could make her happy. Though she had no plans for college, we sorted out that she could go to a community college, transfer to Brooklyn College to get her BA and become a teacher of young children. Through Scientology, I was then able to more effectively cultivate a consciousness that also cultivated motherly compassion.

As Young Adults

You were more loving when you were older; you gave me guidance and support... You helped me out with all the relationships I had. Even when I was a mother, and I did not have Mommy there, you helped guide me towards good parenting. You guided me in doing right for my children. You always helped me if I got in to a fight with a friend or a boyfriend. You were always wonderful with relationships with me; that was major! You gave me good guidance in my life. (Interview: December 14, 2008)

Throughout our young adult years I was being a motherly, and sometimes *mothering*, big sister as well as a dear friend. We laughed and played when we were close by and during our frequent phone conversations. When Elyse was confused or in need, I listened to her problems intently and gave her loving counsel while we together worked through those difficult situations. I also introduced her to many teachings, including Rosenberg's *Non-Violent Communication* model which I tried to coach her through. It was during these times that she expressed the most gratitude for my attention and when she shared her appreciation for my having been there for her as a mother.

My memory says that I was motherly advising my sister when she got upset. However, I am so glad to hear that she has the sense that I guided and supported her. Since I was in my *love and light* spiritual persona at the time, my advice must have been easily palatable as it would have come across all *warm and fuzzy*. I know I must have done something right as, in my attempts to love and be of service to her, these years hold the most pleasurable memories of my sister and my relationship.

As Adult Women Sisters

Though we lived 3,000 miles away, my sister and I stayed quite close - with highs and lows – as older and younger siblings. I remained the one to hold up Elyse’s emotional strength, though she took on the responsibility for ensuring we got together and booked all the travel reservations for us. These acts guaranteed our adult bond.

Somewhere in the past 10 years Mom was able to see that she was not really there as a mother, especially for my sister. And she is making up for it by calling frequently, always expressing love and care, especially to my sister. (Heuristic journal: September 9, 2004)

Over time, after many long and arduous conversations with Mom, and once she completed menopause, the part of the motherly role returned to our natural mother. Elyse, living one state over, took great advantage of this. Mom learned to be quite sympathetic and careful of saying anything that might offend my sister, even when she disagreed with her. Their mother/daughter relationship continues to blossom.

This new relationship lessened the frequency of Elyse’s calls to me, as she depended more on Mom for daily conversations and no longer needed me as her mother. My younger sister still mostly calls me for comfort and advice as her big sister. However, many of these conversations are not as pleasant as before. I sometimes find myself less tolerant, patient and calm when I react to her as compulsive, strong-willed and unwilling to see the truth. Those moments of my non-compassion reduce the affinity between us. Nonetheless, our basic relationship remains strong and our love and caring seem infinite.

You are the most compassionate person in my life.
You’re there; your heart is always open.

But sometimes your advice is a little overwhelming... when you are repetitive. That’s the only time I get frustrated - when you say it again and again and not give me the time to process ...and act on it. You think I am not quite getting it. I know you have my best interest at heart, but pushing

makes it difficult for me to handle. But it's all good. It's not negative; I know you just want me to get it.

Thank you being compassionate to me.
You are a wonderful safety net in my life!

(From my Second Interview with Elyse:

What are the positive and negative aspects of my compassionate efforts towards you in the past ten years? December 16, 2008)

When I heard my sister tell me the above, I was touched – with both her positive and negative responses regarding my more recent expressions of compassion towards her. I felt quite relieved that my method of help had produced only a minimal increase of pain. This seemed to be true as I had to drag any negative comment out of her at first and because she modified all of her honest, unfavorable comments with a warm, sincere re-affirming compliment of me. I was also grateful to now clearly hear about her frustration, which I had prompted her to reveal since I had awkwardly experienced that form of pain within her. In that un-triggered moment I was able to receive what I asked for, a deeper view into any area of my compassionate ability that still required further cultivation.

My realization, after this conversation / interview, was that where I was falling short was in my sensitivity; I was not sufficiently fine-tuned to know if *she got me*. This reduced sensitivity reduced my warmth (as I then had less affinity towards my sister) and increased my control (as I had to emphatically make up for my resultant lessened confidence). During my efforts towards engaging in compassionate communication, I recognized I had not been accurately sensing whether or not she was receiving my communication - whether or not I was being understood.

This is basic *Scientology 101*: communication includes duplication and understanding. It was great to learn that I need to strengthen my ability to sense when my attempted communication is actually received, and to recognize to what degree it is

understood. My heart wanted her to be happy and not in pain so much that it emphatically jumped into trying to make it happen! She was right; I had her best interest at heart.

A communication cycle consists of just cause, distance, effect with intention, attention, duplication and understanding.

L. Ron Hubbard *Communication cycles within the auditing cycle* 1971

This error of compassion was stimulated once I became a teacher and the negative side of the authoritarian persona crept in. My student's parents and my staff members strong request (if not sometimes a demand) for me to take on the role of an authority seemed to necessitate a change within me. I began to create some definite belief structures that I could offer those in need to consider and utilize in their own fashion. This led me to more strongly believe in what I felt to be *right* and began *compassionately imposing* it (an oxymoron) in an effort to *teach* or *enlighten* the people I cared most about, in the hopes of assisting them to minimize their pain. The more obvious their situation seemed to me, the more I coached them to obtain their own *ah-ha* so they could effectively deal with their painful situation or help prevent them from the possible painful consequences of their actions.

My sister, being cursed and blessed with hypersensitivity as well, was one dear person that was affected by this persona as she quite often came to me for relationship help. When her overwhelming pain energy kicked in she would call me in grave distress; this caused me to urge her to receive and deeply consider *my wisdom* so that her life had a better chance of running more smoothly. If she did not seem to embrace my feedback, I desperately tried to find various ways of explaining psychological concepts wanting her to then have her own realization; this would hopefully help her be better able to take care

of her own life with greater ease and satisfaction. I was always feeling like she needed my wisdom, never realizing that she had been amassing her own.

Being: Elyse... - to truly be is to be truly present.

Present: Elyse... - to be in clear reality; to act and not react; to be here and now. (Definition interview with Elyse: September 15, 2004)

This shift in my method of help seems to be an aspect of my reaction to my own pain that occurred when I was no longer being superficially compassionate. As I began being more *in my body* I felt her pain more severely within me. This made it more difficult for me to be patient or comfortable with letting her learning her own lessons in her own time. My pain energy affected my ability to be as warmly compassionate to her as I had been previously. I felt our relationship was less optimal, but now I realize that this just indicated a need to deal with my own triggered pain self-compassionately.

Elyse's *birth number* is the same as Leni's – a 29/11. All three of us being 11's have made us all seem overly secure and confident at times and then utterly insecure. During this authoritative period, with both Leni and Elyse, I lacked the sensitivity and abused my control to deal with their overconfidence that may have been covering up their pain. My own insecurity brought about resentment which was non-compassionate and unhealthy for our relationships. Because of my strong warmth factor, my lessened compassionate attitude was tolerated.

I now see an area of difficulty as well as its unconscious solution that has been inhibiting my ability to be truly compassionate with these sisters: As soon as someone quite close to me is in need, I act on a program that implores me to drop everything and take care of my loved one – disregarding my own current needs. It has been especially

difficult for me to stay mindfully present with my perception of the now moment and acting accordingly, when one of these sisters reached out to me in pain.

Elyse calls and I jump right into being there for her when I need to be here for me. (My Heuristic Journal: March 8, 2004)

As I look at my To Do list, I see I have decided to call Elyse and Leni first---I guess my priority is making other people happy, fulfilling my perceived obligation to a person close to me before taking care of my body and home, etc. (September 16, 2004)

My *now moment* says, to put my notes down on paper. Then the phone rings - next new moment. Do I speak to my sister who 'needs' me? Can I choose a new choice for me or should I let my mind... automatically carry out my past intentions... without including what *I* want to do... what the *moment* calls for? You cannot know without first *being*.... Only when you are *being*, do you truly know what to *do* next. Otherwise the mind makes up your mind for you, chooses for you. (August 13, 2004)

I do not seem to be able to 'just be' when others are suffering around me. (December 23, 2004)

I am exhausted and my throat hurts tonight after dealing with my sister about her problems with my mom. (November 21, 2004)

Pain energy then arises within me when I feel my loved one's pain so deeply.

When the pain becomes too great for me to deal with, another part of me often takes over to try to relieve this pain while handling the situation as compassionately as it knows how: my *fix-it* persona. While my *fix-it* persona is in charge, my warmth for self and others decreases. My *fix-it* persona ignores my triggered pain as well as the added developing pain. Though I am not heeding it, this pain still exists and bursts forth – sometimes as compulsions. Perhaps if I took a break to give myself compassion for my pain I could have maintained my heart connection and been more lovingly effective.

I play the fixer all the time with people... I don't have faith that if I don't, things will work out... When I learn how to fix me, then I can begin to attempt to 'fix' someone else. (September 29, 2004)

Phone calls engaged my 'compulsive' mind again, and I began pacing in the living room speaking to my sister and friend; this resulted in eating chocolate raspberry sticks which are bad for my body... but I ignored that. (August 16, 2004)

Make no attempt at problem solving until there's a connection at the heart level. Only with a heart connection can you fix it.

Rosenberg *Hearing and Expressing Anger Compassionately* 1996

I learned that part of my fixing program is giving advice. Actually, when I look at the process of compassion, the last step, *caring for*, could introduce some suggestions. However, that is after *just being with, awareness of, listening, empathy and appreciation*. Offering advice before taking these compassionate steps does not connote compassion. Giving advice is not compassionate as it is protecting me from feeling my pain, keeping me in my rational mind and does not include my spiritual connection.

The advice I wound up giving was often an alternative to the actions Elyse was, or thought of, taking. I felt her potential pain and I became frustrated when she did not resist her patterning, even when I made her aware of it, so I felt it necessary to intervene *for her own good*. Presenting alternative methods of dealing with life needed to include a spiritual connection (which I usually had not made in those situations). It would provide for an interconnectedness that could sense what would be good for the whole; it would encourage my appreciation of the viewpoints she is already having or expressing. With no spiritual connection, a request for empathy after unheeded advice can fall on non-compassionate, emotional ears.

Without having made a spiritual connection, my advice-giving easily appeared to be a criticism of Elyse's actions. This reduced our communication and compassion for one another. I seemed to have gotten back from her what I dished out. Fire with fire, criticism with criticism, was the game it often turned into.

I worked this through one time with Elyse. It was so hard because she gets so critical of me when I question her about an alternative viewpoint...That is an example of my not being compassionate or empathetic to another's diverse viewpoints... or [the] emotional charge connected to the area. (My Heuristic Journal: November 19, 2004)

My sister wanted to buy a dog for companionship in the midst of much turmoil in her life. I sensed this would be an impulsive act, recognizing that she was not seeing the ramifications of that action that I was envisioning... I tried to convey my insights so that another "mistake" would not have to be made that would cause her, and consequently myself, pain and discomfort. I had experienced her impulsiveness in a number of recent situations which caused much eventual distress... The type of empathy I have with my sister is one of feeling the energy of her emotional pain within my own body which is a triggering of great pain.

Her call for compassionate empathy came after she bought the dog, who she named after our father, Herby; she told me she was very upset but now had to get rid of Herby, who she had just weeks ago given a breeder \$1000 for, because she had not realized how much work and energy it would take, which she did not have, and that the dog would not be her companion. I felt empathy, her pain; but I felt mine as well. I felt the impulse to throw my pain energy on her by making her wrong for not listening to me earlier and encouraging her to check into her purchase decision more thoroughly. I was hurt and disturbed that she had strongly rejected my advice that she look at the probable resultant non-optimal situations that could arise before buying this dog. Additionally, I felt very frustrated because every reason that she was giving me for wanting to now get rid of the dog were the exact same reasons that I initially presented to her for not buying the dog in the first place. Heeding my advice would have saved her the current pain... which was now causing me pain as well. I found myself able to feel empathy, but unable to compassionately give her empathy. Since I have chosen to be responsible for my own pain, I realized that giving myself compassion for my own pain needed to precede giving her compassionate empathy. (October 30, 2004)

Right now my sister wants compassion for her difficulty. I always give advice. I will need to give myself compassion for the pain it triggers and the lack of compassion I have for her as I struggle with wanting her to feel good. If I could only do for her today what I did for myself last night. First I needed to be in my body and have body awareness and communication; then spiritually smile from my heart; then lovingly be compassionate to myself; then perhaps I can be that way with her. I also know that I have to eat as I have not done enough of my physical routine for this part of the day. It is hard for me to do this for me when I know she needs my help

now. I need to change this if I'm truly going to be able to be self-compassionate and... help her be compassionate to her. (January 29, 2005)

Inspiring her rather than giving her advice is something I am consciously working on now. When I told her I did this... we both laughed and eventually we saw that it worked well. (November 1, 2008)

Dedicated Sisters of Compassion

I have been blessed to have a sister who I have mostly been able to stay quite close with throughout our lives. This is despite our differences in general lifestyle and our attitudes towards health, materialism and spirituality. Being continually influenced by the same parents made for both positive and negative similarities: we both have the warmth and sensitivity of Daddy and the ambition and controlling drive of Mom; we value family connection as Daddy did and possess our Mom's fiery and emotional nature; we share wonderful memories and can easily react to the same triggers; we both have worked towards maintaining a loving relationship with, and embodying the strengths of, our Daddy while resisting our mother's criticisms and bad temper.

And now, after all of these years, my sister has a real mother who she communes with daily, sees fairly frequently and shares holidays with. In her 50's she now has a mother she is proud of and who loves and cares for her! It has become appropriate for my sister and I to cultivate a new relationship that includes compassion, but one that is more sisterly and less motherly.

My relationship with my sister gives me ample practice to cultivate compassion. Feeling her reassurance that she knows I have her best interest at heart, remembering to take the time to be compassionate to myself, and taking refuge in a spiritual connection seem to be positive avenues that are increasing my compassionate communication if I get

triggered by her pain. It seems that we will always be able to return to our heartfelt, warm connection and loving thoughts, and create moments to laugh hardy forever more.

Cultivating Compassion with my Son, et al.

The startling blindness of adults, their insensibility with regard to their own offspring, is something that is deeply rooted and of long duration. An adult who loves children but unconsciously condemns them inflicts upon them a secret sorrow which is a mirror of his own mistakes. (p. 5)

Maria Montessori *Secret of Childhood* 1966

As I reflect on my life's best work, my most devoted effort, and my greatest love, all have been for my son, Ryan. I can see that my motherly input has contributed to many of the accomplishments in my son's adult life. Also, in spite of my noble heartfelt intentions and obviously wonderful successes, my many mistakes have caused him much sorrow. I am thus inspired to create this version of my mother/son story for insight and a clearing of the road to a greater transformation of our relationship - into its highest available compassionate form. The use of my Process of Self-Compassion applied to what I discover in this new telling is continuing to heal our mutual secret sorrow.

Do a narrative and find my personas' pain energy and apply the Process of Self-Compassion to each... really examining all the pain energy I have carried around, suppressed and altered.... Doing this [with Ryan] is part of my role as a parent! (My Heuristic Journal: September 21, 2007)

This narrative will include both the wonderful aspects of my mothering and of our relationship, as well as the unfortunate difficulties that arose. My educator pain has reduced my ability to be compassionate to my son and we have both suffered from this. I will inspect this educator pain from a self-responsible stance, investigating times as a mother that I was unable to deal with my triggered reactions and my resultant pain, and then increase my awareness as to how this affected my son. This responsible attitude,

becoming aware of *my* pain and programs, will be assumed so that I can become more compassionate by being self-compassionate and not because taking responsibility condones or negates either of our mistakes and unconsciousness.

Becoming a Mother

When my husband told me he wanted us to begin making a family of five, inwardly I went into shock but said nothing. Playing with kids was one thing, being a mother was quite another! Focusing on my enjoyment of creating games with children, I moved forwards with my attempts to get pregnant. My first action was to be as healthy as possible, so I did Hubbard's *Purification Rundown* – a very in-depth six-month cleanse. However, no matter how much and how often we tried to get me pregnant we failed. Perhaps one of us was infertile, we thought. Through testing we discovered that my husband was ready and raring to go; I finally had to confront that I was not.

Upon inner exploration I had the realization that some emotional pain connected with having children was blocking me from conceiving – this was my *fear of having to give up my independence* – afraid of not being able to do what I wanted to do when I wanted to do it! I was enjoying being married and was fairly content running a division of our Scientology mission, but even with those commitments at my core level I felt I was in charge of my own life.

An immature attitude of selfishness, a self-centered resistance to *giving up my life* for someone else became evident. Further investigation led me to understand that this was my mother's fear and not mine. Once this became clear, I immediately began to get excited about co-creating my internal and external life, 24/7, with a child - being a responsible initiator of educational adventures!

Despite this recognition I surprisingly still could not get pregnant, so I had to do a deeper inquiry. Seeing Leni and others working at the mission while stressed out due to having insufficient quality time with their children was an eye-opener. I saw that this violated my vision of parenting and that this had been further blocking my pregnancy. Completing my Scientology contract as a staff member became my final freeing action!

This was the first compassionate act I performed for my future child and myself. Once unbound I opened my heart and soul to self-compassionate motherhood, which included compassion for my child: I accepted a non-pressured, part-time, high-paying position at a local office (that I could walk to) which permitted a baby to be present. I was ready and then blessed to experience the wondrous feeling of being pregnant.

Being the *good mother* persona... was very important to me since I did not feel like I had a *good mother* or received *good mothering*. It began when I was pregnant with Ryan. It connects to being brought up with a lot of pain and therefore has a lot of pain energy around parenting. (June 2, 2007)

[In the *Appendix* I placed a document entitled *Pain Energy Narrative: Events leading up to the death of my daughter Tara*, written in the spring of 2007 to locate and deal with the specific pain energy and personas connected to Tara. This document includes a full narrative account of my pregnancy and the birth of Ryan. I will cite this document as: *Pain Energy Narrative – Tara: 2007* and summarize appropriate sections.]

My long history of compassion and education officially began when I became pregnant. I read every book I could get my hands on about my new condition and the various ensuing potential childbirth strategies. Natural childbirth painted the most beautiful fantasy, so I rejected my obstetrician's statistics that 50% of all pregnancies end in c-sections and that one-third of all pregnancies have a breech presentation which is best resolved through a c-section.

I tried to hide from the flashes of an impinging mental picture of my own breech hospital birth that ended with horrible pain for both my mother and myself and my left hip being unthinkingly dislocated by an OB/GYN. To avoid this past recurrence, I threw myself into a nurse mid-wife option (with an obstetrician back-up) since their approach resonated with my natural lifestyle belief system... and also because it offered the probability of not giving my new baby or myself a c-section trauma.

Perhaps if I had been truly self-compassionate I would have had the courage to directly deal with my triggered pain. Or possibly these fears were not triggers from my unresolved past, but were offering intuition of inevitable future events. Either way, self-compassion would have included gaining a greater awareness of this painful perception.

I chose the Maternity Center... Their programs and classes, and... birthing rooms created an environment that felt like the safest place I could find to birth my first, yet unborn, child. I discounted every male gynecologist before choosing this midwife center; I wonder if this relates to my own painful 'violent' delivery by a male doctor in a cold hospital environment.

In the midst of a midwife examination during my end of the 9th month of pregnancy, which was being photographed by a writer for Parent's Magazine, I was struck by the terrifying thought that the baby was breech. ...Unfortunately I was right! ...a breech presentation was horrifying to me... I resisted... any type of hospital delivery especially one that might include any potential for... a drugged c-section... I wanted the best for my child; I did not want any drugs or unnecessary procedures... I remained relentless in my search for a midwife who would birth my baby naturally... I went to a midwife conference... and found out that only nurse-midwives were not permitted to do a breech delivery in a hospital or at home...

Very upset and nearing my due date, I... discovered one group of lay-midwives a few states away that was willing to take the risk. One midwife from this group said I had to be prepared for the possible death of the child... and that the midwives would be under the influence of marijuana during this delivery... now I sadly and apprehensively knew... that I had to consider being hospitalized... I felt trapped.

When my water broke and my baby did not 'drop'... I panicked; I refused to let [the doctor] prep me and cut me open. My triggered pain energy was

that I would die and that something horrible would happen to my baby that would cause him immense suffering. I was determined, as his mother, not to allow this to occur at any cost. The doctor became more and more frustrated with me and eventually said if I did not begin the prep for a c-section he would throw me out on the streets of New York City where I would have to attempt to have this breech baby alone, probably causing his death... I submitted to all of the pressure and prayed for the best.

Fearful of being awake and seeing my body cut open and fearful of getting an epidermal that had the possibility of causing paralysis, I opted for general anesthesia; this is despite the fact that more chemicals would be going into my baby's body as a result of this decision.

Right before I gained consciousness after the surgery, I was deeply affected by a drugged nightmare that felt like reality... I opened my eyes and... Pat was offering me a baby... I didn't know if he was really my husband or if that was really my son. All I could say...[was]"Who can I trust?"...I rejected my husband and refused the baby whom... he had been caring for during... my recovery. Eventually the doctor came... grabbed the baby away... and put [him] on my breast...my consciousness was steadily returning... I became aware of my baby feeding on me... I fell in love with the experience of breastfeeding. (Pain Energy Narrative – Tara: 2007)

The next few days were ones of regaining consciousness, healing from the surgery and slowly realizing that I actually had a son when he was periodically brought to me to nurse. The trauma and drama was over... for this pregnancy anyway. In retrospect, however, I can see that the fact is that if I did not have this c-section, I would have had no sutures and my uterus could not have burst during my delivery with Tara; theoretically Tara would then still be alive today. Was my neurotic behavior surrounding this birth an unconscious effort to prevent my future daughter from dying? I will never know.

When I was home with my baby three days later, I cried ecstatically at the meaning of birth and motherhood. I quit my job and decided to stay home and care for and teach my newborn baby. (Pain Energy Narrative: Ibid)

As soon as my son and I were together, home from the hospital, and I saw that tiny body lying on the queen sized mattress on the floor I knew I was not going to go back to the work. Even if I had to go on food stamps and welfare, my place for the next few years of my life was with my baby.

This was my most important job in the world and no one could possibly take my place. (My Heuristic Journal: December 12, 2007)

Home with my new son was amazing and marked the onset of extended highs in our relationship. I was instantaneously compassionate to this beautiful huge being in a baby body who now relied upon me, his primary caretaker, to meet all of his needs. To the surprise of family and friends, I looked forward to a career of being a loving mother and raising this child. Though I was new to this field, I learned that practicing the loving acts of *just being* and listening to both his heart and mine were my greatest lessons – the cornerstones of compassion that showed me how to make the magic of happiness happen.

So the real reason for survival, the principle factor in the "struggle for existence," is the *love of adults* for their young. (p. 42)

Montessori *The Absorbent Mind* 1967

Both Ryan's dad and I cherished our baby as the divine creature he is, saw his greatness manifested and bonded beautifully with our son. Although I profoundly loved my husband, neither I nor he had a role model for simultaneously creating a viable marriage. Breastfeeding hormones did not promote my caring for the needs of my husband as well as my son. Naturally focusing mainly on our baby's needs I see that although we were all quite happy, because I neglected my husband's needs I was not then able to establish a truly *divine family*.

In mothering, the child becomes the purpose of the mother. She expresses her purpose by establishing family life and meeting the needs of the child. When she recognizes herself as the Divine Mother made manifest, when, with the Father she creates the Son and offers her Creation to the world, it is then that she is able to experience the Divine Purpose. The experiences of purposeful daily life give rise to the possibility of happiness. (p. 113)

Salter *Mothering with Soul* 1998

My compassion received its most wondrous cultivation during our nurturing moments at home. Breastfeeding (for over three years) was the key to increasing my

success as a compassionate mother. It brought forth my lovingkindness energy and allowed me to begin to *taste the Oneness* during these incredible bonding moments.

These states of being were necessary for me to sense how to serve Ryan compassionately.

Right mothering springs from this knowledge: the One in either responds to the One in both. The bond is oneness, and cannot be broken. (p. 1)

McClure *The Tao of Motherhood* 1991

Nursing was the foundation for self-compassion and developed my childlike, yet grounded, qualities needed to be a compassionate educator. Soon after Ryan's third birthday, I stopped nursing - listening to the advice of *authorities*. This was too abrupt a shift in our relationship and I now wish I had ended our nursing relationship more gracefully. Within months, missing the level of intimacy nursing provided, I found that I could apply my nurturing skills to myself and others during my massage therapy studies.

When I heard Stephen Levine's body-mind meditation refer to treating yourself 'as your only child' I was able to resonate with that and nurture myself the way I learned how to nurture Ryan. (My Heuristic Journal: August 20, 2007)

Mother as Early Childhood Educator

"The period of infancy is undoubtedly the richest. It should be utilized by education in every possible and conceivable way... Instead of ignoring the early years, it is our duty to cultivate them with the utmost care" (p. 222)
Carrel, Dr. A. *L'Homme et Inconnu* 1947

The next 5 years as the mother and teacher of Ryan were... wonderful. I had home-schooled him with [excellent] results: he walked at 7 months; he read at 2 years old; by the time he was to enter kindergarten, he was doing long division, reading chapter books, was a dancer, a gymnast, an inventor, a magician and the sweetest, devilish, happiest, most loving child anyone could hope to parent. (Pain Energy Narrative – Tara: 2007)

My transition from enjoying a self-centered style of *freedom* to being free to dedicate myself as a mother commemorated my compassionate goal of being my child's

educator. I saw my role as a loving assistant in his spiritual, physical and intellectual development. Emerging from the spiritual belief system of a Scientologist, some of LRH's views remained alive in my heart and soul.

The concern of the Scientologist is purely with the beingness of the child, which is to say his spirit, his potentialities, and his happiness. (p. 381)

L Ron Hubbard *Volunteer Minister Handbook* 1976

Scientology's attitude prepared me to connect with Ryan's consciousness, staying compassionate to his purposes and needs. As a mother, I applied what Hubbard (1973) wrote in *The Fundamentals of Thought*, that *granting beingness* is "...probably the highest virtue; it is even more important to be able to permit other people to have beingness than to be able oneself to assume it" (p. 27). I used this theory when another of Hubbard's (1970) statements in *Dianetics: The Original Thesis* became true in my life with Ryan, "...an individual human being has established his purpose for life at the age of two years" (Glossary: Purpose). *Granting him beingness* enabled me to receive *Ryan the Light Magician's* secret he shared when he was 2 ½ years old: he was going to either become an inventor or a magician. So as his Mother-Teacher I helped him pursue both arenas (These purposes are being actualized through his patented Biofeedback programs and his company which specializes in self-healing – helping make difficulties *disappear!*)

The positive parental education that I did was based on choice and opportunity. I wanted to give Ryan all the opportunities to open him up to anything that may be on his path or that interested him. I always gave him choice as to whether he wanted to take the opportunities that I offered him. He got to choose whatever he wanted to do in the moment, so there was rarely any necessity for discipline. (My Heuristic Journal: July 9, 2007)

As for Ryan's intellectual and physical development, I was thankful to be able to learn how to provide sufficient opportunities for both through my Doman studies. I discovered that his books on teaching babies to read (intellectual) and teaching them to

swim (physical) were of the highest interests to me as these were the areas of my own life that I had struggled with. Teaching Ryan early enough seemed to reassure me that I would not pass on my challenges to him. Despite my inherited fear of drowning, I taught Ryan to swim when he was 9 months old.

When Doman's reading program was insufficient, I taught myself and Ryan phonics programs that were the missing links and he began to instantly read voraciously. As my goal was that school to be easy for my son, I helped him to excel at all he could before he reached school age. I wanted him to feel confident in school. This now reminds me of Mom wanting me to be better than everybody else, as she thought she was.

Parents want... their children to be special, which in our competitive culture means more intelligent, accomplished and attractive than other people. (p. 14)

Brach *Radical Acceptance* 2003

In the earlier narrative section, *Glen Doman: Institutes for the Achievement of Human Potential*, I wrote of the transformational, multidimensional, early childhood education, brain development program that I was trained in and shared with Ryan as his Mother Teacher. For me this *most dynamic learning combination* of the mother and child, that Doman wrote and spoke of when he taught mothers how to multiply their babies intelligence, felt like just the right tool to get the job done.

My compassionate desire was to help my son to actualize his potential in all areas of life, believing that then he would then be blessed to enjoy offering his highest contributions to the world and be appreciated for them. *Educational achievement required joy*, Doman taught. Though Ryan was quite an independent child, he and I were both diligent in together engaging in educational moments frequently throughout the day because learning became a blast for both of us!

My husband and I made time every evening to create new material that I would teach Ryan. Calling himself by his first name, Pat took on the early childhood father role in his creative storytelling and respectful way he played with Ryan. Having received motherly lovingkindness, his feminine is well-developed, and this he shared with his son.

When father shares the caring as most fathers do today then he must also draw upon the feminine qualities of his soul. He too must express tenderness in his activities, gentleness of speech, tell the story imaginatively and from his heart. (p. 87)

Salter *Mothering with Soul* 1998

A shift occurred in our relationship when I stopped nursing just after his third birthday. My breastfeeding hormones “which relax the mother and make her feel more nurturing toward her baby” were no longer being released. This increased the triggering of my unconscious genetic programming. We all still laughed and played together, but my teaching became more directed and authoritative as I became a bit more nervous about life going smoothly without my effort. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breastfeeding>)

We then hired a 20 year old German *au pere* who lived with us for 9 months, so I could work a few hours a day for Pat from home and also so I could take various holistic classes with him. I still taught Ryan daily, but because of his advanced reading and creative level, and his high self esteem, he learned anything he put his mind to on his own. For example, on his 4th birthday we videoed this precocious boy reading many books independently, doing a magic show and performing his own tap dance.

Watching this family video I felt blessed to have recorded an expression of our loving bond. I saw that Ryan and I had remained very close as I thoroughly enjoyed him experiencing all of his new discoveries, his creations, and his wonders. I asked him for

posterity, “What are your favorite things in life these days?” To which he replied with an impish, heartfelt smile, “I love *you!*” I asked again; He said, “You... and my Legos!”

When I then became pregnant with Tara, Ryan and I had developed a more mature, yet still quite playful, relationship. Our warm, sensitive connection increased as my hormones were re-activated. Being such a sweet, caring child, inspired me, the Mother Teacher, to involve him in my pregnancy. He helped prepare the nursery and went to birthing classes with us so he could attend the delivery. A video of Ryan at 4 ½ shows him kissing my big belly and singing to the baby inside of me: “I love you baby! ... I love you whoever you are, a boy or a girl. I hope... you like it in there. I love you.”

On the second day of Ryan becoming a part of an actual Montessori kindergarten class, I went into labor. Leni was to bring Ryan to the hospital to assist the birth, but because of the horrific situation, Ryan only saw me in the recovery room when we all found out that the baby only had a 5% chance of survival. Ryan angrily shouted with frustration that if he had only been allowed to be with me for the labor he would have saved her. Who knows? Perhaps that is true... he was *a light magician* after all!

Ryan and Pat visited Tara in the neonatal unit for three days, but when I had to let her go we compassionately saved him from yet another trauma. When I returned home and began crying seeing the empty nursery, Ryan, ever so kindly, brought me outside and raised his arms to the sky as if he was connecting energetically. He said, “Look! Tara is here. She says she will always be here with us.” It was difficult for me to embrace this spiritual awareness. Ryan was compassionately trying to assist me in getting in tune with Tara’s spiritual essence, but I was too traumatized to be able accept this possible reality.

Once Tara died, I dropped being the Mother Teacher. It was even difficult to be the *good mother* as I was utterly depressed (especially as my breasts were filled with milk and I could not nurse my dead baby girl). Pat and I had great difficulty living each day, communicating with each other or parenting Ryan. Family and friends visited to care for Ryan, but that was insufficient. Then his teacher called us in and told us how forlorn and unresponsive Ryan was and of the problems he was having in school. I was so lost in my pain that I was unaware of the affects that our emotional absence was creating.

I tried to pull myself together for Ryan, but it was no use. I barely knew who I was anymore with 8 pints of other people's blood coursing through me and I had lost all my certainty about my beliefs and values; how could I mother? The unresolved *hurt child* of my pubescent and teen years re-arose and transformed into the new *hurt mother* persona; allowing myself to be her when I was with Ryan had been a huge mistake. Pushing past this persona to renew our glorious relationship met with no success. I now realize I never mourned the loss of these wonderful early childhood days; that beautiful, intimate mother/son love and connection never again to be experienced in all its glory!

Primary Parent: Taking on Mother and Father Roles

Tara's death seriously debilitated Pat; he stopped working, sobbed and began meditating. As his relationship with Ryan had been based upon living in a magical world where anything was possible, Pat became afraid to once again connect with him. Being so devastated from the loss of his daughter, he could no longer find that world or any other. It took years before he was able to re-establish a positive relationship with Ryan again. The burden of making a living and caring for our son, consequently, fell on me. I wound

up mothering *and* fathering during the time period when Ryan needed fathering from his own father. When I asked for help disciplining Ryan, he asserted that good role models were needed. Of course this is important, but that was not all there was to parenting.

When the child reaches about seven years of age, then, parenting begins. Now a father starts to draw on his masculine soul qualities while the mother continues to express her feminine side... from puberty to emerging adulthood, the soul... [The child needs to receive] the firm guidance... inherent in the masculine. This is largely the father's responsibility. (p. 87)
Salter (Ibid)

I was still personally grieving while I was trying to be *Mother/Father*. Though I took fairly good care of myself before, I lost much of my self-compassion which I now really needed. My self-esteem dropped when my husband overtly blamed me for the loss of our child (secretly torturing himself with self-blame) and could give me no empathy for my loss. Feeling Pat's unbearable pain I began mothering him as well; my own deep pain reduced my empathy for his occasional input into family matters that I was now in charge of. What we needed the most, we so sadly could not give to one another.

When people are in pain that is when they need empathy the most.
Rosenberg *Learning to connect* April 24, 2006

Our relationship suffered, especially when Pat's reactions to his triggered pain energy became overwhelming to me; I could barely stand coming home. We separated and he moved out when Ryan was 8 years old (ironically the same age Pat was when his parents separated). This new loss of my family splitting-up upset me deeply. I non-compassionately *threw my pain energy* onto Ryan at times when his own pain energy manifested as what appeared to be *disobedience*.

Since one can only tolerate a certain amount of anger directed at oneself, one normal way of coping... is to direct it outwardly toward a child. (p. 56)
Greenberg Teaching with Feeling 1989

Feeling fully responsible for my son, I often became afraid that I was not serving him well enough. In spite of wanting to consciously mother quite differently than the way I was mothered, I found myself beginning to compulsively *be my mother* since as I was more easily triggered. Determined to stop the negative transmission of certain characteristics of the Jewish cultural DNA, I committed to Ryan that I would try to not pass on my inherited unhealthy patterns. I knew it was impossible to transform all my pain energy, but I vowed to try to resist acting out my triggered negative behaviors.

If you leave parenting to the unconscious process, you will blindly repeat unhealthy parenting you may have received (p. 75)

McClure *The Tao of Motherhood* 1991

Have not all our efforts been aimed at removing obstacles from the child's path of development... at keeping away the dangers and misunderstandings that everywhere threaten it? (p. 27)

Maria Montessori *The Absorbent Mind* 1967

Despite my promises, I often felt compelled to *parent him for his own good*. For example, when Ryan was around 10, he tried to manipulate me into allowing him to play violent video games at my home knowing how much I was against this but also knowing that this was permitted by his father. My blood began to warm as the control I needed for the vital task of protecting his emotional and physical health became more and more out of reach; then it boiled over, I lost control and attacked him. This felt simultaneously horrible and good. Hitting him just once released my tension, but I was ashamed of myself as I used violence in the name of forbidding violence. His hitting me back also just once broke through a warp which brought our relationship to a new level.

Do not let yourself be baited in fighting fire with fire. Keep your center. ... If you try to overpower your children you will discover a simple truth: Their power is greater than yours! ...In a battle of wills, loving kindness is the only weapon that conquers. (p. 137)

McClure *The Tao of Motherhood* 1991

Ryan and I immediately calmed down, apologized, and with lovingkindness began to empathize with each other without making ourselves right. He agreed to play the games for a week, being mindful of any state changes within. This true inquiry brought about an awareness that resulted in him deciding to rid himself of those video games. I saw that consciously focusing on not acting out painful energy had been insufficient. Compassion (acceptance and appreciation) of the persona connected to each transmission was also necessary.

One negative genetic transmission that now emerged told me that Ryan's educational success *depended upon my involvement*. My Mother/ Father/ Teacher persona was more controlling and less warm requiring increased sensitivity as Ryan got older. I investigated which values would be most important for him in life. My desire for him to recognize and learn how to meet society's demands often reduced my compassion.

If your childhood was painful you may get over-involved with your children's lives... Or you may find yourself forcing them to think and feel the way you do. (p. 33)

McClure (Ibid)

This led Ryan to resent me for the same reasons I resented my mother: demanding morality, *knowing best*, correcting mistakes and being disappointed with anything less than the highest grades. Being traumatically mothered, having personal challenges in school and having a Jewish heritage had tainted my Mother/Father/Teacher role. Jewish parents have a particular transmission that can inadvertently make them put huge pressure on their children and have inappropriate achievement expectations; I was guilty of this.

In 1932, one young *Jewish* woman wrote a newspaper article, "Must We All Be Wonder Children?" Criticizing the high *expectations* of *Jewish parents*, she asked, "Why must Jewish parents give their children untenable wings which too often leave them maimed and hurt?" (p. 70)

Wenger *New York Jews and the Great Depression* 1996

To my merit, I honored Ryan's educational need to locate schools that worked best for him, but this became a difficult task. He came home from first grade in public school wondering why it was fun to make fun of people; no one would share his healthy snacks; they laughed at him for wearing his favorite color – purple. Many teachers misunderstood Ryan: they called me in to make changes so that he would better *fit in*; they recommended he wear dark colored clothing, not share his love of unicorns, not read under the table when he already knew what was being taught... and learn the art of war!

Ryan had extra-curricula educational experiences which were transformational, like Aikido and his co-created Bar Mitzvah, but most traditional settings had cruel-like elements. If there had only been a transformational education environment that I could send him to! Sensitive to his being ridiculed, bullied and misunderstood, we explored various other options and he chose well. At last we found a private high school where for three beautiful years he was highly valued, was challenged.

During these school years, I had trouble keeping up with each new stage of his development. Just as I finally understood what he was truly needing he was transitioning into his next phase. Though this is a fairly common parental phenomenon, my delayed perception was exacerbated because I was often emotionally distraught and got easily caught by my triggers, which Sears (1996) says can be the result of a mother's emotional exhaustion; Determined to transmit only constructive messages, I consciously began to up-level my reactions. After strengthening myself, I discovered I could operate in *cope* mode. Both of these parental lifestyles restricted my ability to understand Ryan's needs, making me even less free to sense how to serve him compassionately.

Although child and adult are made to love each other and to live together in harmony, they are constantly at odds because of the failure to

understand each other... [It] becomes increasingly more difficult for [the adult] to interrupt his own labors to satisfy the needs of a child by adapting himself to the latter's rhythms and psychic outlook. (p. 190)

Montessori *The Secret of Childhood* 1966

Both my son and I had emotional needs that we had difficulty getting met. In Ryan, one way this manifested was through physical problems: he had many allergies (like to his own cats!) and got asthma. I sent him to the school psychologist, but she did not see his pain hidden under the mature way he handled his losses and considered he did not need help. When we got involved with Marshall Rosenberg's *compassionate communication* model we began to understand how to be compassionate to both our own and each other's needs. Marshall vulnerably shared the difference between demanding and requesting a need be met. This initiated my slow evolution: transforming my authoritative parent persona and improving my listening skills to restore my warmth and sensitivity that Ryan so deserved.

Communicating our desires as demands is another form of language that blocks compassion... It is... common... in our cultural especially among those who hold positions of authority. ...somehow I had gotten it into my head that, as a parent, my job was to make demands. (p. 22)

Rosenberg *Non-Violent Communication* 2000

Despite my efforts to help him meet his emotional needs, towards the end of high school Ryan felt, and explained to me, that his big heart was hurting and closing. This ripped *my* heart open, especially as he was questioning his love for me. I went into a daze, afraid to confront this reality. Feeling miserable, all I could do was be there for him in any way that he could receive. Ryan had found a book with heart-opening processes and asked me to help him with their techniques. We spent many nights doing healing meditations together to bring back positive feelings to his heart.

What had I done or not done that caused my tenderhearted son so much unbearable pain? I remembered that Leni had warned me to not let Ryan help me when I became emotionally upset – mainly with his dad. Ryan disagreed: *Wouldn't you have loved it if your father let you help him when he was in trouble? Let me help you for my sake!* He seemed to be fully compassionate to me at that time; but he obviously needed self-compassion and more compassion from his mother. Had I taken advantage of his incredible compassion? Should I have followed Leni's advice after-all?

What about my quadruple Virgo perfectionist *subtle* evaluations and criticisms I gave Ryan in my attempts to prepare him for life? Was my sometimes quick and fiery emotional reaction too strong for his dear, sensitive heart? Could I have somehow stopped my bad seeds from getting watered as Thay was now teaching both Ryan and me? Pat had invalidated our communication saying we were bickering when he saw Ryan and me intently working out any differences. Was I being my Jewish New York authoritative mother? I was so sorry that I had been unconscious; I needed to be more responsible and ensure that I stayed heartfully present with him despite my own pain.

How do you treat an awakening being? Do you criticize him... evaluate him... try to manipulate him? Or... just love him and serve him? (p. 145)

Keyes Handbook to Higher Consciousness 1975

A major transformation I am still in the midst of is matching his energy level instead of overwhelming him with my stress, excitement or exhilaration. In his junior year he made this perfectly clear and it hit me hard. I was highly enthusiastic when we were exploring potential universities. Quite dismayed he said, "You're more interested in my life than I am and that's not good. You want to share with me whatever you are

excited about; I have my own things that I am interested in. I don't want you to interrupt what I am thinking about and make me feel that I have to share everything with you.”

Whenever we attempt to get someone to do something, we are exerting our will over that individual. This rarely works, and creates power struggles. (p. 135)

Carroll *The Indigo Children* 1999

As we continued to attempt to stay aware of our issues and deal with them (perhaps too intently) on a regular basis, Ryan and I enjoyed more peaceful, spiritually intimate times with one another than most mothers and sons. Spiritually aligned, together we enjoyed going to Devotional Singing, Sufi Dancing, *Whole Being* week-ends and Marshall's, Thay's, and various Tai Chi workshops and retreats. We also stayed sensitive to what we ate; Ryan was happy to have a partner who shared his value of holistic health.

Affectionately, we hung out with our arms around each other in such deep-rooted connection that when we traveled throughout Europe together when he was 17 years old, the summer he graduated from high school, most people thought we were boyfriend and girlfriend (or even married when they saw we had the same last name). We had fun doing Laura Day's intuition exercises and practicing spontaneous intuitive decision-making throughout our journey. As both of us had studied some *Tui Na* and *Aikido*, we were able to coach each other with the workshops we were independently delivering in a retreat center in France. Except for a couple of glitches (when Ryan realized that I was not as pure as he was and when I was still working out how much financial independence I should give him) our warmth, sensitivity and control – our positive compassion with one another – was said to be quite beautiful to behold!

Moving On: Transitions

If I could, I would try to shield your innocence from time.
 But the part of life I gave you isn't mine
 I've watched you grow, so I could let you go!
 (Ray Charles)

Ryan going away to college forced a transition for both of us. I was so excited when we arrived at the university that we hoped would be a beautiful place for his next stage of development. Together we tried to find his dorm, registration, the healthy snack bar, the conscious kids and the telephones (so I could call him). At the time, Ryan was not at his best when it came to directions, so I immediately, joyfully, led the way.

...practicing looking and listening deeply ...give up your idea, your prejudices ...of how this person could be happy ...You continue to believe that you love him or her. It is the intention to love, it is not love yet!

Hanh *Compassionate Line* 2004

Soon it became painstakingly apparent that this was not *my* first day in this wonderful environment between the Redwood Forest and the Pacific Ocean. It was not even something I was meant to share with Ryan, not a journey that a freshman student's mother was welcome on, not a place where we even had equal status; this was now all *his* and he knew he needed to break ground alone. Though not without great personal suffering, I forced myself to withdraw my assistance and enthusiasm. As best as I could at the time, I extricated myself from our divine partnership, biting my lip as I compassionately granted his wish, for his sake, to let him struggle on his own. It was now my job to hold my own warm, stable front and be sensitive enough to let him fly away.

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth. The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far. Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness; for even as He loves the arrow that flies, so He loves also the bow that is stable. (p. 18)

Gibran *The Prophet* 1968

Embarking on his new adventure, moving many hours away from home and having to live with strangers, other teenagers in a dormitory, was challenging for Ryan. He had always been quite independent and his few friendships had painful endings or were insufficiently rewarding. His differences from the norm were still apparent and though he was fairly ignorant as to how to bridge the gap, he would learn. The students he noticed he felt most comfortable with were the *pot smokers*. Although he was committed to never personally indulging, he found that he enjoyed the company of those on campus that did as their heart and spiritual connection were more potentially open. I appreciated his sharing all of this with me and tried not to compulsively give him advice.

Academically, he was far beyond his peers in his Computer Arts major since his high school had given him the opportunity to create multimedia projects from his self-studies (He had led a team of students and teachers that created the first DVD yearbook in the country). My Mother/ Father/ Teacher was pleased that now, on his own as a freshman, he arranged attending all senior classes in his major, and became many professors' assistant.

I rarely received phone calls from him and the ones I did were often too short for me. This was partly due to Ryan's dislike of speaking on the phone, but mainly because he needed to establish a separate identity! Sometimes, though, he initiated in-depth calls rich with professional and/or spiritual importance. One professional call was to let me know of his ponderings into becoming a doctor which would mean switching his major to Pre-Med. *My son the doctor*, I laughed realizing how easy it was to be compassionate to this need. I tried to make it safe for us to discuss all aspects (with me as a mother and as a friend) before making his final decision.

One particular spiritual call from my son was quite unexpected. It included his request for my further investigations of a new Kryon book. Patty, my Montessori mentor and friend, had given Ryan some spiritual books when he graduated from high school. One was a book by Carroll who channeled an entity he called Kryon.

Ryan's first Kryon book, which Patty gave him on his 16th birthday, excited him so much that he began, while I was with my dying father, engaging in Kryon's conscious evolution *implant* techniques. I was weary of my young son entering the realm of implants as Scientology taught that this was like communing with the devil. When he asked to attend a group channeling session, I agreed if I could join him when we returned home from Daddy's funeral. The Kryon session turned out to be meaningful as it related to the death of a child for three group members, of which I was one. Our new Kryon bond was made and we shared our interest in this new spiritually transformative process.

When Ryan, in his second term of college, called requesting me read a new book by Kryon I was surprised as we were no longer sharing spiritual practices. Then he told me about the *Indigo Children* chapter. This began a re-connection with Ryan as we discussed the qualities of this type of child and investigated together whether he was one of them. Upon reading about *Indigos*, I realized that the box Ryan wondered if he fit into was the same box the children I attracted to my school fit into as well. What was my relationship to this phenomenon? Though unsure, it increased my understanding of the characteristics thus magnifying my compassion towards Ryan and my students.

To deal with his pain occurring during the first year and a half in school, Ryan took a break for a semester to study healing: massage, color therapy, acupuncture, sound healing, aromatherapy, advanced Aikido, herbology, etc. Ryan moved in with his dad and

got fathered during that time period, which I knew at least partially resulted from my reuniting them and removing myself from their relationship. That semester seemed to work out well for us all. As he was gaining a fuller level of independence, his dad suggested Ryan get a girlfriend, and I agreed. This six month healing renewed him.

The remainder of his school years was spent living in the motor home park on the Redwood Forest campus (a dorm option) with an eccentric girlfriend who opened her heart to me and beautifully shared Ryan. I visited fairly often and appreciated the care that they both offered me. They took me to *raves*; they invited me to be a part of their New Years celebration, to meet them in Costa Rica and then again in Hawaii. Although I thought she was a poor match for Ryan, disapproved of their engagement, and clashed with parts of her personality, Ryan and my revived closeness arose from this connection.

After his graduation, they broke up and Ryan moved in with me for a while. I had to work hard to allow him his independence and not tell him what to do. When I saw him working in the same bedroom he had since he was 6 years old, I affectionately wanted to commune with him as I mistakenly felt I had my boy home again. Influenced by Mom's authority and Daddy's worry I tried to have him tell me when he was going to be home and call if he was not. We enjoyed sharing time and events together again, but he made it clear that I could no longer give him orders and that I needed to respect his privacy and not enter his room without knocking or expect him to be available as my chatting friend. This was grist for my mill and another opportunity to further cultivate compassion.

But what confusion our relationship must have caused Ryan! He wanted my love and compassion, but not at the expense of losing his birthright: to run his own life. I was learning from him the importance of Ryan cultivating self-compassion, even if his

attempts at first were clumsy in their execution. Not being very compassionate to myself, I was not easily able to support his self-compassionate activities that did not include me; I again felt shut-out of his life. Our relationship remained an emotional roller-coaster - lavishing love and bitter with bickering – both compassionate and non-compassionate.

Child Becoming the Man

Mother has a key role in preparing humanity's future... This starts at birth, and proceeds throughout childhood, and is an essential experience for the child... to develop the capacity to stand as an individual in a community of free people. (p. 65)

Salter Mothering with Soul 1998

When I decided to be a Mother, I sensed the outcome for him, but lacked consciousness that once he became a man, my job would be over and my son would separate out from me so he could be his own person. Experiencing this young man it was difficult for me to connect with the child I had raised. The free-spirited youth was gone. And he remembered none of his childhood anymore – just had memories of others' memories, or of photos or videos he had watched, but nothing that linked that boy in the movie to his sense of self or to me as his gentle, loving mother.

Now standing on his own feet, he made male and female friends whose influence brought about a Southern California sense of social mores. With his next girlfriend came a new perspective of me, one less accepting of my quirks and eccentricities, my Brooklyn, New York Jew-ness. I was at times now seen as the embarrassing mother with offensive characteristics; I was horrified that this duplicated my experience with my own mother. As his interest in receiving my help, viewpoints and advice waned, I felt alone, even betrayed. Was I being punished for rejecting my own mother? Would my approval be maintained if I had raised my family in New York or was this influence inevitable?

The pain energy from this schism was difficult for both of us and we tried a variety of potentially compassionate ways to deal with our pain effectively. Of course, the first was using Marshall's NVC model; then Ryan came home to introduce me to some NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) techniques he found interesting and hoped could improve our relationship. Then he tried to help me heal through a long session of *Core Transformation Work* created by NLP practitioners. He later studied Cheri Huber and left me her book to read. These women's self-help texts inspired Ryan, but due to his quiet, protective ways, I deduced the part of their writings he was touched by: self-appreciation and acknowledging judgments which cultivated transformative compassion.

Not wanting to be how you are, is one of the most significant aspects of self-hate... We're trying to change everything we don't approve of. In acceptance, we don't want to change those things about ourselves. It's only in non-acceptance that we hope acceptance will mean they change. (p. 82)
Huber *There is nothing wrong with you* 2001

Begin thanking this part of you for being there, doing its best to accomplish something on your behalf. (p. 18)

When we are young, parts may split off when we have strong feelings that are not acknowledged... Judgment and criticism from those around us frequently results in parts splitting off. (p. 170)

A crisis often makes it impossible to continue our old life or old routine as we've known it. This gives us the chance to allow a new life to emerge from a deeper level of inner health and well-being. (p. 186)
Andreas *Core Transformation Work* 1994

Upon reflection, I saw many parts within me that were transmitted to Ryan. Both of us have unconsciously acted out these parts. We seem unwittingly bound by them.

A great mother [my father]; a self-centered, unconscious mother who abandons her family [my mother]; a self-centered, unconscious father who abandons his child [my maternal grandfather]; an unhappy, overwhelmed mother, fearful of her hard-headed husband [my maternal grandmother]; a loving, kind, nervous, spiritual mother abandoned by husband [my paternal grandmother]; a self-centered, unconscious father who abandons

his family [my paternal grandfather]; a child who hated her mother [me]; a child who loved her father [me]. (My Heuristic Journal: May 6, 2008)

The Buddha said... "There is no separate self." You and your son... are just a continuation of many generations of ancestors... whatever your children do continues to affect you deeply... Whatever you do still affects your children deeply... Your happiness and suffering are your child's happiness and suffering and vice a versa (p. 99)

Hanh *Anger* 2001

Following his parents' footsteps, Ryan decided to discontinue with schooling (he dropped medical school as he was *not into cutting bodies open and drugging people*) and continued his favored self-taught / experimental / inventor route. The next transformative compassion work we did together was biofeedback, which Ryan began to study intensively. He gave me many biofeedback sessions as I volunteered to help him fulfill his internship requirements. As *joy* and *appreciation* was said to create optimal heart-rate changes, our session were geared towards moving spontaneously into those states. I felt embarrassed when I saw how surprised he was that I could not maintain these states nearly as easily as he could. He realized the available programs were limited.

Ryan created better biofeedback programs using intricate digital art knowledge. These were intended to help people learn how to perform under pressure through relaxation. He was told by biofeedback practitioners that he found what had been a missing link in the field and so patented this technology (with a bit of my help). It was wonderful to be a part of Ryan's creative endeavors. I marveled that his university majors and self-study training had all merged and converged at this very point: making *magical* inventions and creating a corporation to share his transformative compassion work!

During this time period, Ryan again moved back to the location his parents lived, even lived with me for a while, and then found a communal home where he could work

and that helped him sustain a healthy lifestyle. Actively involved with a variety of healing dance methods, he and his father began *Dance Church* locally. Both of them quite compassionately tried to teach me *Contact Improvisation* so that I could be a part of this group, but my body could no longer comply. Although I had loved to dance with Ryan, now as a man I could no longer share this wondrous dance world that had become such a major part of his life. But it was wonderful that he *came home* as we all were able to share family time together on a regular basis.

After having only fairly successful relationships, during one of these dance sessions Ryan met a sweet Israeli woman nine years his senior with two PhD's and a successful career. Finally he was with a woman with similar intellectual capacity, who was not floundering, who was spiritually oriented, who was Jewish and who loved to dance. Within months he proposed marriage, again following his father's path.

Shortly after they were engaged, his fiancé got pregnant and that began the next period of overwhelm and loss in my life. They needed an immediate wedding at a time when my world was already terribly challenged. I quickly had to drop everything and work intensively to help create a part of my partner's work for a couple of months; my health was failing; Leni got ill; I traveled to Israel and was caught in an all out war during their first wedding; then I had to single-handedly create a California wedding and be the Master of Ceremonies, receiving minimal assistance from Ryan, his fiancé or Pat.

All of them being constantly busy and hardly available to help me in the huge one month preparations for the wedding, and then finding out that Leni had Stage 4 cancer, stretched me to what I thought was my limit. I was sad that my *children* were not really compassionate to my situation, were totally involved with their own lives and did not

really appreciate how I overextended myself to create a wonderful event even as I was experiencing my next great loss - my soul sister. This marked the beginnings of a new era of attempting to be a compassionate mother, mother-in-law and then grandmother with a triggered *no one cares about me* persona. This required cultivating great self-compassion.

Cultivating the Compassionate Art of Being a Mother-in-Law and a Grandmother

After Leni died I became the Godmother - and the one who would be dying shortly to meet my soul sister. My mourning stole my energy and I did not at first have the wherewithal to become a grandmother, to be responsible for anyone – not even myself. I had hoped my daughter-in-law would have a stronger inclination to bond with me, especially after the loss of Leni. Then, I thought, the deep warmth and sensitivity between us would have naturally arrived; I discounted that new relationships takes time to form. Without this new connection I stayed lost in the crowded emotions within and outside of me. A shell of my old mother /teacher self, I tried to find my lost nurturing heart that had been buried under the ashes of Leni's soul.

My heart yearned to participate in the birth of my grandson. I requested this, hoping it would heal Tara and unite this family. But although I suggested many possibilities, all were turned down as would so many of my requests in the beginning of this relationship. I longed for the inclusion that Ryan's first girlfriend had provided me.

After being on pins and needles for three days with my *machtanesters* (Yiddish for my relationship to my daughter-in-law's parents) the baby was born, but I was not called or invited over that day. I felt like my heart was cut in two; I was so deeply enraged that when I spoke to Ryan I could not be honestly congratulatory as I was still reactive. Though the next day they finally asked me to come see my grandchild, after

words with Ryan he left a note on the door forbidding my entry so that I would not bring my *negative energy* into the house with his new baby and exhausted wife.

When I visited the following day upon their request, I was emotionally shut down and could barely look at any of them. Like my first moments with Ryan, not knowing who he or his father was, I wondered: *Who can I trust?* A half a year later this got resolved with my daughter-in-law, when, over the lunch I bought her after she assisted me with Silk's transition, she told me that she had forgiven me for my behavior the first day after the birth and realized their mistake of not including the rest of the family. Now having compassion for each other's situation, we are creating a more loving relationship.

I knew I was not prepared to be a new grandmother, a new mother-in-law, or even a compassionate mother as I was in too much personal pain to be free to sense how to serve compassionately or creatively. For Daddy, I stepped up to the motherly plate at their Rabbinical *bris* (religious circumcision) at home and held my daughter-in-law in my arms for the first time while we watched two of my dear friends and Ryan assist the rabbi in inflicting the ritual cutting that branded our new baby boy a Jew. Surprisingly, this familial trauma didn't bond me to Ryan's new nest. My suffering hadn't opened a compassionate connection, but triggered more suffering. Committed to being the compassionate one, I worked hard to heal my pain.

You have created Hell many times in your family, and every time Hell is there, not only do the other people suffer, but you also suffer ...one person who is capable of smiling mindfully...can be the savior of the whole family ...because compassion is born in him first, and that compassion will be seen and touched by someone else... Hell can be transformed in just one minute or less. It is wonderful!

Hanh *Transforming Negative Habit Energies* 1998

I am discovering many maternal personas and I am transforming their pain energy through self-compassion. One persona that has been creating Hell is *the not cared about experiencer* that craves deep connection and recreation inspired by or happily contributed to by the family. It yearns for the kind of appreciation expressed by love and the creation of times of enjoyable true sharing; it wants to be understood, honored and played with (Indigo desires) at celebrations, during vacations, or when experiencing attractions together. This persona's sister, *the princess*, feels rejected and hurt when I am not treated as special by my family. Both personas seem to have come into existence when as a child I did not get these needs met by my own family.

My skill, authority, and knowledge on child-rearing and education had not originally been valued by my daughter-in-law. This triggered *the not cared about experiencer* to feel dishonored and I tried to prove myself to get her agreement; but I sensed that I was just dismissed. Another persona that was then triggered when I felt rejected was *the runaway*.

When I felt that they didn't care about me I thought: let me just move! Adrenal flight! I left school, left my family... I didn't want their negative influence! My pain energy felt too great and I did not know another way to deal with or transform the pain energy besides fleeing from their influence... so I could bring up Ryan the way I wanted to. Perhaps this is just like how they feel. (My Heuristic Journal: June 2, 2007)

Another persona that has been causing us mutual suffering is *the child advocate* that feels it is essential that *the mother should be mothering as her sole activity when the child is a baby*, agreeing with Carrel's (1947) urgency that it is "our duty to cultivate [the early years] with the utmost care" (p. 222). Judging her for staying committed to an outside career when she had an infant at home relates to my abandonment as a child when my mom worked full time. Also, considering Doman's brain development program as a

necessity, I became determined to help my grandson, Tal, actualize his potential, to meet his needs (as I did for Ryan) and to prevent him from the neglect that I had experienced.

This persona feared they preferred a Waldorf approach because it does not value early academic training which was gospel to Doman and Montessori. What was natural mothering for me did not align (in this way) with how she experienced her role as a mother/teacher and the type of input she felt was most important for her child. Then the *Catch 22*: always wanting Ryan and his wife to provide more educational opportunities than they were, I found myself being caught in the thought that I was the only one caring for my grandson's education. This led me to take on much more work than what was comfortable for me. I set myself up to not be appreciated for my education of Tal since what I was doing was not of a high value to her and was not a necessity to Ryan.

An additional persona I now see in this package is *the Independent Woman*. This is the persona that my mother had when I was growing up; this is also the one that was preventing me from getting pregnant with Ryan. I evolved the same *Independent Woman* persona that I later sometimes objected to in my daughter-in-law as Tal's mother! She is actually being quite a good mother to my grandson, but I could not see this while I was experiencing my pain of fear and being covertly critical.

Through many trials and tribulations, I recognized that if I maintain the *self-righteous* persona (which seems to be attached to the above personas) that I am ultimately prevented from being compassionate to any parents or teachers that are not making the same choice that I am; this means not being compassionate to my family and to other educators. When being compassionate, I am the one who needs to be honoring the mother. To expect, anticipate or even hope for the reverse shows me that my *self-*

righteous persona is triggered and points to my own underlying pain energy and my need for self-compassion. When no longer triggered, I appreciate my family's lifestyle choices.

As I work through the challenges of being a grandmother and a mother-in-law, I further understand that these personas have been not only preventing me from being free to sense how to serve the child compassionately, but also how to serve the family compassionately. I am recognizing that the triggered situations don't necessarily get handled from just one persona receiving compassion. Only when every persona involved receives compassion and its pain energy is transformed will I be free to sense how to serve compassionately the next time a similar situation or event arises.

For good education to take place I have to support not only the child; I have to support the family as well. So it is very important to be able to be compassionate to the parents and not just the child. Education is a social activity. (June 2, 2007)

The Compassionate Matriarch

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself...

You may give your love, but not your thoughts.
For they have their own thoughts...
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor carries with yesterday. (p. 17)

Gibran *The Prophet* 1968

As my relationship with my sister and mother needed to change as we matured, so it is also true that a new relationship is beautifully maturing with my son. Acknowledge, I must, that he generally no longer *needs* my thoughts, my advice or my companionship. In the big picture this is quite positive, and what I really want for him. I am happy that, as well, he gladly accepts me as a babysitter, appreciates my occasional help with his work and enjoys our infrequent movies or walks and talks that we share alone or with his dad.

It has taken me quite some time to realize, accept and even appreciate that Ryan's priority is now his wife, then his work, then his child, then his self-care, and then after that is me as his son's grandmother, and shortly after that he cares for me as his mom. I can finally see that this is as it should be. In turn, now he can quite respectfully and graciously request my assistance, mainly from me as an honored grandmother.

When my *watery, emotional, hyper-sensitive* persona feels hurt by Ryan's lack of interest in creating time for he and his family to connect and share with me, this is a time for me to transform my pain energy. When, because this persona *wants to be wanted*, it schedules appointments to help take care of needed aspects for him and his family; this is another time for me to take care of myself. I am learning to remember that my son, daughter-in-law and grandson are not who I need to be getting my fulfillment from.

This persona has an ally, *the fiery protector*, who wants to use whatever emotional force is necessary to help get my needs met (which has included resorting to making Ryan wrong by showing him how he has hurt me in the hopes that this will get him to be empathetic to my pain, compelling him to change his behavior towards me). When this persona attempts to act out, I need to re-vow that my liberation is through self-compassion and *stop and just be!* As these two personas receive spiritual connection their water and fire intensity comes into balance, unburdening me from my programming.

It is my spiritual obligation to transform any pain energy that stands in the way of my motherly activity. Consciously evolving my pain energy with Ryan and his family seems to have made space for Ryan to evolve his attitudes towards me and he has been consistently much sweeter. Though still easily triggered, especially when he feels obliged to help me, he revives fairly easily, returning to his manly kindness. Since he still gets

affected by my emotional reactions, he has learned how to protect himself. In kind, I now strongly monitor my emotional outbursts, utilizing my self-compassion practice.

Another area of pain energy that needed transforming, which I inherited from Daddy and was triggered by Pat, relates to the *worrier* persona. As the maternal educator I have mistaken this for *compassion*. Since Ryan was in college, he has tried to enlighten me about the negative affects of worry: *When you worry about me, you teach me that I need to worry. Then neither of us then trusts me and I wind up not having faith in myself.* I couldn't argue with that (though at first I tried).

Not to worry! To be afraid, to worry about the future, does not help; it can only harm. Learning how to enjoy every moment in your daily life, in a non-thinking mood, would be very helpful. When the time comes for you to consider the matter, your thinking will be very productive.

Hanh *Taking Refuge in the Island of Ourselves* 2004

Cultivating compassion with my son has taught me a great deal about honoring both of us and the transitions in our lives. I am beginning to see that whether it be with a newborn, a baby, a toddler, a child, a preteen, a teenager, a young adult or a full adult with a family of his own, a reassessment may be required as to the style of compassion this best fits this person. It is my maternal duty to re-establish a loving, spiritual relationship with my son, now understanding that he is now a parent of his own children.

Mothering... is essentially a spiritual activity, a woman's intimate connection with her child... It is a career of the heart. (p. viii)

Salter *Mothering with Soul* 1998

I am approaching a new rung on the spiraling career of motherhood. Instead of imposing my *wisdom* that stems from being *hyper-responsible*, my greatest lessons are coming from practicing the loving acts of *just being* and (with awareness) listening to both Ryan's heart and mine. His father and I had had a different understanding and

expression of compassion; I tended to be a bit more sympathetic and emotional than him. However, when I reviewed his reply to my request for his input about compassion and our family, I realized that though a father and mother's experience of compassion may be quite different, at this new level of motherhood, I may need to be incorporating a male/father's viewpoint (like OSHO and LRH) of compassion as well.

"Compassion is not having a bleeding heart full of sympathy, but rather doing what is necessary to bring awareness to a situation"...I think that was Rajneesh /OSHO's statement about Jesus throwing the money lenders out of the temple... I guess I fell more on that side of things, and Scientology strengthened the head and intention and production more than the heart and feeling and being... (December 25, 2008)

Positive changes are happening in my relationship with my son Ryan; mainly, I feel blessed that he is more compassionate and loving to me again. He shows me appreciation for what I am teaching and for my care of his son and is applying some of my educational suggestions as well. Ryan has begun to value my flexibility and further recognize my worth in his life. More than ever, he is appreciating and respecting my needs; it has once again become his intention to help me to get them met, if it is not at his own expense, and encourages me to also get them met on my own.

I respect Ryan's new choice to take responsibility for helping get his and his dear wife's needs met, as he decides to be compassionate to my needs as well. This includes honoring that she is doing what is right for her son and not opposing her choices regarding working and mothering. As he continues to help his wife get her needs met, he is now ensuring it is not at my expense. His mediation skills are quite wonderful!

Ryan is now taking on the responsibility of helping me get my needs met and is listening to my request/demand for having a Chanukah exchange time together. He left me a message with a possible time, and then I got an e-mail from my daughter-in-law expressing her realization that I was not getting my needs met and *she* suggested our meeting. How Ryan subtly made this happen I don't know, but I marvel at it. (December 20, 2008)

After trying to *get* my son to *get* his wife to finally OK inviting some of my friends and my godchildren to my grandson's 2 year old small birthday celebration, I realize that I have been too authoritative - exerting more control over their family decisions than is my business to do. I can save my maternal influence for important matters and let them run their own lives without many demands, much input and even minimal requests from me. The stress it causes me and the pressure that I put on these relationships are unhealthy for all of us. As I shift from giving my opinions as to what is right into expressing my feelings with minimal suggestions it is working out better for us all. Self-compassionately, I am learning to set boundaries, which had not been a value of mine, so that I can be respected and not inadvertently taken advantage of. I protect both my own and my family's energy systems by not watering negative seeds.

Finally I am learning at a new level, that when I am self-compassionate it is easier for others to be compassionate to me! (December 31, 2008)

It has finally come to my attention that I have been unconsciously assuming the role of the Godmother for everyone around me. This has ironically caused me to receive less compassion from, and be less compassionate to, all of my extended family of *godchildren*. However for many reasons this looked like my most viable option.

I was ensuring everything was properly taken care of in Daddy's name. Since Leni established me in the godmother role, respecting her wishes I wanted assume this once she was gone. I felt obligated to be the *good mother to keep the family together* - especially after my marriage broke up. And lastly, as a devout early childhood educator, I took on the responsibility for my grandson's education, even when that was not what his parents needed or barely valued. This role of Godmother has become more of an effort and less a compassionate element in my life, often at my own expense and of those around me. Being the Godmother now needed to be consciously evolved and not be the top priority in my life anymore.

I can now graduate from this active motherly role, for my own mother, my sister, my friends, my son, my daughter-in-law, my grandson, my god-children and my partner. The consummate Jewish mother can be transformed; the one who feels it is her responsibility to handle all the problems and upsets of her extended family. There is no longer a child at my breast who needs my total devotion and care. A new identity can emerge: the compassionate matriarch!

The passive matriarchic role that I want to now take begins with my daily practice of self-compassion; my active matriarchic role can be an extension of this. I can offer compassion to anyone in my family that is in pain and encourage self-reliance. I do not have to continue to be the crisis-bearer of all around me. Only when I first care for myself can I help others to care for themselves.

Being compassionate is not being the sage or the advice-giver. Instead of trying to get my family to perform certain activities in the hopes of preventing others from being hurt or offended, I can release my control and begin to have faith that everyone is ultimately capable of caring for themselves. This will help facilitate the prevention of my future burnout as the caretaker. As a mother I was caring, but had difficulty being truly compassionate. Cultivating the compassionate matriarch fulfills my motherly universal role. It also frees me, both of time and energy, to be available to whatever else is calling to me on my path.

As an educator of my son, my relatives, my friends, my students, my employees, and the parents and teachers in my charge, I have come from a place of caring but I have not always come from compassion – being a listening heart to their hearts. Now I am taking on this new task in life: consciously evolve so that I can truly be of service as an

educator, a mother, a mother - in- law, a grandmother, a godmother, etc. Mutually compassionate service to all of us achieved by cultivating the Compassionate Matriarch!

Cultivating Compassion as an Early Childhood Teacher

Although I taught in many early childhood environments, this story will include only the two most significant settings in which I was consciously cultivating compassion. The first is a traditional environment, Montessori at Fairbanks Country Day where I did my Montessori internship and then became an assistant and then a head teacher. *My Montessori Curriculum Project: Emotion in Motion*, an earlier section within this narrative, includes a holistic internship account.

The second early childhood environment I will address is The Caring Adventure Educational Center. This is the eclectic school I founded, directed and acted as the sole administrator and head teacher. In the previous narrative sections *Reaping the Rewards of Higher Education* and *Soul-Sister Leni: Caring and Teaching Together*, I have explained the core facets of this school's conscious evolution curricula and gave excerpts from The Caring Adventure preschool's *Basic Philosophy*.

These two environments are linked to one another. My vision to create and run my own Montessori school out of my home initiated my Montessori training. This then remained in the forefront of my mind throughout my years of teaching at Fairbanks. First digesting Montessori's basics, I was then able to focus on expanding its holistic aspects by adding my Caring Adventure curriculum.

As I have already introduced both of these educational settings, I will now emphasize the compassionate and non-compassionate elements of my experiences in

these schools. This narrative piece will focus on the areas of: the joy and pain of creating and teaching, being compassion, teaching compassion, and my required and personal educational agendas. I will investigate how my workaholic tendency led to my burnout in both environments. Hopefully, this will reveal where more self-compassion is needed so that I can be free to once again teach young children compassionately if I so choose and/or support other educators in becoming freer to serve their young children.

Teaching in a Traditional Montessori School

Upon my Montessori training completion, I sought to do my internship at Fairbanks because I recalled watching Miss Patty (as the students and parents affectionately called her) lovingly, joyfully and sensitively give a lesson to a young child in her lap who then happily responded to this learning adventure with confidence. Instantaneously, I experienced the heart of Montessori and the beauty of the teacher/child relationship that this young woman embodied. When Patty, who was also the director of this school, did not immediately hire me I observed and began working in other Montessori schools. Before long I found that no other teacher could serve as such a fine role model for me and railroaded myself into interning under Patty in her classroom. We developed a very workable and highly enjoyable interdependent relationship. It was a co-creation of a beautiful mentoring /teaching partnership and friendship that continues to greatly increase the cultivation of my educator compassion.

Posted on a quarter-wall opposite the educator materials in Room #1 at Fairbanks Country Day was a list of teacher tips to aid in the development of a more respectful attitude towards the students. The points that I was frequently riveted to, encouraged an

up-leveling of language: from domineering, critical, negative demands to tolerant, understanding, positive encouragement. Carefully observing the children's cooperative responses to Patty's compassionate way of attending to their needs and providing security, I began catching my unconscious phrases that required re-training; my mild reprimands and warnings soon became acknowledgments with sweet suggestions. A sense of joy was spontaneously born and which opened my heart to each of the 23 children in our fold. This helped me to receive their essences into my professed new beingness of compassion and consequently furthered their development.

Teachers exhibit pleasure in the classroom not only to enhance learning but also to exhibit to their students the delight that comes with acquiring and using knowledge. (p. 5)

Banner *The Elements of Teaching* 1997

My evolved attitude paved the way for the creation and interactive delivery of my *Emotion in Motion* curriculum. Patty, cautiously at first, granted me the opportunity to explore all feelings with these young children to discover how they could be felt, accepted, expressed and appreciated. For example, one curriculum activity I created was a *feeling necklace*; I utilized her artistic talent to make drawings of various moods from which children could choose in order to describe their current moods. They could then turn this into a necklace to wear that day. My new curriculum increased my compassion as I touched more deeply into the feelings and needs of my students. Our increased intimacy developed a greater sense of oneness in the classroom which ignited my demonstrative educator joy. As a teacher of Tai Chi, Patty greatly appreciated my earth connection activities which expanded our students' awareness of universal compassion.

I was intently bent on helping to create solutions to alienation and helping children see the possibilities for peace. During the Gulf War I came in with photos of

G.W. Bush and Hussein and we took turns giving love to both of them as we sang the song: "Let the love in." The children, who had been seeing the conflict on TV, couldn't understand how people who were in charge of countries weren't *using their caring words* and *working it out* like they were learning to do in my program.

Through encounters with deep differences *in a compassionate context* many students begin to grasp both the immense possibilities for human connection and the tragic hold of hostile separation. (p. 25)

Kessler *The Soul of Education* 2000

Although my compassion persona's action triad of warmth, sensitivity and control (with the addition of joyousness) marked my teaching years with Patty, there were a few situations that caused me to not hit that mark and be less compassionate than I would have liked to have been. These involved students who were repeatedly making the same mistake, those who couldn't *get with the program* and children who were acting out their anger in ways that disturbed others and myself. Rather than sensing these as expressions of their pain energy, frustration turning into anger steamed up within me and I felt the impulse to assert my control over these situations as a result of my becoming triggered.

In its simplest form anger with a child is irritation at a child's resistance... it soon becomes mingled with pride and develops into a kind of tyranny when confronted by the child's...attempts to express himself. (p. 152)

Montessori *The Secret of Childhood* 1966

The required agenda of this school's Montessori curriculum kept me on my toes. Patty and I ran around the classroom giving new lessons, re-teaching old lessons, keeping a record of every piece of work each child was doing and trying to ensure that every child was being productive in some fashion. Though I was generally compassionate, when any of the above situations arose in my students, my goal-oriented tendency to want *to stop or change their actions in order to fulfill the school's agenda* frequently took over.

In those moments, my school-imposed agenda took me away from being present, looking deeply and following the child. In the name of achieving personal success through the child's academic accomplishments, I did not confront the actual difficulties and take the necessary steps to bring about true positive results. Consequently, I was unable to imagine an optimal present moment and create a safe place for the children to feel their feelings as my present moment was being dictated by my fear of potential negative consequences in the future. At those times, because of my fixed agenda, I was not free to sense how to serve compassionately and creatively as I was easily activated.

I recall one three year old boy's behavior that stimulated my fear-based controlling programming. He came to school, even in the hot summer, wearing a three piece suit and a serious, rigid disposition. When he did not get what he wanted he would threaten to kill himself. This stunned me; I took him on many walks preventing him from climbing the fence and running away; I attempted to apply Rosenberg's Compassionate Communication model and tried to reason with him – all the while triggered by the gravity of the situation and my inability to have him conform to the classroom structure. Conversing with his parents we found that there were grave problems in his home-life and that his parents were working hard on fixing these domestic circumstances. Though I experimented with a variety of techniques, I was less than successful at being of compassionate service to this little boy.

However, despite the moments that I got triggered by my young children's behavior, I never wanted to implement this Montessori school's disciplinary policy of time-outs. When a student acted out or disobeyed the rules he or she was told to sit on the stairs in front of their room and not to get up until they could *think about* what they just

did until they realized the error of their ways and agree to never do this again. This seemed to violate Montessori's approach which is anti-rewards and anti-punishments. I watched these children instead figure out how to manipulate the teachers and say what they wanted to hear to get out of this punishment. I vowed never to use this disciplinary approach in my future school as I found it to be non-compassionate.

Punishment also includes judgmental labeling and the withholding of privileges. In this type of punishment, the withdrawal of caring or respect is one of the most powerful threats of all. (p. 158). Ibid

... Any type of coercion, whether it is the seduction of rewards or the humiliation of punishment, creates a tear in the fabric of relational connection between adults and children. (p. 18)

Bryson *Don't Be Nice, Be Real* 2004

But the worst lesson of all that I learned in this school was that teachers were expected to work well beyond the hours they were paid for. It was customary for Patty to stay at school three unpaid hours past her work day in order to *get everything done*. I balked at this unwritten policy when I was told that I had to work beyond my scheduled hours, using the valid excuse of needing to go directly home to be there for my son.

We often betray ourselves by giving in to the demands of people whom we perceive as being in "authority".

Characteristics of Workaholics <http://www.workaholics-anonymous.org>

Over the next years I found myself submitting to the school's pressure, especially when (as I was stealthily leaving the premises) I received demeaning glances from the rest of the teachers who were arduously daily working late. Besides these additional school hours, it also became necessary to spend many evenings creating projects for all holiday and school events as well as spending long tedious week-end hours twice a year meeting with Patty to write up lengthy progress reports for each child. Insidiously, my teacher job description began to include being constantly productive and giving all of my

energy to benefit each child's education. This introduced an educator habit pattern which triggered the pain energy that Scientology had instilled - being a workaholic. Scientology auditors were trained that if you could see breath on the e-meter you were expected to audit; as a teacher, I began to understand that I was expected to willingly sacrifice my personal life and work without monetary compensation no matter what other obligations I had or physical and emotional state was being compromised; this denied self-compassion.

There are teachers who... tolerate acute discomfort without feeling that they have a right to see to their own comfort... Sacrifice of self is not compassion. (p. 132)

Jersild When Teachers Face Themselves 1967

Although Patty and I were highly validated for the job we were doing and encouraged by many of our parents to start our own elementary school, working became so overwhelming that we were both ill for two months straight every autumn. Even though our class time was filled with many hours of joy, it was also very stressful. The classroom size prohibited meeting the students' needs and the required agenda.

Attempting what began to be the impossible task of observing, giving individual appropriate lessons to each of my 23 students, recording each lesson and all that each student was working on throughout the day was stressful and resulted in physical and emotional pressure. This led to the beginnings of burn-out which precipitated my getting into a four car accident when leaving the school one day. Initially on disability I did not teach for a period of time and later on I could only work a part-time work schedule.

It was then that I realized that it was time for me to get my BA in education, and perhaps a teaching credential, so that I could actualize my original dream of having a small, intimate school out of my home. I envisioned myself as I had been with Ryan in his early childhood years: relaxed and enthusiastic. Preventing myself from total burnout

I had to abandon this school. Wanting to leave with integrity, I gave my notice and stayed until the end of the year. Then I wrote up part of my curriculum since Patty wanted her other teachers to implement some of my activities in their classrooms. Before I left this educational setting I received a beautiful album from the parents chock filled with accolades that I would show new perspective parents and which I cherish to this day.

Compassion and The Caring Adventure Educational Center

This is my story of first cultivating a state of *being compassion*, then creating a compassionate transformational curriculum and alternative classroom; finally teaching compassion to my students fairly successfully... and still burning out as a teacher!

Free as a mama bird feeding my babies in the nest I carefully created.
 Nurturing, strengthening and armoring my dear ones.
 Stuffing them with manna I send them off to the big world of mankind.
 My own bones breaking, my belly empty, my nerves shattered,
 I forlornly sense my instincts becoming deficient
 And create a new nest to crawl up in... to rest or die.

Creating a Compassionate, Joyful, Holistic Curriculum

Once I graduated from university, and after assisting Daddy in his dying process, my holistic curriculum I was to deliver (in the Montessori preschool that I was founding) joyfully began to flow quite easily. My new work seemed to emanate from the scope of my education and experiences taking form as exercises and activities. This creative adventure harmonized my ambitious vision of running a unique school with the deep sense of caring and responsibility that I felt for children. Wanting the school to reflect the essence of this type of educational experience I named it The Caring Adventure Preschool and Kindergarten. When I later included coaching and workshops for parents,

as well as elementary school tutoring and enrichment, I expanded this title to The Caring Adventure Educational Center.

I put my heart and soul into the creation of the programs, activities and policies of this new school which seemed to represent my life's mission, or at least a dream coming true. Because of my own diverse educational background, I had ample models and practices to choose from and infuse into an alternative educational program. That I had not mastered any of these personally did not faze me at the time. As long as I maintained a strong connection with my own compassionate persona I believed that offering tastes of humanitarian and spiritual practices, modified for young children, would be wonderful lessons that I was sufficiently capable of teaching.

My first action was to utilize the Body Awareness program, which I wrote for Patty upon her request before leaving her school, within The Caring Adventure program; I decided to have it begin the first unit of the Self-Awareness section I named, *All about Me: Body Awareness - the Adventure of Having a Human Body*. Although I did not yet fully grasp *how* to be compassionate to myself, I still knew becoming a teacher required self-awareness. So Leni and I did this initial activity [see below] to help us to confront our relationship to our own bodies. This, I hoped, would mitigate unconsciously poisoning our students with any of our past potential negative energy on this subject. We attempted to resolve any connecting pain energy before we taught our students to be aware of their own bodies. This would be my first educator exercise in self-compassion.

A. ACCEPTING & ACKNOWLEDGING YOUR BODY

1. Look at Me! (For caregivers)

a) Look at yourself closely in a full length mirror.

This is a reflection of your body.

Allow any resistance or pleasure to be present.

With your eyes, explore your own unique body.

- b) Notice the body parts that you are drawn to.
 Acknowledge them directly with a smile, a "Hi!" or both.
 Notice which ones you avoid.
 Be compassionate to those body parts.
 Acknowledge them as well with a "Hi!", a smile or both.
 (Include: head, nose, mouth, hair, chest, stomach, pelvis,
 back, each eye, ear, arm, hand, leg and foot)
- c) Ask yourself these two questions alternately:
 "What part of my body do I like?" and
 "What part of my body do I ignore/avoid?"
- d) Notice any judgments.
 Repeat with increased acceptance and decreased judgment.

By introducing caring as a compassionate avenue of awareness, we hoped to raise the consciousness of humanity through these children. Once our bodies received attention, we then gave care to our spiritual connection. My coined term the *magical self* could also be called consciousness. I saw compassion and empathy emanating from the magical self. For me, even White Tara was actually a representative of this magical self.

Consciousness is the irreducible substrate of the human capacity to know or experience, to perceive or witness, and it is the essence of the capacity for awareness itself. (p. 14)

Hawkins *Truth vs. Falsehood* 2005

My educational goal was to raise children's self-esteem and increase their potential so that they could actualize their life purposes. Since joy and compassion seemed to be the pathway, I wanted to create lessons that offered opportunities for joyous self-expression which satisfied *their* needs (not the school's or parents' expectations); hence, be relevant to their lives. This meant treating each child with respect as a unique individual. Instead of pushing or forcing a child – I wanted to be aware of their readiness. Each caring adventure was then based on the assumptions that awareness leads to caring about, and caring for, which results in an increase of responsibility. I developed a scheme, theme and vow for teaching which assisted me to attain these aims:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
 EXPLORATION
 DISCOVERY
 CREATION
 EXPERIENCE
 GRATITUDE

A balanced self for self-esteem:

The journey is the integration of all of the parts of a human being and a balance of the magical self, the mind, the personality & the emotions. Exploration and discovery of how to balance all parts of oneself Reason for exploration is that each individual needs something different in order to balance him/herself with at each moment. Discover that! The understanding of the interconnectedness of all things begins at this stage.

Qualities to be developed in children in each section: courage and humor. This will create warriors of the heart on a Carekids adventure...

Gatha [Dharma verse]: " I am now here with you"

(Caring Adventure Journal, 1996)

Formulating the skeletal curriculum was quite enjoyable as I was able to be continually creative. This left room for the conscious evolution of the ongoing program and for my joy of creation to exist throughout the school year. Experimenting with how to best cultivate compassion within me and the children seemed to be forever stimulating.

The Joy of Being Compassion

Joy was the predominant emotion I felt during my initial school years of creating and teaching. This joy naturally arose from being able to work at what I loved, moving towards the fulfillment of my Bodhisattva vow to *liberate all beings* and from consciously creating myself as White Tara, the Mother of Compassion. I meditated on these daily which helped me to acquire and maintain a state of *being compassion*.

This was reminiscent of my early mothering days. When Ryan was an infant, toddler and young child, I honed the skills of being highly sensitive, affectionate, and

empathetic which I now enjoyed being with each of my children. Keeping me sweet, light and airy, I further cultivated my ability to confront and listen to a child's pain and suffering, ensuring I demonstrated an overflowing expression of warmth. My educator persona of compassion was balanced by ensuring that all needs were fully addressed.

I don't know if Montessori has ever used the word compassion when describing the teacher/child relationship. After reading her works and finally finding Patty (a teacher who had a highly compassionate attitude towards children) I realized that Montessori did possess a compassionate educator persona. As a Montessori teacher, I emulated her educator persona that deeply cared, respected and loved the children as they were, and always with an eye on who they were becoming.

Warmth and sensitivity [are] characteristic of Montessori teachers. A teacher... [must be] ready to be there whenever she is called in order to attest to her love and confidence. To be always there – that is the point... Dr. Montessori advised that teacher show the degree of warmth and sensitivity that is reminiscent of the characteristics of parents whose children are securely attached. (p. 275/6)

Lillard *Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius* 2005

My heart was wide open with the children as White Tara would be, and I became mindful to the emotional and academic needs of the children as Montessori promoted. I felt comfortable fully receiving and expressing deep feelings with children because I had created a self-image of being compassion that I vowed to uphold. When I observed a child needing more attention, I kept him gently by my side. When I observed a child learning something new, I shared my great pleasure in her success and her growth.

If an educator was empathetic and compassionate she would be truly interested in what the student wants to learn and would help him to learn it. I did that with Ryan throughout. (My Heuristic Journal: May 11, 2008)

When dealing with children, there is greater need of observation than of probing. But this observation must be made from a psychic point of view

and aim at discovering the conflicts that a child experiences in his relations with adults and his general social environment. (p. 11)

Montessori *The Secret of Childhood* 1966

It is important to observe each child in the morning as they arrive to school to see how they are doing physically and emotionally. When situations are apparent, it is sometimes helpful to incorporate the difficulties into the first circle or individually. (Caring Adventure Journal: October 18, 1996)

Teachers exhibit pleasure in the classroom not only to enhance learning but also to exhibit to their students the delight that comes with acquiring and using knowledge. (p. 5)

Banner & Cannon *The Elements of Teaching* 1997

During the first few years, I took care of myself sufficiently so I was able to observe and be compassionate to both the children and their parents. My heart was filled with joy whether I was welcoming them each day, presenting a student with a new lesson or sharing a group activity. While maintaining my spiritual connection, I felt honored and proud to be a servant of God through my loving compassion and the holistic tools I had learned in a way that could be satisfying to others.

Elementally being *Water/ Fire* made me heartfully (water) passionate (fire) so my work was ecstatic and pure. Although Rider (2004) says this elemental combination has “an excitement and desire to share the tender beauty of the new creation with others” they also “need to rest after a profound experience that require(s) an incredible amount of focused attention” and are “challenged to create a space within and around themselves that honors their profound inner experience “ (p. 81). Understanding this as my elemental combination allows me to better understand how not being aware of it during this time period led to my burnout. Acting as if I was *fire* first, I continued to flow compassion non-stop and did not take breaks, which eventually hurt me.

Compassionately Teaching Caring

When we care, we accept the responsibility to work continuously on our own competence so that the recipient of our care - person, animal, object, or idea - is enhanced. There is nothing mush about caring. It is the strong, resilient backbone of human life. (p. 65)

Nodding, cited in Miller *Educating for Wisdom and Compassion* 2006

Teaching caring taught me compassion. Each caring unit of the curriculum further cultivated the class's compassion. Hands-on applications and structures modified through the creative arts had the greatest impact. I created and sang many old and new *caring* songs with the class that we all enjoyed. Singing *Let the Love In* helped each child to receive love from the group. Every day we began and ended with one of my original songs that produced a caring *beingness* within these children that I have been told over and over has remained with these children long after they graduated from my program.

The Carekids Theme Song

We are Carekids, yes we are - yes we are
 You can feel us near and far - near and far
 With our caring hearts, eyes, words and hands
 We spread (love, etc.) throughout the land

I'm a Carekid yes I am - yes I am
 I spread love (peace, happiness, friendship, laughter, beauty, fun)
 Throughout the land - And I can...
 Feel my caring heart, eyes, words and hands
 I'm a Carekid yes I am, yes I am. Yes I am!

When we moved into the curriculum unit on Awareness of Family and Friends, I brought in pictures of myself at their age to bridge the gap as we looked at who in the class I reminded them of and considered who would have wanted to be my friend. Many of Karl Anthony's songs were adapted and performed over these years especially during this unit. Sitting in front of one friend at a time and holding their hands while singing *I am your friend* increased compassion as it taught each child to "see the love" in another's

eyes and always be there for them. Father's Day became a special honoring as each child reflected on, appreciated, created and sung to their fathers their own verse that expressed their unique relationship:

I am aware of all the things that you do,
The things that say I love you.

I love your games.
The way you throw me in the air, on the bed, in the pool,
The way you tickle me

I love your laughter (ha, ha, ha)
The way you teach me lots of things for work and for play

I am aware of all the things that you do
You do the things that say I love you.

When we did the unit on Awareness of Humanity, we utilized Anthony's title song from his CD *We the Children of the World* for one of our performances as they vowed to create a world they longed for. I also remember us tenderly singing a Sufi song, *Share our Love with the World*. This unit often included physical touch through guided massage. We all became more sensitive to our own and another's pain as well as became better able to acknowledge this and communicate our feelings. Movement was also utilized to discover various ways to positively use our energy when interacting with our world. We sang, drummed and danced for peace.

I utilize movement techniques such as tai chi, yoga, push hands, chi gung by introducing their physical connections to the elements of this planet and by opening their awareness, individually, and in a group, to the energy fields in and around them. In addition, we get to dialogue about how to use this energy effectively and explore appropriate behavior for physical interactions. (My Personal Portfolio, 1998)

...educators report witnessing waves of joy wash over the faces of young children immersed in the rhythm... of music and dance. (p. 86)

Kessler *The Soul of Education* 2000

The unit of Awareness of the Earth was perfect for Montessori's *walking the line* used in conjunction with Thay's walking meditation. We noted the elemental connections of the earth and the heavens – *feeling those from inside of our body*. These were good daily preparations for the students and for ourselves. When I did this with the children with no thinking or worrying I noted we were all more present in the classroom. These mindful activities with the earth and its life forms increased awareness and compassion. For instance, when we watched the cycle of the butterfly happen before our own eyes and then wish it well as we celebrated its eventual flight we were all transformed forever.

The majesties and the intricacies of the natural world are a frequent source of joy for students. The miracle of new life may also be a source of rapture. (p. 84 Ibid)

Compassionate communication was necessary from the top down. Although Leni and I had been forever friends, we had not actually been in business together before. Our relationship did include her following my lead (as well as at times me following hers), but the steady diet of this brought up differences that had to be worked out between us compassionately. Teaching caring required teachers who were compassionate to one another in every moment both in and outside of the classroom. Our alignment resulted in a class and families that quickly began to travel the caring road with us.

After some difficulties with communication between Lesley and Leni, we realized that it was important to have weekly meetings to go over the curriculum as well as the progress of the program. It is vital to maintain our friendship while we are going through our group and personal process. Communication, compassion and understanding are important to maintain throughout our *caring adventure*.

It has been three weeks since we started this program. After last night's parents meeting, the changes that we as well as the children have made in just a very short time became clear to us. The words that the children and parents are using in their homes, like love and heart and warmth, are a direct result from our program. It was apparent... that we have definitely

touched the hearts of our children as well as the families. We are very lucky to have wonderful and loving children. Each one of our students is very special. (Caring Adventure Journal: September 24, 1996)

In just a few short months demonstrations of the development of true Carekids and the cultivation of compassion had become apparent. After a shy girl brought her new kitten to share with the class, some of the boys thanked her and said that made them feel happy. When we gave love to a crying boy, weeks later he gave love to a different crying boy. Both boys commented how good it felt to receive love from their classmates. We noted in our class journal on November 15, 1996 a few other sweet statements from our three year old Carekids:

“I teach my friends on the block that there are caring words that they can use”

From four children:

“We’re going to send a letter to Disney to not make violent movies”

And from a dear boy to a classmate who was home sick:

“Open heart! Send love by train. Love, do your stuff!”

Professional & Personal Agendas and Triggered Pain Energy

Being love and light
Being the disciplinarian

Being something for the world
Being something so I can do
Doing something to make it OK to be...
Completing actions so I can be comfortable at Home
Determined to do right action so I deserve Peace
Giving so I can be left alone
Paying my dues so I can be free
Merging with the All to escape being me
Being the me who struggles -
The struggle of staying out when I want to stay in
Needing to be the responsible me

*Try - my dear one - to stay at Home always.
Doingness that spills out of making love with oneself becomes Peaceful
Home. Innocence at last!*

(Personal Journal: September 19, 1991)

Every child in my care has seemed to have been given to me so that I could be, as the Prayer of St. Francis (<http://www.prayerguide.org.uk/stfrancis.htm>) says, God's *instrument of peace*. To achieve this, my professional agenda was to ensure academic and worldly success for each student so that their future school years would be less stressful and so that they could discover where their potential lies. This also included my personal agenda which was an extension of my career as a physical and psychological healer: *where there is hatred let me sow love... where there is darkness - light; where there is sadness - joy... For it is in giving that we receive.*

These huge goals made every lesson I created and every minute of my teaching seem of utmost importance. Thus, the quality and quantity of my energy surrounding these goals helped to bring about amazing successes. Nearly every child continued on to elementary school academically prepared well beyond their years and maintained a heart and spirit of caring.

My extreme focus was unfortunately limiting because my personal and professional agendas at times painfully conflicted with one another. I felt this when a child's spiritual longing opposed the public school mandates. Peace and production were at odds within myself and initiated the primary burnout symptom: stress!

The Caring Adventure became very stressful as I wanted the students to be able to read and write in an integrative holistic gentle way before they left my school, so that when they went to a public kindergarten or first grade they would feel less pressured by the forceful learning of facts. I got stressed-out when I violated my own principles by having the children learn what *I* wanted them to learn, even when they did not want to.

When I feel pressured to gently manipulate children to comply with my agenda, I am not sensing the magical self, honoring its path and helping it to naturally manifest; I am not following the child and am barely adhering to the tenet of being attentive to the teachable moment. I am not allowing the children to follow their own path of learning and exploration; I am doing the opposite - I am taking away the mystery inherent within each moment's learning opportunity. Because of my agenda I am reducing their opportunity to live in the mystery and learn through personal discoveries... I did not truly open to the child's moment when I was inflicting mine. (My Heuristic Journal: June 11, 2008)

A sense of urgency was another educator pain energy that began to arise within me because of my belief that every action I was to perform, intended to help fulfill my agendas, was vital. Although my mind was usually capable of retaining a huge amount of potentialities, the urgency of each of these many actions caused me to struggle with having to implement a variety of important, and sometimes opposing, actions simultaneously. Attempting to accomplish this often put me into a useless spin. This growing pain energy started to reduce my ability to prioritize. It often prohibited me from carrying out a task that I had planned, since I became more easily side-tracked by yet another thought of something else that *should be done right now* to satisfy my agendas. I wanted it *all done yesterday* – like Leni often said about her intentions.

One administrative tool that I was lacking was adequate mindfulness of my relationship to the current environment. Demanding myself to do such a huge amount of multi-tasking required being able to *stop and just be* with what is, not only consider my wondrous fantasy of what could be. Working without mindfulness was a liability and led to workaholism. This was especially true for a quadruple Virgo, highly detailed-oriented, who felt compelled to focus on each minute part of every task, just asking for burnout!

Making Mistakes and Triggered Pain Energy

Oops! I Made a Mistake.

What should I do when I make a mistake cause I don't feel good at all.

Should I tell a lie? Should I sit and cry? Should I bellyache?

No! I should learn from my mistakes...

Oops! I made a mistake. That's OK!

Oops! I made a mistake. Everybody does.

It's OK to goof at times cause everyone makes mistakes.

Institute of Living Skills *No More Feelings Weird* (cassette) 1982

My God/Conscience persona triggered pain as it compulsively sought to distinguish right from wrong. It put making mistakes in the forefront of my mind when I was teaching educational materials. The enforced educational model of demanding perfection on tests, attendance and behavior was restimulated. Realizing that degradation had been the upshot of any degree of invalidation and failure in the public school system, however, I was committed to transforming my pain energy connected to mistake-making.

There is a persona of mine that is afraid of making mistakes. It relates to errors and having to do it right. That part worries so much about doing the wrong thing, it prevents me from sensing what the right thing is. (My Heuristic Journal: July 3, 2008)

I claimed to parents and students alike that making a mistake was not only normal but fully acceptable and a viable way of learning. Given the way I was treated by Mom as a child and by most of my teachers, my own dealing with children's mistakes was actually somewhat admirable. But because the system's paradigm of evaluating and judging student's mental, physical and social performance was powerful, it, regretfully, was too difficult for me to fully reject. Additionally, my *perfectionist* and *critical* Virgo personas wanted to correct! Since I was not self-compassionate to these personas and had not dealt with my past pain, I often found myself covertly and shamefully correcting

others' mistakes even though it went against Montessori's standards that I heartfully and intellectually agreed with.

One thing she must never do... is to interfere by... correcting his mistakes... Most teachers think it is their main business to be always criticizing... All the crosses made by the teacher on a child's written work... have a lowering affect on his energies and interests. (p. 240)

...the teacher can err unconsciously. Unfortunately teachers usually have the idea that they must never make a mistake themselves, for fear of setting a bad example. Hence, if the teacher does make a slip she will certainly not admit it to the child. Her dignity rests on being always right. The teacher has to be infallible... the whole school system is to blame, resting as it does on a false foundation. (p. 243)

Montessori *The Absorbent Mind* 1967

Being Responsible and Triggered Pain Energy

I had chosen the path of responsibility sometime in the 70's. Was this from Scientology or perhaps its routes stem from my relationship to God as a child? (Heuristic Journal: March 31, 2004)

...teachers have a profound responsibility for students' intellectual and moral nurture, as well as responsibility toward the society and culture of which the students are a part. (p. 23)

Banner & Cannon *The Elements of Teaching* 1997

Through the process of inquiry the children learn about caring, which we define as "compassionate responsibility."

A dissertation introduction: *Inspire – Inquire* September 20, 2003

My coined term *compassionate responsibility* wound up having dual meanings. Initially, as a definition of caring, the term meant being responsible in a compassionate manner. Each of us in the classroom tried to ensure our actions hurt no one and that when others were in pain we would find ways to empathetically reduce their suffering. When taking ultimate responsibility became overwhelming *compassionate responsibility* then came to mean being compassionate in a responsible manner. Eventually I had to see that

being overly responsible triggered and created pain energy and was therefore not always necessarily a compassionate activity.

A problem got developed once I had to know what to do and help others to do it. I felt my choices were to *say nothing and watch mistakes happen and unconsciousness take over* or *do something, say something, be responsible!* I unwittingly felt the necessity to choose the second path as ‘the savior’ ‘the authority’ that the parents in my school were demanding that I be. Eventually I began to feel compelled to give advice and state my point of view, believing that if I did not I would be remiss... I continued to do it because of my commitment to caring for others – as a way of actualizing the bodhisattva vow. (Heuristic Journal: October 30, 2004)

My spiritual, mental and emotional attitudes connected with joy and enthusiasm in creating and teaching lessons began to supersede my physical connection and care for my personal needs in every moment. Leni would warn me about this as she saw me always enthusiastic about perfecting each lesson and not taking the same personal responsibility for myself. My perfectionism and high standards seemed to fulfill me when I produced wonderful external results, but over time I began to notice its harsh consequences when I could not achieve my goals and as I felt its physical effects.

Learning and teaching had become too serious and ultra-important. Games were great as long as I could see their immediate results. I knew I did not want to be a part of the teacher population that measured children by the mistakes they made and how much they knew. I wanted to assist in the unfoldment of happy children and not assist in triggering anxiety, stress, tension and fear of imperfection as was done to me.

With all its abundance of achievement, just where is America today? Do we take pleasure in all this consumption? Is it giving us what we need? America is by far the greatest consumer per capita in the world of antidepressants, cocaine, and heroine... We hold on tightly, anxiously, not lightly...it is impossible to do the right thing all the time, to be careful, always to have your ducks in a row, and still be happy. (p. 20 - 23)

Housden *Seven Sins for a Life Worth Living* 2005

The spontaneous child was dying within me as the responsible teacher came to life. The *punisher of mistakes* persona, so strong in the field of education and in my youth, was attempting to get activated. Fortunately, I recalled Hubbard's Responsibility Scale reminding me that this persona was being *responsibility as blame*, so I sought a better way. Still, holding myself continually responsible for all outcomes caused me to second-guess. This triggered my sense of insecurity common to 38/11's.

Frustration and doubt occur... in the course of our work itself, particularly when we try to measure how it's all going. ...we may note that our efforts to measure our work and ourselves are frequently patterns of insecurity. "Did I help?" "Did it work?"..."Was it really for the best?" (p. 201)

Dass and Gorman *How can I help?* 1985

My pain energy was blinding me from what worked best for me as a child and began substituting that for the ways I learned to *get by* as an adult, although that was stressful and boring. Realizing this now is liberating! I can see how I can allow myself to have more fun with less stress in the classroom, maybe even with a classroom of adults. I could trust the process, and have fun even when the work is intensely challenging. Stress is like a homeopathic: low level stress can be valuable, high level stress kills!

Discipline and Triggered Pain Energy

Discipline is maintained through exercising "freedom within limits" and the application of "compassionate communication" skills. We watch, in a non-judgmental manner, for any potential difficulties. With empathy, we encourage self-discipline by assisting the verbal expression of any child's unmet needs. This opens the door to harmony with others... Discipline problems only arise from unmet needs.

The Caring Adventure *Discipline Philosophy* 1995

The children's behavior and our disciplinary practices were always praised whenever we received visitors in the classroom, went on our many field trips, or gave

performances for others in public. I recall a fireman incredulously asking how we disciplined the children because he never saw a group so attentive, well-behaved and happy. Humbly, I was able to tell him that my method of discipline was to teach self-discipline. I felt proud of the children, as well as of Leni and myself, for our commitment to listening and helping our kids meet their needs which then created classroom unity.

Self-discipline is not about punishment or even about a restrictive lifestyle. It is the ability of the individual to adhere to actions, thoughts, and behaviors that result in personal improvement instant of gratification.

School of self-discipline: <http://self-discipline.8m.com>

Discipline included both the teachers and the students exploring the concepts of control and self-control. *Stopping and just being* were gently introduced through the classroom use of Thay's *mindfulness bell*. As I found the disciplinary method of *time-outs* to have negative influences on the children, we found more compassionate ways for the children to learn to care for themselves and be a Carekid with their friends.

I implemented three techniques as potential alternatives when a child or a few children were upset or *acting out*. One was a type of modeling where I would demonstrate how I actually took care of myself when I got upset, showing my use of mindful self-compassion verses mindless emotional breakdown. Another technique was the introduction of a personal time-out, absolutely not used as inflicted punishment, which gave a child the opportunity to compassionately remove themselves from the triggered environment, take care of themselves and get ready for the next technique (which I modeled in real-time as well). This third alternative was assisting them in doing the process of *Working it Out* which is a teachers, parents and children tool I created (based on Marshall Rosenberg's Non-Violent Communication model) for conflict resolution and the creation of interdependent relationships (see *Appendix*).

Though it was remarkable to see the transformation through the use of these disciplinary methods, the way I frequently demonstrated these or helped to carry them out was not without some personal anxiety. I had not sufficiently experienced the only self-compassion tool that I had been introduced to at that time, Humphrey's (1989) *under the hat*, to be able to teach it well enough. With the skill of self-compassion, my previously stated agendas, complicated by my extraordinary sense of divine responsibility, resulted in triggered pain energy in the form of tension. This reduced the potential of the students finding their way to true self-discipline rather than depending upon other students or the teacher to be compassionate to them.

Leni and I were laboriously taking full responsibility for ensuring each child got their needs met. This was exhausting and violated Emerson's (1995) self-reliance model which I valued. It became especially stressful for us and the other children to deal with the reactions of a couple of children whose harsh emotions did not shift through these disciplinary alternatives. Taking on the role as the healer (the savior?) had deleterious effects as the more I tried to apply my compassionate processes with these students the worse their behavior became. Thinking I was helping them practice being a Carekid in difficult situations, I allowed my Carekids to spend their energy trying to care for these troubled kids; dealing with emotions then became a full time job in the classroom.

Adults have...erroneously believed that it is through their care and assistance that a child is so wonderfully animated. They have looked upon such assistance as a personal responsibility and have imagined that they were the molders of the child and the builders of his psychic life. They imagine that they accomplish this creative work exteriorly by the direction and suggestions they give to the child to develop his feelings, intellect, and will ...pride was man's first sin; his attempts to replace God has been the cause of the misery of all his descendants. (p. 33)

Montessori *The Secret of Childhood* 1996

Although I applied every applicable process I had learned I surprisingly was incapable of using compassion to take care of each situation. Unwilling to admit my defeat, which I withheld even from myself, I became triggered by the children I could not help and they I knew they felt my frustration and dismay. In the name of care and compassion I continued to work with the class to help care for their troubled friend.

Time and again, this made matters worse. Eventually, paying attention to the parents of my Carekids and communing with the parents of the children having difficulty brought about the positive result of those two children (one from my first group and the other from my third) transferring to a public school. Our school took a bit of time to return to normal each time, as we grieved our loss that we were not able to help those children and keep them in our fold.

Letting go of these friends so that they could move on to other environments better suitable for them, was a lesson for us all. Letting go of the savior complex I had installed in them, was quite necessary. Though we knew we did not know why this had happened, we had to find that place within ourselves that trusted we did our best and that this was sufficient. What a group lesson in self-discipline and compassion!

With the perspective of the Witness, then, we're able to hear when it is time to let things go and be what they are, as they recede beyond the horizon of our understanding. At this point the need to know begins to fall away, and not simply because we've given up and resigned ourselves to ignorance. Quite the contrary: we've come into a deeper wisdom, which knows its place and accepts Not Knowing. (p. 207)

Dass and Gorman *How can I help?* 1985

Workaholism and Triggered Pain Energy

Don't overwork to fill yourself with goals... A stuffy, rigid body cannot dance. (p. 70)

Huang *Embrace Tiger Return to Mountain* 1989

Running my own school enlivened my fervent commitment to somewhat divine agendas, brought about the opportunity to emerge myself in the enthusiastic joy of the creative process and awakened an immensely strong sense of responsibility. That package, when tainted by my *Virgo* perfectionism and my 38/11 high energy, was fodder for unconsciously taking on workaholic programming. Eventually, this would cause alienation, stress, rigidity and poor health, elements of my educator burnout.

This addiction of workaholism had been deeply instilled. Initially, this program got stored as it entered my family life. When my parents' work ethic shifted to exclude the Sabbath, they began working long and hard hours from morning to night; they both became workaholics. Later, I revisited this through Hubbard's workaholism that got passed down to all of us as Scientology staff members. Finally, Patty professed this to be an attitude indicative of the teaching profession's work ethic which needed to be honored.

The fundamental behaviors, beliefs and attitudes we observe in our parents become "hard-wired" as synaptic pathways in our subconscious minds. Once programmed... they become our biology for the rest of our lives...unless we can figure out a way to reprogram them. (p. 164)

Lipton *The Biology of Belief* 2005

The moral requirements of teaching exact from teachers an unusual degree of sacrifice ...gifts of energy and time ...for the benefit of their students. (p. 38)

Banner & Cannon *The Elements of Teaching* 1997

Up to this point in my life, I had never taken on this programming because the necessary combination of circumstances had not yet presented themselves that would bring it into being. When I was pregnant with Ryan and during the first few years of his life, my workaholic educator work-ethic began trickling in when I had to create and deliver voluminous material for the Doman program. But my nursing hormones kept me

so relaxed that workaholism could not *key-in*. As just the right stimulators appeared as founder and directress of my own alternative school my stored workaholic package *hard-wiring* slipped in and started running my life.

Staying up happily to the wee hours of the night, making beautiful material, creating new curriculum and writing elaborate newsletters, became a lifestyle. It provided a great deal of instantaneous gratification as well as kudos. Being so excited to be evolving a school that was meeting all the criteria that I valued, plus giving me immeasurable satisfaction, I hadn't noticed I was becoming a workaholic.

Do you take complete responsibility for the outcome of your work efforts?
 ...Do you take on extra work because you are concerned that it won't otherwise get done? ...Do you believe that it is okay to work long hours if you love what you are doing? Do you think about your work while driving, falling asleep or when others are talking?

How Do I Know If I'm a Workaholic?

http://lifetwo.com/production/workaholics_anonymous

I had not realized that this addiction had been taking me over even though it had been frequently suggested to me. Leni admonished me for working so many extra hours and tried to make me see that my earnings were greatly reduced based on the amount of additional time I was putting in. Then I bumped into a parent of one of my students at a local grocery store who was the wife of the director of the local alternative high school that my son had excelled in. She told me that all of the families were extremely happy with the school and that I did not have to work that hard as I was giving the parents much more than they required. Basically, she was encouraging me to take it more easily. As is the behavior of workaholics, I gave myself lots of excuses for rejecting this advice. I couldn't receive their caring words and continued to put in whatever extra hours I needed to make the school *picture perfect* - my mental picture of perfection!

Upon awakening, I would sense into what I wanted to create that day with what felt like thorough enjoyment. I was compelled to enter the creative process with no consideration of my personal needs. During the last few minutes before my assistant arrived, I would take a quick shower, brush my teeth, drag a comb through my hair and push down a few bites of something to eat. I did this even though I was teaching a Caring Adventure program based on awareness and discovery and which was supposed to lead to self-awareness and self-care. So having studied this on many levels was not enough. I guess you do teach what you need to learn! (My Heuristic Journal: November 12, 2007)

As I was still unaware of how to be self-compassionate I gave in to my addiction and hid from its deleterious effects. That my energy was getting depleted, that I was developing chronic hip pain, that I was having difficulty walking, and that my adrenals were running down I managed to completely ignore for a good deal of the time. I was serving the parents, children and God at my own expense, but I did not seem to care as long as felt I was truly productive. What I really needed, as Housden (2005) says, was the “freedom from the breathless and guilt-laden need to be constantly productive and useful” (p. 18). My accelerated workaholic activities were causing me to burn out.

The Karmic Cost

Gotta work
Till I drop
Mind control
Goes non-stop

Nerves are shot
Can not sleep
Habit sowed
Sickness reaps

Burnout & the Caring Adventure Educational Setting

Cultivating compassion as an early childhood directress had more hits and less misses than being parented, being a student, being a friend or being a mother. Being

compassionate to young children was so natural to me. My compassionate educator persona succeeded in decreasing both the children's and my own potential triggers.

However, being an early childhood directress while running my own school became associated with non-emotional psychological stress, excess strain on my body and spiritual disconnection which contributed to greater physical discomfort and pain than I had ever before encountered. Over the ten plus years of Caring Adventure activities, my own lack of self-compassion wound up reducing my compassion towards my students, their families that I had cared a great deal about and, of course, myself. This stress led to physical, emotional and spiritual pain. Eventually I burned out, temporarily closed down my educational setting, and have not yet officially re-opened the school.

It had been so satisfying to teach newly created material, actually creating a joyful, compassionate classroom of Carekids, that I was too easily able to ignore the parts of myself that were taking the hit for my workaholic enthusiasm. I stopped meeting many of my own emotional and physical needs. My lack of personal care was beginning to take its toll on me. Although preaching self-awareness, I had not realized that although I was feeling very compassionate to others, I was not in fact being compassionate to myself. I felt impermeable to anything negative coming into my life, so I did not find it necessary to pay attention to my body in the caring ways that I had in the past. By not assuming the role which I now call *Being Self-Compassion*, I later had to pay the price.

Throughout the course of our three year program, any of the earlier mentioned potential triggers seemed easily manageable and none of my eventual burnout manifestations had become apparent. Nevertheless, the thought of beginning a new three year cycle felt like a daunting task. After this first group graduated, now 6 years old and

ready for first grade, I questioned whether it was right for me to continue to run this school any longer. The graduating families wanted to help me create an elementary school for their children to attend. I was also prodded to begin a new three year program for the younger siblings of a few of the families. Both of those offers were wonderful but my low-grade overwhelm, though mostly silent, whispered that I should not accept either. It had been a wonderful three years for us all and their completion felt like ours as well.

Although Leni did a wonderful job, she now needed to begin creating her own career, which had been our plan since she agreed to be my assistant. As for me, I could make no plans for the future since I was strongly sensing that I had to stay open to intuitive signals, symbols, questions and answers and make no decisions until my next step was clear to me. Now being compassionate to myself, I stayed attentive to my present state and future possibilities, trusting that if I followed my path all would work out fine. I created no new program, did not advertise and refused to enroll any child for September. One parent from the previously completed program gathered up a whole new group of parents for a new class if I decided to run the school again. It was remarkable that everyone was patiently waiting, giving me the time and space to find my truth.

That summer I turned 50 and returned to New York for a celebratory family and friend birthday party and immediately went into menopause. Miraculously I was blessed, for a second time in my life, to feel like I had attained enlightenment. This was marked by my no longer feeling I had to be responsible for others. Instead, I could just be present in each moment and intuit the next appropriate action – which was oftentimes nothing!

To maintain this state, it seemed impossible to begin another school program. Part of me knew that if I had continued my previous pace and volume of work, that it would

be hazardous to my health. The administrative requirements alone would now be impossible to maintain if I were to continue staying in this calm, quiet, unrushed, blissful state. Should I start that next group of kids, do my PhD dissertation, travel abroad to work with poor children or just walk the earth? Would I be brave enough to find out?

When I returned to California, I contemplated my immediate future possibilities through the end of the second week of the semester. How could I just walk away from a successful career and business on a spiritual whim? Couldn't I incorporate my heightened state and my work? I finally surrendered to starting a two day a week program for 2 ½ year olds if the parents would rotate in as my assistant and reinforce the structure and concepts at home. I set up a parents' meeting to explain that I was now committed to having my spiritual journey be my priority necessitating reducing all administrative functions (eliminating my making newsletters, writing up progress reports, sending out invoices, etc.). This would allow me to further cultivate my spiritual state and focus more on the needs of each child. Amazingly, they all supported me and honored my requests.

Wanting to keep the wonderful connections alive with my graduating class, and to supplement my income, I also offered enrichment and tutoring to them, their friends and relatives once or twice a week. Additionally, their parents were conscientiously helping me found a new elementary school, *The Institute for the Whole Child*. Once again I explained that I wanted nothing to do with any administrative chores and would only create curricula and teach. The parents believed that we could make a better school than any of their current choices. Within months I gratefully, yet sheepishly, turned down their offers and assistance. Although I was successfully tutoring and enriching their elementary school students, I did not have enough confidence to move ahead with this project

because I had never received my teaching credential and since somewhere within my mental and physical consciousness I sensed the potential of my eventual burnout which I had been successfully hiding from. My workaholic had been this far refusing to recognize my *water/fire* needs, but finally her presence could no longer be ignored.

Initially my new two day program flowed well. It then became a struggle as once again *my* desire for their success became greater than *theirs*. I was able to teach for about three months before noticing that my spiritual high had worn off and I had pulled back into my potentially triggering problems, agendas, assumed responsibilities and workaholicism, all which had emerged worse than ever before. Within a year I began, putting on a lot of weight, being barely able to walk, being in constant hip pain, vaginally bleeding and having dizzy spells. All the educator pain energy that had been present, which had previously been at bay, became full blown by the next year. I suggested closing down the school but was convinced to take some time off for healing and give everyone an extended Christmas break. Being dedicated to self-healing greatly helped me allowing me to return to work, though still in a limited capacity.

The following year Leni's daughter became my assistant and took on a lot of what had then become burdens. My unresolved conflict about whether or not I should continue to run the school when my all of my systems were telling me otherwise, brought my energy into a hyper state; my curriculum presentations became less genuine and more automatic. I was still having some fun and the children were mostly doing well, but I knew it was not quite right. My unconditional compassion no longer flowed naturally. Teaching was becoming quite uncomfortable. I began getting irritated at little things. No longer easily connecting to my compassionate nature prevented experiencing inner peace.

Many teachers and students have lived with the burden of anxiety day after day... On the surface, such people may appear to be leading rich and productive lives. They may say that they like their teaching, that they find educational pursuits rewarding. But if the inner dimensions of their personalities could be examined, many would show a large amount of tension, appearing... in disproportionate resentment, competitiveness, discouragement, efforts to impress or to placate, to play the game and to play it safe. (p. 8)

Jersild *When Teachers Face Themselves* 1967

As the years went on after I knew I should end the school, my ability to truly remain compassionate further decreased. When this group graduated I once again decided not to continue and suggested the remaining parents find another school, though in September I gave in. Leni returned and I ran three mornings and she ran three afternoons. It went very well for a period of time and old results were manifesting again.

Creating a Compassionate Classroom results: In *Emotion in Motion* and the *Caring Adventure*, children began to verbalize their feelings and needs with each other and the really listen to the feelings and needs of each other which had magical results. For instance, a big fight had occurred and we helped the crying *bullying* child find and express his underlying feelings and needs. He was sad to be alone and frustrated that he could not be a part of the game other children were playing; he was scared to ask to be included. When the other children heard the reason he hit them, they immediately invited him to play and found that he was uniquely able to improve their game. From the magical self residing in their heart, they listened with compassion. Immediately, the magic happened. A big fight had turned into new friendship. (My Heuristic Journal: March 23, 2008)

Eventually, even though I was still teaching caring through applications of compassionate practices, like mindful eating, I was sometimes doing it by rote without my personal involvement –like doing a chore without pleasure or presence. My program was in place, but my compassionate heart was harder and harder to find. Feeling dismal for devolving to this level triggered my insecurities.

Convinced that we are not good enough, we can never relax. We stay on guard, monitoring ourselves for shortcomings. When we inevitably find them, we feel even more insecure and undeserving. (p. 8)

Brach *Radical Acceptance* 2003

Many problems arose, the first of which was the school getting flooded and requiring huge repairs. The second was unconsciously falling through a hole in a structure, breaking my ankle and relying on crutches. Despite feeling aches and pain as I moved from student to student on the floor (thus continuing to damage my hip), I powered through my classroom mornings and my tutoring and enrichment. My disabilities necessitated having to sit on low stools and other creative contraptions; my heart sunk when I could no longer play with the children in the yard or playground.

As a teacher and school director, my triggers originally had been more internal than external. They related more to what I felt obligated to present and what I felt responsible to have my students achieve; I was rarely triggered by my students or their parents' pain. But when I was in my burnout phase and not following my own inner guidance, my triggers appeared to be external. This resulted, unfortunately, in being judgmental of some of my families and their children. I became ashamed of my ungraceful handling of my own triggered pain. My heart and soul suffered greatly.

A growing burden of personal responsibility leads to exhaustion and frustration... As our heart begins to close down, joy and inspiration give way to apathy and resignation. (p. 184/185)

Dass and Gorman *How can I help?* 1985

When we graduated this group, I explained once again, for the last time, that I was not going to start a fourth group and was instead going to complete my PhD dissertation. I continued tutoring and enrichment sessions for the next two years, but even had to stop that as my burnout was so much in my face that I could no longer do anything else but attend to my healing. I had violated my spiritual promise and was paying for it big time!

Although I had had excellent results as a teacher, had a school that enjoyed a wonderful reputation, and was exalted by parents and teachers alike, my physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual pain energy prohibited me from reaching my educator potential and fully actualizing my true path. When my creative juices were flowing, I used my physical body for its adrenaline rushes not realizing that I was depleting my adrenals. My joy and enthusiasm in creating and teaching lessons always seemed to supersede my physical connection and the recognition of my physical signals of educator pain. My pain energy included my physical symptoms of fatigue, pain and illness and my emotional symptoms of sadness, depression, resentment and anger. I would try to leave all of this outside of the classroom, not being compassionate to myself. This left me less and less in touch with the needs of my body and soul.

Fears, like *being out there alone in the big world* and of *losing my financial security* had triggered insecurity. These along with a deep-seated fear of *not being good enough* prevented me from moving along on my path of creating an elementary school, creating a program for parent and teacher educators (which I was repetitively told was my obvious next step and what I intended to do for my dissertation) and/or following inner urgings to shift gears by ending the school and being open to the next step on my spiritual journey. I did not engage in any of these actions because I had not compassionately taken the necessary steps to effectively deal with my accumulated triggers.

I had been so in my head and my heart, that I was unaware of my need for personal grounding, self-care and spiritual inspiration. My resultant burnout package included all of my pain energy triggered in this educational setting and its associated disabilities which depleted my energy, nearly destroyed my ability to educate at all and

left me so debilitated that I could do nothing but search for and discover a way to possibly heal. Helping others had been my path; now it was time to help myself.

The experience of burnout has a particular kind of poignancy. Having started out to help others, we're somehow getting wounded ourselves. What we had in mind was expressing compassion... what we seem to be adding to the universe is more suffering - our own - while we're supposedly helping! (Ibid)

I was just asked to attend a memorial service for a young parent whose two children had been in my educational center five to eight years ago. At the service I saw many of my other students and their parents as well. Some children who I had as pre-schoolers were now in the sixth grade, but it felt like I had been with them just yesterday. The love, closeness and great appreciation with, for and from all of the students and parents were incredibly wonderful to feel.

I can now more deeply recognize why I was so ambivalent about closing down the school to heal myself and to follow my soul path: my compassionate heart flourished by caring and sharing with those who appreciated it and who continually thrived on learning about compassion and being nurtured through this connection. My compassionate service was highly valued; this enriched my heart, fulfilled my need for accomplishment and kept me financially stable. However, as I was not also being compassionate to my body and my soul this was sufficient cause to crash.

No matter how much compassion I successfully cultivated for my students and their parents, without further cultivating this same compassion to *my whole self* I could not maintain my success. Because I blindly soaked up this beautiful shared energy and kudos, other parts of me suffered. What a wonderful lesson in cultivating holistic self-compassion!

Evolution of my Transformational Education Doctoral Study: From Compassion to Self-Compassion towards Greater Compassion

Choosing to get a PhD in Transformational Education

During my many years as a Montessori teacher I had been lovingly, yet emphatically, encouraged by school directors, fellow teachers, parents of children I taught, and even by the students themselves, to write a book that would teach how to best utilize my compassionate curriculum for young children, *The Caring Adventure* (which included the *Emotion in Motion* curriculum as well). Although I truly appreciated the dear validation from my friends and colleagues, and secretly did desire to accomplish this task for the holistic benefit of humanity, I felt utterly incapable of pursuing their worthy suggestion. I backed out by telling them, and myself, that my being totally immersed in the plethora of administrative and educational responsibilities of founding, directing and teaching rendered me useless to take on this huge project.

However, now many years later, after developing and applying my practice of self-compassion, I realize that even then I had a far-away glimmering that my unwillingness to take on this task actually resulted from my ignorance of how to self-compassionately transform what I am now calling, my *pain energy*, my unexplored uncomfortable emotions, negative self-talk and lack of the self-confidence that was always just under the surface. I had been unable to successfully deal with this pain energy package when it got triggered during those moments of encouragement and I froze at even the mere thought of ever publishing any of my programs. The impact of this pain and the power of its accompanying programming brought forth an immediate avoidance of this project. It left me unwilling to expose myself to my own fears of being

overwhelmed and of being harmfully criticized by families and sections of the educational community that either felt threatened by my work or felt that what I had to say was insignificant. Lacking ways to be compassionate to the parts of me that were experiencing this pain energy package, with sorrowful relief, I refused the invitation to make a commitment to what felt like a daunting, an impossible, task of turning my work into a book for educators, both parents and teachers.

However, when a good friend and primary health consultant, Dr. Laura Thompson, encouraged me to move beyond the classroom and give my work to the world through getting a PhD in education, somehow her words pierced through my thwarting pain energy triggers. Instead it revitalized the possibilities in me of attaining personal and professional grounding in this world. I envisioned that a grad school could offer me an educational structure, a supportive disciplinary tool, which would compassionately help me deal with any erupting pain energy and spoon-feed me through the write up of my educator programs. Since becoming a doctor in the field of education would satisfy a core goal, I began to strongly consider this new avenue on my path that had the potential of catapulting my local achievements into global accomplishments!

Another dear friend of mine at the time, Robert Frey, who was in the process of getting his PhD, playfully prodded and inspired me to get one in education from IUPS. This *conspiracy* to have me take the plunge was further nudged during my conversations with IUPS's founder, Dr. Irv Katz, who offered the carrot of a PhD in Transformational Education. I appreciated how this school exemplified a transformative educational relationship. My treatment as a prospective student was similar to the way in which I

chose to treat my students: with respect for their individuality, confidence in their creativity and an honoring of their potential contribution to the world.

The promise of having a PhD in Transformational Education also helped me to decide on enrolling on this program as that title seemed to reflect my professional path. Although at the time I did not comprehend its meaning, I now realize that the educational programs that I have written have always had transformation at its core as a potential for every child and adult. This degree title spoke to the educational environment that I envisioned and hoped to help manifest: a transformation of the traditional system.

Enrolling on this program could give me the opportunity to not only refine my own investigations and include theoretical research, but also open me to deeply engage in heuristic research (which eventually became the fulcrum of the creation and presentation of this dissertation). Since writing up my curriculum had been such an overwhelming task, I thought doing this as a *work of excellence* for IUPS would be perfect. At that time I had not understood what it meant to write a dissertation or how a work of excellence fit into that. I happily felt with my PhD schoolwork nearly behind me and with professional assistance I could finally attack the job of turning over my labor of love to the world!

That my college professor friend Dennis could be one of my mentors increased my sense of security as I trusted him with being sensitive to my core truths and knew he would have my best interests at heart; having Inula, Irv's wife, as a mentor was inspiring as her expertise in psychology, education and the creative arts painted a picture of a wonderful, continual, hands-on relationship – one available to get me from any point A to point B; I knew I would need help throughout my dissertation writing process. I was unaware that partnering with these mentors in the ways I had anticipated was actually just

my fantasy, and that this program required writing and organizational skills, as well as self-discipline, that far exceeded my knowhow, abilities and expertise at the time.

Living in my dream world, I was thoroughly exhilarated with this professional prospect. Feeling that I could positively affect the educational community by spreading, to these settings, the word of compassion and its broad implications began elevating me to new heights. When I left Irv's office I was literally jumping with joy. Though earlier a bit fearful of the deep waters, I then closed my eyes, held my nose and took the dive.

Prior Works of Excellence:

The Caring Adventure

The evolution of this study began with attempting to write up my Caring Adventure curriculum as a book to be used as my *work of excellence* in lieu of writing a traditional dissertation or trying to write a book on my own. While I was still running my school, I began organizing this three-year curriculum in the hopes of giving other educators the opportunity to have similar successes in their classrooms as I was enjoying. I wanted their students to also anxiously desire to learn what it meant to assume the beingness of a Carekid. Offering my theoretical and heuristic approaches and worldly activities, I heartfully now began writing how children could care for all the parts of themselves, their family and friends, their immediate environment as well as become aware of cultural diversity, humanity, all life forms, the earth and the ecological interconnectedness of all things. In retrospect, I recognize that the curriculum I was writing cultivated personal and universal compassion as it increased awareness, empathy and appreciation - all aspects of the process of self-compassion that I later discovered during my own heuristic study.

In September of 1998, I created an introduction to this book, entitled *Inquire and Inspire* which included topics such as: The current world of the child, What do children need from us?, What are the most viable/successful attitudes of educators?, The heart of learning, and Discipline. Though incomplete, it was intended to inspire educators to newly see the child and reflect on the meaning of education and discipline while considering their transformational possibilities and renewing their commitment. By revealing myself, my compassionate depth for both children and educators expanded.

How do I approach the subject of education and its transformation? I have analyzed and synthesized the ways that I have adapted my particular academic learning experiences, as well as my personal, interpersonal, therapeutic and spiritual explorations and study. My pragmatic application of this information to early childhood and elementary school age children has awakened me to my piece in the unfolding transcendence of the field of education. I am hoping that by sharing a passage of my sacred journey, my dutiful passion to help create inner peace globally, I will connect with fellow travelers who have a purpose in alignment with my own. If so, this may give us the opportunity to touch some universal truths together and act upon them side by side. Can my words alone create transformation?

...

Disappointment and blame often accompany unmet expectations. If the adult does not take the time to understand the present needs of the child, then the adult is at risk of taking a superior, authoritarian, dictatorial role by harshly doling out threats or punishments. However, if the Educator and the child can be compassionate to each other's needs, then they both can request actions that might meet their standards. This phrase works well for me: Respect & Request, but not Expect!

...

We are the pillars of strength that guide young children to find the modalities that they can utilize to best attune themselves to this world. We are the facilitators of the attainment of each child's birthright to personal happiness. We are the true friends of children as we recognize the individual potential for greatness in each child. We are the "magis" validating the natural universal flow of personal awareness and the development of each child's most precious gifts and talents. We are the believers that know that children who follow their own paths will have the possibility for inner satisfaction. We are the educators who trust that children who know their worth will be enthusiastically compelled to give of their gifts to their family, friends, community and the world.

While I was still running my school full time, I spent months figuring, organizing and attempting to write this book, but I began feeling overwhelmed by the vast amount of territory I realized I needed to cover and the immensity of this project. There was so much experience, contemplation and knowledge inside of me that was bursting at the seams to come forth and be told, but I was not sure what had to go where, what should or should not be revealed and how. My workaholic, perfectionist tendencies were turning this book into an encyclopedia to create transformational educators via the use of my curriculum. Though I tried to heed my mentors' requests to focus on just one aspect, writing a complete book for educators is where I always wound up because that was my intention for writing a dissertation and was to be my contribution to the field of transformational education.

Eventually I had to come to grips with the fact that this curriculum necessitated creating a textbook or deserved a series of mini-books; it was actually inappropriate as a work of excellence towards the attainment of a PhD. I later also realized that not continuing with this was positive because I was not researching and discovering something new as a dissertation and would therefore not be teaching me anything new. I, of course, was clueless about the fact that I was not including the research necessary for a dissertation. Despite all of these reasons, my heart is sad that I did not have the foresight to work out some way to write this book as a work of excellence and then do the theoretical and dissertation requirements as I am doing now. Having this completed product would be wonderful, but, also, it would not have allowed for the insights and rich personal transformation to follow which it might have needed to make it great.

Creating a Compassionate Classroom

Another main reason that I had to put the writing of this book aside was that I began to realize that even if I wrote a wonderful curriculum, the successful execution of its lessons and activities would not necessarily be ensured if the teacher was having difficulties in the classroom. So I felt an undercut to a quasi-text of this curriculum would be more appropriate. The next *work of excellence* book that I decided to write was *how to create a compassionate classroom*. This was an important preliminary as it would ready the teacher and the class for the full Caring Adventure curriculum.

If I had to focus on one subject matter, compassion seemed like the key. I created a Montessori workshop entitled *Creating a Compassionate Classroom* and decided to run it with Patty as I felt too insecure to present this material to educators on my own. We delivered my new material to 100 teachers at a local Montessori convention.

Although I spoke on subjects that I believed I embraced and had successfully applied and utilized in my classroom, like: Creating a Compassionate Attitude, Spiritual Preparation of the Teacher, My Compassionate Classroom Props, Making a Basic Commitment, Feelings and Needs, and Rosenberg's Non-Violent Communication model, I was unable to comfortably get any of these core beliefs across to the other educators. Utilizing the following steps, I attempted to assist these teachers with real difficulties they were having in their own classrooms, such as:

Applications to teachers in their personal lives

Find situations that are *cries for... compassion*:

*Reactions in parent that you find difficult to offer compassion to

Examples: a) a parent upset with your disciplinary approach;
b) a parent shouting at their child

1. notice your reactions
2. give yourself compassion
(Use the 4 steps of expressing empathy)

3. be empathetic - see the other person as a wonderful being
4. ... guess their feeling, get their underlying need
5. ...make a request: ...now would you like...?

I realized that it was one thing to write about compassion, be compassionate to children and teach compassion to children. It was quite another thing to teach it to adult educators. Perhaps I did not understand this subject well enough to help these teachers who were distraught and only wanted the children to be compassionate to one another. I was shocked by how many teachers blamed their troubled students and were unwilling to consider being compassionate to them. This was once again too steep a gradient for the teachers to apply. I needed to write a more basic topic for educators to investigate before they would be able to fully utilize these *compassionate classroom* concepts.

The Magical Heart of Learning: Crossing the Rainbow Bridge

Since being compassionate to children in a classroom was the most important aspect for me to address, I decided to write about the importance of compassionate relationships in education. What is the role of the teacher in the learning process? Interdependent relationships seemed to be at the heart of learning. Transformation can *magically* arise when being one's magical self and honoring that in children. At the heart of learning can be interdependent relationships transforming the educational experience. I advocated a peaceful revolution of education, a quantum leap as a magical safe bridge. This was now another book inside of me longing to be written as a *work of excellence*.

Learning is... to be utilized as a spiritual activity in order for each individual to be able to fulfill their life purpose.
 ...Interdependence is the quantum shift needed for the parent /child /teacher relationships. The child as an empty container to be filled is the old paradigm.... a child has purpose – needs support and direction in order to fulfill that purpose... the child will respond beautifully once he/she realizes he/she is recognized, then trust develops.

...For me: having a spirit/heart intimacy with children gets results! The child feels recognized and magic happens. Use magic as a teaching tool - the magic of learning. True learning is magic. I am using magic – right brain activities to absorb left brain concepts.

(From The Magical Heart of Learning Abstract: December 22, 1998)

Initially the sections were gentle: 1. the magical self; 2. life; 3. learning – my service. As the passion in me exploded, the books sections shifted into: 1. the old paradigm; 2. the quantum shift of transcending the logical mind and letting go of the old structures; 3. the new paradigm. Ten to twenty chapter titles fell in each of these sections.

Dennis wanted me to consider the philosophical /metaphysics of education, “what it is,” using more left brain theory. I took his suggestion and looked at the concepts that reflected this study: interdependence, compassion, independence, awareness, willingness for and appreciation of chaos, authenticity, synergy, integrity/wholeness, etc. Inula helped by asking me questions like, “How do you inspire the reader to shift into the magical realm of the learning mode?” Asking me to find the book’s intention, suggesting it be one sentence long, I came up with the following:

1. For the teacher and parent to see the *magical self* in each child
2. For teachers and parents to truly know that they can help the child mature into themselves by acknowledging who they really are, guiding them to develop their unique gifts...
3. For caretakers to engage in an inquiry of how each child learns best
4. To change the educational system to allow for the child to recognize their individual purpose and receive any necessary assistance in achieving their purpose which will then allow him to give to the world from the highest place that he is capable of giving.

I had some beautiful ideas, but I had not yet been committed to honing the theoretical research skills required to discover what learning is really about. I began reading some books, but once again was overwhelmed with the amount of data and the opposing viewpoints. Research was not my true interest, as what I wanted to do was

share the depths of my soul on this subject through a creative work of excellence. My creative soul was also interested in making this book beautiful and simple. The chapters would have clear facts, collages, proverbs, poetry, personal experiences, cartoons, many images and a question for the reader to ponder on at the end of the chapter.

Feeling a bit shaky, I knew I needed to take this to the next level. I decided to run another Montessori workshop at their next convention speaking on how interdependence can be a result of independence and compassion. I entitled this one: *Balancing Autonomy and Compassion to create an Interdependent Classroom*. Its intent was to soften the educational system and magically transform the teacher / student relationship. The workshop presentation included so many beautiful and workable aspects for educators.

When I find myself off balance and martyring myself a bit, I am now working on remembering to shift my attention and focus towards increasing my autonomy so that I can regain my balance.

...I have used these tools to help me to open to my deeper feelings, to have a better understanding of my thought processes, to be more conscious of my needs, to really feel what is going inside of my body and to be grateful for being able to recognize my inner guidance.

...By the time you feel confident in recognizing all of the facets of the gem of self-awareness in any given moment, you are well on your way towards autonomy, and are ready to give yourself compassion when you need it.

...Self-compassion comes before compassion for others.

...As a result, my autonomy got a big boost and I can now be here with you today, able to be more present and to work more interdependently.

...Once someone has established a true sense of autonomy and can have compassion for themselves and another, then interdependency can occur.

I sensed the truth in all I said and loved the possible outcomes. But although the written words felt soothing to my heart and satisfied my mind conceptually, my actual presentation confirmed what happens in a classroom where the educator does *not* have a

good sense of her autonomy as I was not comfortably present, could not then be self-compassionate, could not then compassionately connect with the students in the class and ultimately did not create an interdependent classroom where learning of the heart resided. This workshop experience demonstrated that my sensitivity and passion (my *water/fire* nature) had been carrying this project and that I did not have a sufficient theoretical understanding grounded in concrete experience (*air/earth*) necessary to have run this workshop or to go ahead with this book. I needed an infinitely simpler thesis topic.

The Attributes and Attitudes of Highly Regarded Educators

The special object of the child's affection is the adult. He earnestly asks him for those things he needs for his self-development. From his lips, as from a spring, he draws the words he must learn to speak. Through his actions, an adult shows a child how men behave (p.104)

Montessori *The Secret of Childhood* 1966

Perhaps discovering workable educator qualities would more clearly point to the compassionate educator's characteristics and persona. I decided to focus only on this aspect for my next thesis. To determine the possible qualities in educators that might make them most effective, I first arranged videoing interviews of myself. I was then able to write up questionnaires to help ascertain the attitudes and attributes of highly regarded educators. A variety of students, teachers and parents were interviewed and videoed to discover if my predictions were accurate. I used this outline to try to get the job done.

Intent: to find the common attitudes and attributes of highly regarded educators in order to pass on the findings to teachers and prospective teachers; to help facilitate effective change in the educational process and system, thereby potentially positively affecting society as a whole.

*Explore and write down my personal attitudes that I feel have contributed to my being a highly regarded teacher which affected positive results.

*Get myself interviewed so that I can explore these areas in greater depths

*Review interviews and identify major areas...

*Look more deeply to discover if these are correct head topics

- *Video me describing the significant components of education
- *Create interview questions and questionnaires
- *Accumulate highly regarded teachers willing to take part in this study
- *Interview and video parents, teachers and students
- *Collect all of the data and find common attitudes and attributes
- *Find authors and other studies to substantiate the findings
- *Write the dissertation based on the above

(Thesis Outline: July 3, 2000)

I created a number of interviews (which follows) each having many questions. They were designed to elicit specific answers relating to the distinctive aspects of this study. The interviews for children needed to be different from the ones for adults. The interview titles are below, followed by the “On Children” interview questions:

My Various Interview Titles:

- * On Children: The Attributes of a Favorite Teacher
- * Adults who share attributes of a highly regarded teacher
- * Attribute list: Which 7 of these teacher attributes best describe...?
Which next 7 do you strongly value in....?
- * Attitudes which highly regarded educators may possess
- * My attitudes on the significant components of education
 1. preparation and personal development of the teacher
 2. adult/child relationship
 3. discipline
 4. approaches to teaching
 5. curriculum
 6. Questions of highly regarded teachers to draw out their attitudes on significant components of education

...

Attributes of a Favorite Teacher

What does a student want from a teacher?

What makes kids like school?

What makes a child want to be in school?

What makes a good teacher?

What about the teacher (attitudes and attributes) and how she runs the classroom creates a positive learning environment?

My old friend Steve Lutzke, who had videoed many Caring Adventure performances, helped me carry this out through his many in-depth videoed interviews of me and also of many parents of children who had been at my school who knew him. The

remainder of the interviews I did on students, parents and teachers from local schools. Patty created a successful charter school in Arizona, where I also did many interviews. The most interesting interview I did, however, was on my 5th grade teacher, Mrs. Gura (who I located still living in Brooklyn, New York) – who had been *my* favorite teacher!

I completed all but the last two steps of my above outline of this study and then dropped it. Since I had never taken a statistics class I did not really know how to evaluate the results I received. Ignorant of how to really do this type of study, I was also uncertain about having arbitrarily chosen my specific list of attributes, attitudes and significant components of education, based upon what was true for me. Had I entered too much personal bias? Had I already known these qualities before beginning this study and was now using this study to prove my postulate? Being ethical, I realized this PhD study had come to a dead end!

Whole Language Reading Program

My next attempt at doing a valuable Transformational Education PhD study was in the field of holistic education. It emerged from my success at teaching reading to preschool and elementary school students. I was receiving many bright children from upper class families who were having great difficulty in language arts and needing tutoring. Additionally, being aware of the literacy problem in this country, I thought that the public schools could use a bit of my compassionate assistance.

What key elements should be provided for the whole child in an early childhood language curriculum that would promote, create, and prepare the child for literary success?

- * Compare Montessori, Doman, Head Start and the Waldorf philosophies and applications.
- * Address phonics verses whole language

* Be objective: visit classrooms, interview teachers, video lessons, get key books... Note judgment verses facts! (Language thesis: January 30, 2003)

This study was short lived. Here again, I sensed I was going to write about something I already knew and was going to prove. I had an initial interest in this topic since reading was my favorite subject to teach. But this academic pursuit did not touch the core of my heart. There was something else I *had* to explore and write about for the field of education that would come from the depths of my being.

Authentic Empathy

I had begun my educator burnout process when I came upon the book, *The Power of Empathy*, by Ciarmicoli (2000). Accompanying this burnout was a questioning of my spiritual connection with White Tara: Mother of Compassion and consequently my Tibetan spiritual practice. The feeling of compassion in my heart and sensing myself as being compassion was diminishing. Delving into empathy then seemed like a better choice to explore. The added quality of the term *authentic empathy* sparked my course.

Authentic empathy is motivated by a genuine concern for others and a desire to help them. (p. 126)

I had always had difficulty distinguishing between empathy and compassion; Marshall's work alternately referred to his model using both terms. Empathy seemed to be a more comfortable subject to study as it did not seem to include the spirit but had the substance of transformational possibilities and the depth of the mind and the senses. Compassion was relegated to feelings of the heart and, I thought, only a part of empathy.

Knowing my own body/mind was in trouble, I began using the empathy for deep heuristic inquiry into my pain connected to education. In October 2003, during my

theoretical research and personal observations, I created a multi-step empathy process and a detailed *Format Outline* to use for each of these steps, my new *work of excellence*:

Steps of the Empathy Process

1. How to listen & how to listen empathically (also define: attention, focus)
2. How to hear & hear empathically
3. How to feel compassionately
4. How to assess holistically
5. How to give empathy
6. How to be empathic by utilizing the whole empathy process
7. How to recognize functional empathy - the dark side of empathy.
How it affects each step of the authentic empathy process...
9. What future research would be appropriate?

Format for each of the Steps of the Empathy Process

1. Make documents, record and interpret past & present personal experiences
 - a) Skills - How have I applied this step well in the past?
 - b) Flaws - What difficulties have I had with its applications?
What stands in the way of my personal success with this step?
2. Explore and apply for each step of the empathy process:
 - a) Self: body, mind, soul, spirit: listening to myself; giving myself empathy
 - b) To Others: listening to another; giving another empathy
 - c) From Others: another listening to me; receiving empathy
 - d) Children: listening to children; being empathic to children
3. Research step references, learn and note them in the reference notes doc
4. Make the sub-category documents:
 - a) Dated Interactions, b) Successes, c) Difficulties d) Cognitions: new ideas, new insights, how I can best utilize this step of the process
5. With the information from above:
 - a) Practice the step mindfully.
 - b) Journal current personal experiences, thoughts and results of practicing this step directly into document or onto a tape recorder or handwrite notes.
 - c) Note in "successes" doc the areas of my life I am applying this step well
 - d) Note in the "difficulties" doc the areas I am having application difficulty
6. Write up an interview for that step of the process
7. Interview myself
8. Interview a few other people
9. Write down any new insights
10. Incorporating these, practice and journal that step as my current path.
11. How did these interviews further affect my experience of this step?
12. Studying and utilizing the data and answer the following?
 - a) What are my total findings on this step?
 - b) What still stands in the way of achieving personal optimal success in this step?
 - c) What have I now learned that could benefit others?

While applying my format to the process of empathy I created, infinite questions poured forth throughout this study. They often put me into a mental and emotional spin. I began to have reservations about the validity and intention of this process.

What is the real purpose of empathy? ...Should I include transformation as an end phenomenon of the empathy process? Are we looking for a transformation to take place when we give empathy? Is it only to help bring about relief and nurturing? (Heuristic journal: February 15, 2004)

What is the first aspect to explore: presence or mindfulness? Does one necessitate the other? Does one bring about the other? (March 31, 2004)

Engaging in this study was very intense and time consuming, but was enlightening and transformed some of my pain energy. I still might have continued this exhaustive process if deeper issues had not arisen. I realized that my difficulties with being empathic related to the pain it triggered within me. My written overview of my experiences of this authentic empathy path reveals why it was necessary for me to shift into focusing exclusively on its reflexive aspect, self-empathy.

By seriously studying the concept of authentic empathy, by examining my past and present thoughts regarding empathy as if my story was important, by appreciating my skills in this arena, and by honestly opening up to my flaws I got to, over and over again, experience my true relationship to this process that I have devoted myself to. Doing that gave me the extra gift of attaining its benefits – to allow my native empathic nature...to begin to subtly – gradually – and powerfully re-enter those painful moments. [I learned how to] take the forefront as the benevolent monarch of my system and for the systems of everyone I am in contact with.

...I am capable of listening deeply from my heart with love and compassion when I am not triggered. When I am not triggered and I am physically well, I have incredible persistence and patience and insight... It is the other person's pain that I have to deal with in myself that is one of my greatest difficulties in each section of the empathy process.

...My obsessive desire to take responsibility for others and my compulsion to jump into "self-responsibility" ...when others are not being empathetic

to me brought to my attention my great lack of self-empathy and my corrupted ability to receive empathy.

...I need to take care of myself first when I am triggered. If I take care of myself first, be fully empathic to the pain connected to my trigger, then I would have a chance at being able to be more present with the other person who needs empathy as well and perhaps even resolve the situation. ...This shows my great need for discovering how to fully give myself authentic empathy. Perhaps, the first step would be to listen to myself empathically. I'm ready for that step.

...I find that just by having applied this process so far, I am actually beginning to find a way - and find the time - to give myself empathy... occasionally. (Overview of my Past and Present Personal Experiences of Authentic Empathy: August, 2004)

The Aspects of Self-Empathy

I realized that I could not study and teach empathy before first knowing - experiencing fully- how to be empathetic to myself; [the] thesis topic had to be changed to *self-empathy* [so I could] confront the areas of my teaching and my life where I have been unable to be empathetic. Although I was teaching caring and empathy to groups of students, parents and teachers I had to confront that I was still inept at some deep level. All I learned had been insufficient to handle all of the people and situations I had to deal with as a teacher. (My Heuristic Journal: September 13, 2005)

Flow: ...an impulse or direction of energy particles or thought... The four flows used in processing are flow one, something happened to self; flow two, doing something to another; flow three, others doing things to others; flow zero, self doing something to self.

http://www.scientology.ie/p_jpg/wis/wiseng/gloss.htm#f

Entering this new realm of empathy reminded me of Hubbard's concept of *flows*.

Even though the intention of the study was still to help others, *Flow 0* (self to self) was now needed to reach this goal and was what I would mainly focus on. Upon heuristic reflection, I created seven chapter titles - areas worthy of exploring for this thesis topic:

1. Self Empathy
2. Transformational self-empathy aspects
3. How to empathize with myself
4. How to empathize with myself by creating transformation!

5. How to give myself transformational empathy!
6. How to give myself transformational empathy by taking personal responsibility!
7. How to give myself empathy in a way that facilitates transformation
(Contents of Self-Empathy Thesis: September 16, 2004)

There were many aspects of self-empathy that I chose to include, like: a vow of personal transformation, being, being me, being aware, being present as myself, being true to and as myself, being aware of myself and the affects of the environment upon myself, appreciating and loving myself, accepting myself, recognizing and caring for my needs, purifying and integrating the various parts of myself, intending conscious clarity, listening mindfully, hearing deeply, gaining insight, and feeling compassion with and for myself, and ultimately knowing that I have empathized with myself. Working with all of these aspects for over a year with moderate success, I was still not settled.

On Tara's would-be 20th birthday, September 13, 2005, I auspiciously understood:

While researching self-empathy, it began to seem like what I really needed to be researching was actually self-compassion, but refused to do so... I had not been able to do my thesis on *compassion* because of its connection to my baby who died, Tara, who brought me to Tibetan Buddhism via White Tara – the Mother of Compassion. (My Heuristic Journal)

A few days later my need to truly differentiate between empathy and compassion could no longer be denied. First, I recalled my mentor Dennis's recent e-mailed where he wondered if I had not meant compassion when I referred to empathy. The day before, my friend Thia saw my outline and also thought I meant compassion and not empathy. I thought Rosenberg had empathy first in his work, though So Cal coined it *compassionate communication*. His trainer Bryson said compassion was a part of empathy. Trying to explain the difference to Thia, I told her empathy was showing that you understood and that, a part of empathy, was compassion which was how you felt!

That week, Tara's week - the Mother of Compassion, I pondered on the concept of *Great Compassion* in the meditation! Then I noticed the word compassion throughout the Rosh Hashanah material. Next, at the bookstore, I was drawn to the Dalai Lama's new book. Looking up *empathy* in the index, it referred me to *compassion*. Reading about compassion, he said that *empathy is a part of compassion!* With all these signs, why was I resisting *compassion* be used as my thesis topic?

I resisted writing about compassion because:

- * It was not as mental an activity as empathy, so empathy would be a meatier intellectual topic to explore.
- * I was afraid of getting into *doing good works* and not truly showing people that they were understood.
- * Self-empathy seemed to transform; self-compassion just *makes it nice!*
- * Is compassion a band-aid that does not lead to transformation?
- * Empathy appeared to assist the transformational process, where compassion sometimes only makes the person feel better in the moment
- * Empathy represents a part of me that is hard core, real and connected.
- * Compassion represents a part of me that is sappy, forgiving, heartfelt, tender, and has no balls. (My Heuristic Journal: September 16, 2005)

Tossing this around, I sensed I no longer wanted to be the *benevolent monarch* persona I had developed during my study of empathy. Empathy as a mental modality did not put being compassion in the forefront, so it was not touching my heart and often left me feeling detached. Practicing empathy without first being compassionate had become exhausting for me. Perhaps empathy is a mental, intuitive gift best utilized within a heartfelt, spiritually connected, sphere of compassion?

Wanting to now more fully honor Tara who brought me the concept of *great compassion*, I needed to seriously consider switching from self-empathy to self-compassion. If empathy was within compassion my thesis title had to reflect this. Self-compassion was that aspect of compassion that I personally needed to learn about and develop within myself so that I could better benefit children and other educators.

Perhaps I had... not known how to be compassionate while being real like I can be when I am being *empathetic* ... [it's] time for me to move to the next level with both the concept of *compassion* and my spiritual journey. I already am beginning to feel this connection bring the love and increased appreciation for all of life that feels so good. (September 17, 2005)

From Burnout to Heuristic Research

...some are...experiencing burnout and compassion fatigue, and they need the in-breath of personal reflection. (p. 2)

Straub Rhythm of Compassion 2000

All of the precious theses, programs and workshops I created and delivered aimed at teaching compassion, empathy, caring and even teaching how to be compassionate to yourself through self-awareness exercises. They were fairly effective for children and parents. However, since I had applied all of these only minimally to myself, I was unaware of my own unmet need to understand how to and truly *be* self-compassionate.

My longing to share my heart and soul with my students and their parents had fueled my enthusiasm for creating curricula, programs, workshops and a school. However, my unconscious harmful triggered programming made me compulsively (non-self-compassionately) utilize more and more of my fire until it was depleted. My educator pain energy (my professional and personal agendas, making mistakes, discipline, being overly responsible and workaholic) prohibited me from reaching my full educator potential, destroyed my ability to educate and kept me from attaining my true goals. The enjoyment of true heart and soul connections abated and created *dis-ease*.

I reluctantly became my authoritarian workaholic mother of old, speeding up my energy system and forcing my latent masculine aspects to take over; I was not listening to my body and had disrespected my entrance into menopause; I ignored my need to make a

spiritual and professional transition; I continually bent over backwards to give everything I could to each parent and child; I didn't take a necessary sabbatical or leave of absence to re-group, heal and do my needed heuristic research and write. All of the above resulted in my full blown burnout. Had I hurt myself, self-sacrificed, in the name of being compassionate to others and being of service as an educator?

The more I ignored my own needs because of my tunnel-feelings the more my physical, mental, emotional pain and overwhelm. I am no longer able to be the educational and caring icon. ...I "know" how to serve parents and kids, but until I can serve myself first –before, during and after serving others - I won't be able to take the big step of serving the community... I will liberate myself! I've done all kinds of therapy... gone to all kinds of self-help workshops... been a part of many different spiritual groups and did many forms of healing and meditation. Something is still missing! There is a deep, heavy area that needs unraveling. Perhaps my earlier spiritual path was an escape, as well as all of my actions, to escape this moment and fly into *feeling good*. They were all quick fixes – a freedom from and not a freedom to – a masked freedom. To truly liberate yourself, you have to be able to compassionately confront, head on, what you are liberating yourself from. You need to really be able to look at yourself in the mirror and see the truth. (My Heuristic Journal: September 4, 2005)

Closing down the school indefinitely, except for the couple of children I was still tutoring, allowed me to now put my attention on discovering what brought about my burnout, heal myself and do this next thesis topic. Could these needs all be met simultaneously? My exhaustion, pain and discomfort were so overwhelming that I knew I needed help. One of the first steps I took was to call a nurse/saleswoman to purchase gentle equipment intended to help with my healing process. After a minute or so on the phone she advised me not to do her program – *don't to do anything at all but rest!* She had immediately sensed I had blown out my adrenals and that my nervous system was shot. Burnout had put me in crisis and I needed to give myself a transformative initiation.

At the bottom of the abyss comes the voice of salvation. The black moment is the moment when the real message of transformation is going to come. At the darkest moment comes the light. (p. 39)

Campbell *The Power of Myth* 1988

Suffering or discontent is universal, and fully recognizing its existence is the first step on the path of awakening. (p. 18)

Brach *Radical Acceptance* 2003

Burnout began my true heuristic inquiry! Initially, this heuristic writing endeavored to help me understand and deal with why I, *as an educator*, burned out. I was doing this heuristic research for the benefit of other educators. However, through this process my priorities changed. My personal healing became first and my service work second. What bridged the two was learning how to, and being, compassionate to myself.

How else can I truly be present in the classroom and teach through wisdom verses rote teaching and learning. My self-compassion can translate into compassion for the plight of the students and inspiration for self-compassion of the students. (My Heuristic Journal: October 16, 2004)

I have just been able to take an honest look at the primary purpose of my thesis has turned into: healing myself, organizing my daily life... putting my life back together! Through my heuristic research, I *stumbled* upon what has become the expression of the secondary purpose, self-compassion. The tertiary purpose, to be free to sense how to serve compassionately and creatively, emanates from and affects all flows in life: self to self, self to another or others, another to self, others to others. It takes the accomplishment of the primary and secondary purposes to accomplish the tertiary purpose, seen primarily through the writing of the thesis. (November 10, 2007)

To achieve my needed whole self healing required personal reflection as well as a focus on transforming my educator pain. Obviously, none of the methods I previously used for transformation helped me sufficiently since I still burned out. What had and what had not transformed pain energy in the past? I considered my new potential thesis directions, both personal and professional: *A path of transformation through personal responsibility and self-compassion; Spiritual preparation of the teacher: how to purify*

and transform yourself guided by self-compassion. Writing a dissertation in the area of transformational education could be a transformational process in and of itself!

There is a sense of relief with this non-structured way of doing this thesis. I will be writing my thesis as I live my life noting everything connected to the thesis topic, no longer trying to fit things into categories, folders and documents. This is *my* transformation process now. (September 18, 2005)

Knowing I was not yet free to sense how to serve meant I could not be fully compassionate yet. I was not able to sense myself and my needs at the same time that I sensed the needs of the students. If I had been, then I would be able to be connected to the oneness of the group I was a part of. The solution was to practice *being present* so that I could connect to the oneness and then be free to sense how to be of service to all.

When I realized that I was only pretending to be present, creating a false state, I had to look deeper. I couldn't be present because parts of me were separated out. *Connection births wholeness*, I thought. What did that mean? I needed to connect with those personas and through some type of healing, allow those parts to re-integrate.

Using purification, wishing them away, releasing them, erasing them, being stronger than them, and affirming their non-existence were not confronting and respecting these parts' intentions and what they had to offer. Those methods were not producing long-lasting benefits or creating integration. I needed to find a way to create personal wholeness so that I could be my full presence, be in the oneness and serve.

I came to realize that if I could transform these persona's pain energy that somehow that would lead to my being whole. After much experimentation, trials and errors, and delving deep into the unknown, uncharted waters, the possibility that I could be liberated, consciously evolve and transform my pain energy through self-compassion

sounded unlikely, but made me smile from my heart through my eyes as it felt magically true. Self-compassion became the thread that could heal my soul and free me to serve.

The only way that I can ever truly be of service in this world is if I can bring myself to be able to stay in a space of self compassion no matter how much the outside or inside world triggers me. (November 29, 2004)

My fire re-ignited giving me the burning desire to be free of anything that stood in my way of being able to sense how to be of service –effortlessly, creatively and effectively ...pain energy ...needed to be addressed. Initially I desired to get rid of it or purify it. Eventually I realized that transforming it was what worked best – and soon I came to realize that could be done, only be done fully, through self-compassion. (February 23, 2006)

My Practice: Holistic Preparation

The following sections touch on the self-compassionate holistic preparations that I heuristically discovered. They are also the beginning steps of the Practice of Self-Compassion that I came to develop as a result of my heuristic experiences. These holistic acts (a vow plus physical, spiritual, and body-mind connections), if done wholeheartedly and mindfully, could truly birth wholeness. These preparatory steps were necessary for me to *be my presence* which would then lead me to achieve my purpose: *to be free to sense how to serve compassionately*.

Vow

Being self-compassionate required a vow to help prepare me to transform my pain. My introduction to this concept was the Bodhisattva vow in the White Tara meditation which states, “Such a vow generates the force necessary...” Though my vow process morphed over the years, it began with that Tibetan meditation’s vow “to liberate all beings.” The trouble I with my version of this Bodhisattva vow was that I vowed to

liberate myself by liberating all beings. A vow needed to be independent of that pressure!

So, during my empathy work I modified it to become a vow of transformation. That

element has remained throughout my self-compassion heuristic inquiry.

As I do the Tara meditation I am brought to the bodhisattva vow to enter into whatever activities are necessary to bring self and others into that state... becoming enlightened and helping others to be enlightened as well. I believe it takes some kind of a vow like that in order to really want to truly be on the path of empathizing. (Heuristic Journal: July 20, 2004)

My commitment to self-transformation is not strong enough to overcome my still ever-persisting and in-control sub-optimal driving forces in my life. Perhaps it needs to have the quality of a vow. It needs to be... more powerful than it has ever been. A vow to heal myself that has the power that it takes for someone who is dying to heal themselves... The vow of transformation of myself for me and the world! It is *Tikkun Olam* – to heal the world. With this vow in place I can begin to trust that any way that I do this thesis will be right until I see that it is not. (September 15, 2004)

Liberation is an ideal; transformation is a commitment. So transformation comes first. Personal responsibility through vowing to transform myself! Liberation is almost a reward for my work. (October 29, 2004)

Initially the vow began my Daily Spiritual Routine. I would make a spiritual connection (which I will later explain in depth) and then re-commit to a spiritual vow.

The necessity of a good vow became paramount in my self-compassionate healing.

The vow may only be able to truly take place on 'holy ground' – for it is a spiritual action. Taking refuge in a sacred place, with/in a sacred being, I believe it must begin with the VOW. (September 16, 2004)

A vow of transformation makes this a 'life or death' vow. It is the only thing worthwhile at this point in my life - and it is for the good of all mankind. The bodhisattva vow seems to be necessary. A teacher has the responsibility since she is a main influence on a child. (October 16, 2004)

Vow change: I vow to purify the parts of myself that stand in the way of my being present, through self-compassionate and self-responsible means, thereby liberating my true Self for the benefit of everyone and everything in the universe. (November 7, 2004)

After a year of experimentation with the vow, along with many other aspects of self-compassion I was sorting through and experiencing, its evolution was complete. It no more reflected my sense of service to anyone outside of my personal self. This became the vow that I utilized prior to any other self-compassion processes or practices.

My intention is to consciously evolve personally for my own sake and for the sake of humanity's evolution. Conscious evolution will liberate me to be free to sense how to serve others' conscious evolution as well - a high form of service that appeals to my personality. (October 16, 2005)

1. I will liberate myself: This sets me on my path.
2. Consciously evolving: This... reminds me that the way I am choosing to liberate myself is by taking the personal responsibility of co-creating my own evolution consciously.
3. Transforming pain energy: The evolution that I am consciously making is the transformation of any pain energy I am feeling.
4. Being self-compassion: ...Reminding me that self-compassion can actually transform this pain energy brings some immediate relief and sets me on my way. (October 24, 2005)

Physical Connection

Stay in the season of Winterness as long as need be,
For everything you feel is appropriate.

Berkus To Heal Again 1984

How could self-compassion transform my pain energy and liberate me? Was there another preparation to do which could also give me some immediate first-aid? Not yet having sufficient energy to take on the task of transforming pain energy, I wondered: What *was* I capable of doing? Nothing but *just being*! This was the perfect next step.

I noticed myself saying this unconscious mantra: "I have to do this; I have to do that; I have to do this; I have to do that; ...do this; do that; do this; do that." Then I knew! BE is the aspect I have to start this thesis with. Everything else will be a doingness, even if the phrase has 'be' in it, i.e. – be present. I will still 'do' be present. (July 19, 2004)

First I thought that meant *being present*, which became a task. Then during the empathy thesis I saw it as *just be*. But as self-compassion was being developed, I experienced it as *just being*. This is just what the doctor ordered: being in my body, collapsing like a ragdoll, contentedly feeling myself *as* my body.

Just being allows my energy to relax and sink downwards towards and into the earth. (My Heuristic Journal: April 11, 2005)

When *just being* didn't work because my mind was stealing all of my attention, I then began training myself in the self-compassionate action of *stopping*: stopping my compulsions, stopping my mind so that I could just be in my body. This was not only a great preparation for transformation; it was also very useful when getting triggered in life.

Stop the automatic emotional turmoil circuit that sparks when I am attacked verbally or when I surrender to someone! Stopping allows me to withdraw from the heart's pain and torture that caused my mind to trigger the pain. (March 2, 2005)

I changed it from *stop* to *stopping* to make it less like a non-compassionate order, a way to police myself. Learning to apply this lesson was big for me as not stopping was largely responsible for my burnout. I honored its importance, even acknowledging the necessity for a day of rest, even hours of rest, as vital. I saw it needed to follow the vow.

Stopping is doing nothing, as much as possible, for a definite period of time -- whether a moment or a month -- for the purpose of waking up and remembering who you are.

Kuntz *An Introduction to Stopping* <http://www.stopping.com/events.htm>

Stopping brings great relief. It is definitely the first step of doing the practice once the vow is spoken or felt. Once I stop the connection to the pain energy there is an immediate sense of freedom... I feel lighter. The mass has moved out of my space and I feel more spacious... because... I have more space to 'just be'. (November 30, 2005)

Stopping and just being became my initial physical connection. It reminded me of a Thay *gatha* I valued but did not fully work as it included a *doing*: focus on the breath. His bell did temporarily stop my thinking, but it was not something I wanted to rely on.

Breathing in I am aware of my body
Breathing out I allow my body to relax

The sound of the bell is to remind us to go home to the here and the now...
We stop all our thinking and talking and follow our in breath in order to
come home to ourselves... Say silently, "I listen and this wonderful sound
brings me back to my true home"

Hanh *Taking Refuge in the Island of Ourselves* 2004

Breathing in and out or *following the breath* had always been a distraction, as it could not bring me *back to my true home* and did not then prepare me to transform my pain energy self-compassionately. However it did advocate allotting time and space to be in my body, *be my body* (a Scientology no-no). A focus on nothing but being in my body - that kind of *stopping and just being* physical connection, relaxed my body-mind's agendas and freed me to make a deeper spiritual connection.

Just being relaxes my body enough to allow a spiritual energy connection and to experience where the pain energy exactly is. It releases the extra grip that the pain energy has. (May 27, 2005)

I used to be compassionate from a spiritual space; but I was not connecting with my body. This reduced my sensing. Even though I was spiritually aware, my total awareness wasn't increasing because I was not sensing my body at the same time, not making a physical connection. That has been a problem with compassion and spirituality. (April 8, 2008)

We need time and space to be alone, to find ourselves in solitude, before we can give ourselves to one another in true togetherness. (p.24)

Steindle Rast *The Listening Heart* 1988

Spiritual Connection

The next area of preparation that I needed was spiritual. These years of heuristic spiritual exploration continued to broaden my personal spiritual horizons on my quest for self-compassionate healing. I now traveled on a road that included many religious, mystical and occult practices of the western and indigenous worlds, and stayed present to my unique spiritual experience and noted what brought me the deepest satisfaction.

Over time this study led me to develop Daily Spiritual Routines (which often included ritualistic candle-lighting and chanting) and a number of spiritual connection practices. Whenever I was seeking spiritual connection I could use these individually or interdependently as needed. I am grateful and happy to have found a variety of possible spiritual connections techniques to effectively assist me in self-compassionately exploring my pain energy and leading me to accomplish my intention: *to be my presence*.

Although this portion of my study has brought about prolific heuristic writings, I do not feel inclined to elaborate upon my particular spiritual preparation. Everyone's spiritual path is unique, so writing much about what has worked for me seems inappropriate. However, I would like to share and re-experience a bit of my heuristic self-compassionate spiritual journey.

Connecting with White Tara and doing aspects of the White Tara meditation began my spiritual heuristic self-compassion experience. She has represented my heartfelt compassionate experience, my divine feminine connection and my dearly departed daughter's essence, all of which remains available as spiritual support. She will always hold my core spiritual connection to self-compassion.

I could be doing this thesis for Tara... for she personifies compassion as the "mother of compassion". Taking her in through the White Tara

meditation increased this realization... Doing this thesis in her name could give me more power – the extra spiritual power I may need to stay on track and do this fully. The heart is the source of emotion in our bodies and is the seat of negative emotions. Tara is the “wisdom of the heart”. (Heuristic Journal: September 13, 2004)

I realized that I first had to connect with my ‘higher power’. When I did so and attempted to understand what I was doing, I saw different spiritual beingnesses around and available, Tara included. They empowered me to be my higher power as they and I were part of the same spiritual oneness... White Tara, in the thanka on my ‘refuge shrine’ seemed to be smiling rather than aloof, as she has recently seemed to me. ‘Trust’ and ‘faith’ in myself, my work, my life, was now available again. (September 18, 2004)

I glimpse White Tara's face... I feel her presence in my heart and I become her comforting me... through her presence of her wisdom of the heart... a knowing compassionate smile within. The tension relaxes, my shoulders drop. I have made the spiritual connection. (October 26 2004)

I have created and used *My Sacred Sangha* (see Appendix) as a wonderful means of spiritual connection. My dearest dearly departed ones provide spiritual refuge for me. They act as a sacred archetypal family whose energies activate each of my chakras.

Another spiritually connecting practice I developed began with an invitation to divine archetypes. I chose a masculine and a feminine connection who embraced compassionate qualities and had elemental vibrations of, respectively, air and earth. Both archetypes are required for transformation. I focused on inhaling Father Sky’s energy up through my feet and each chakra while I chant *Ah*; I exhaled Mother Earth energy drawing me down to her depths with an *Om*.

The *yin/yang* movement of these divine archetypes occurred simultaneously and balanced my *water/fire* energies. Their eventual merging with one another I termed: *the wedding within*. This spiritual support initiated a conscious spiritual rebirth. The divine archetypes and my *magical self* formed a spiritual triad which then merged with White Tara in my heart; I began *being self-compassion* as I found that when the *magical self*

operates from the heart, self-compassion is born. My divine parents were then available for the transformation of pain energy through my *process of self-compassion*. I was amazed to later read about other similar spiritual connection practices.

The duality of the God and the Goddess is a monotheistic approach that recognizes the inherent oneness in nature resulting from a natural twosome – a whole has two halves, yet remains a whole, and the whole maybe divided into numerous segments (aspects), yet remains a whole.” (p. 45)
Moura *Origins of Modern Witchcraft* 2000

The Shekinah (Divine) Presence, the feminine aspects of the Godhead, exists in all creative orderings of all dimensions. ... This is the “Age of the Holy Spirit” – where the Bride and the Creator become one, creating a new peoplehood of trinitized powers who are the “bearers” of a higher Christed seed unfolding life anew by virtue of this greater union that is without dualistic separation. (p. vi)
Hurtak *The Book of Knowledge: The Keys of Enoch* 1977

Body-Mind Connection

On the road to wholeness, I was now ready to make a body-mind connection and inquire if there was any pain energy triggered within me that prevented me from *being my presence* and therefore needing transformation. Gradually, I learned various ways to contact areas which could benefit from my compassion. First *being self-compassion*, I then made a second physical connection: body-mind awareness through inquiry.

Ask my body, who needs compassion? (Heuristic Journal: June 4, 2005)

The area needing self-compassion may change and move as awareness enters the area. Relief in one area brings up another connected area that needs attention. (June 24, 2005)

When I feel pain or discomfort, I move into it and sense the feeling, emotion or thought connected with it. This connects me to the beingness of the organ or persona associated with the pain. (September 24, 2005)

A scan can be done of the body-mind and/or I can recall the part I had to be put on hold during the earlier stopping step. Feel into... which part has

the most pain energy or which part has the most available pain energy to be transformed. (December 18, 2005)

There are a few reasons for an inquiry:

- * I am doing my daily practice that this is a part of
- * Some physical, mental or emotional condition or pain energy initiated
- * I am handling pain energy noted in the “areas that need compassion” doc (October 3, 2005)

“What persona seems to be countering me?”

“What persona may be causing my illness?” (December 22, 2005)

The act of looking is very important because just by looking you transform everything. Look in order to see your suffering.

Hanh Ager: *Wisdom for Cooling the Flames* 2001

The Process of Self-Compassion

My pain energy can now be transformed by *being self-compassion* and applying my Process of Self-Compassion to what arose during the inquiry. Having found a persona or body part that needs compassion, these are the process steps I applied to either or both to help transform their pain energy: *just being with, awareness of (with empathy), appreciating* and *caring for*. Finding these loving steps of this process heuristically was wonderful; experiencing a transformation of the pain energy on any of these steps was incredible; but what is truly amazing for me, is that over the years they have never had to be altered and remain a viable transformational process to this day. Here are some of my heuristic reflections as well as the words of others, relating to each step of this process.

Just being with:

Sense into the fullness of the area of the pain! Allow myself to *just be with* the area of pain extending to... the scope of the pain; be with that and the persona connected with it. (October 12, 2005)

Just being with it - as it is - before inviting in the possibility of a change. (March 17, 2006)

Just being with and connecting is what makes healing; it is the same way as Scn looked at *as-iness*. As-ising makes the pain energy disappear by being with it exactly as it is... That's the magic. (May 20, 2006)

Just being with means experiencing the comfort of hanging out with a persona or body part... Nothing to do or say, just being comfortable with oneself and sharing the energy present... it requires *being self-compassion* to create the vulnerability necessary to transform pain energy... *Just being with* includes not bringing pain energy to an area that is already triggered with its own pain energy. (January 15, 2007)

Just being with the persona in a deep way is often so intense, that just sustaining that quality of attention compassionately, in and of itself, transforms a great amount of pain energy. (April 4, 2007)

I am *just being with* it letting myself experience the persona expressing how much pain it is in, witnessing a happening. I am being the therapist with Greater Compassion. (May 24, 2007)

Just being with = Conscious self being self-compassion... The personas can then express themselves in a raw fashion (June 26, 2007)

Just being with! Going any further brings me into doing. (July 16, 2007)

When interest becomes fixed, we have attention. (p. 27)

Hubbard *Dianetics and Scientology Technical D1975*

Our attentive presence is unconditional and open – we are willing to be with whatever arises, even if we wish the pain would end or that we could be doing something else. (p. 27/28)

Brach *Radical Acceptance* 2003

When you choose to be present with your body when it is in pain or when it is feeling the tension and contraction caused by the wanting mind, you are accepting your life experience just as it is, in this moment, without clinging... you don't identify and contract into it. (p. 113)

Moffitt *Awakening in the Body* 2007

What allowed the transformation to occur was the healing potency of presence. (p. 149)

Bryson *Don't Be Nice, Be Real* 2004

Awareness of (with empathy):

Listening is a part of Awareness. [It] includes true listening, hearing and understanding. (My Heuristic Journal: June 22, 2005)

Awareness of creates sensations in the part of the body that I am becoming more aware of... I can feel the energy shifting whatever was just stuck in the area. (February 22, 2006)

The *awareness of* step is about spiritually becoming aware of what is happening with the body-mind and also the body-mind becoming aware of itself and the spiritual connection... When I normally *listen* to myself, I am just following my automatic pilot that keeps me busy enough to make me feel that I am being responsible. True listening to me includes feeling my current body sensations. (March 17, 2006)

Awareness of means a part of me that is occluded can be revealed and express its feelings and needs because another part of me is being with it compassionately... for the benefit of the whole of me. (July 16, 2007)

Eventually I learned to translate my judgments into feelings and needs and to give myself empathy... hearing our own feelings and needs (p. 170)
Rosenberg *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Compassion* 2000

When we notice our own suffering, rather than distracting ourselves, we can stay with our awareness of that experience. (p. 53)
Ladner *The Lost Art of Compassion* 2004

By inhabiting my body with awareness, I was discovering the roots of my reactivity. I had been avoiding the unpleasant sensations. (p. 97)
Like every aspect of our evolutionary design, the unpleasant sensations we call pain are an intelligent part of our survival equipment. (p. 104)
Brach *Radical Acceptance* 2003

Discover the deepest positive purposes our parts have for us (P. 14)
Sometimes it takes the part a little while to find its positive purpose (p. 17)
I asked questions to find a *deeper level purpose*. (p. 19)
We uncover increasingly important and wonderful purposes within the very behaviors we dislike most in ourselves. (p. 36)
Andreas *Core Transformation* 1994

Transformation builds on wider awareness and connection. (p. 129)
Awareness is wider and deeper than anyone had guessed. (p. 154)
Ferguson *The Aquarian Conspiracy* 1980

By listening deeply to the message of any given moment I shall be able to tap the very Source of Meaning and to realize the unfolding meaning of my life. ...listen with one's heart, with one's whole being. (p. 10)
 We must learn to... expose ourselves to the message ...understand it ... so it won't just be a reaction but a genuine response... no easy task! (p. 45)
 Brother David Steindl-Rast *A Listening Heart* 1988

Appreciating:

Grasping this persona, I can appreciate its huge energy I have stored within me and its protective ability always at hand. I openly acknowledge the times the use of this energy has aided and protected me. It helps me to relax in life ...it brought me a sense of security, respect, and courage. I thank it for that. It allowed me to stand tall and face my aggressors. It tries to protect me in situations where I feel threatened. Thank-you! ...It appreciates my respect; we commune. (Heuristic Journal: August 5, 2007)

Give it gratitude -appreciation - for all of the work it has been doing - for being there for me. It's trying to get me to get things done. It's on that task. When it gets the appreciation it can care for the whole. (May 27, 2005)

My *appreciation of* step came from Andreas. [However, she] thanks the part before becoming aware of what she is specifically thankful for. It is a premature acknowledgement to me. I don't express appreciation until I become aware of the positive intention of the behavior. Then the appreciation is not only genuine, it is transforming. ...Although we apply it differently, her understanding of the intention of appreciation was so satisfying when I applied it. I respect its importance. (July 16, 2007)

Some part of us had to try to achieve some useful purpose. (p. 11)
 ...appreciate them for the positive outcomes they want for us....this is the first step in befriending that part of myself. (p. 15)
 ...thank that part of you for responding. If you think the purpose...is positive, thank the part for having that goal or intention for you. (p. 17)
 Andreas *Core Transformation* 1994

Express appreciation as a way to celebrate and not to manipulate. (p. 182)
 ...components of appreciation
 1. The actions that have contributed to our well-being.
 2. The particular needs of ours that have been fulfilled... (p. 183)
 Rosenberg *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Compassion* 2000

Acknowledgement: something said or done to inform another that his statement or action has been noted, understood and received... [it] brings about a condition not only of communication but of reality (p. 5)
 Hubbard *Dianetics and Scientology technical dictionary* 1975

Is not gratitude a passage from suspicion to trust, from proud isolation to a humble give and take, from enslavement to false independence to self-acceptance in that dependence which liberates? (p. 87)

Brother David Steindl-Rast *A Listening Heart* 1988

Caring for:

You Don't Have to Act Crazy Anymore

You don't have to act crazy anymore
We all know you were good at that.

Now retire, my dear,
From all that hard work you do
Of bringing pain to your sweet eyes and heart

Ladinsky *Renderings of Hafiz* p. 5

The personas don't have a lot of consciousness; they are mainly acting out a survival program that has appeared to work in the past. Personas were used to act as our defender when consciousness was not present. They do a good job, though it is not what they do best. They do better when aligned with the larger consciousness. This occurs during the *caring for* step of the process. (My Heuristic Journal: September 22, 2007)

Having my compassion flowing through it, this new interbeing brings to light that although this energy may actually be needed at some time for certain situations, a more optimal option may be possible as we experience the realization of the high price I and others pay when this program is implemented. (June 26, 2007)

Sufficient empathy and acknowledgement prepares the *caring for* step. They allow for the persona to now hear what the possible negative, or non-holistic, results have been from the program it has been using to deal with pain energy. Together we now make necessary changes. (July 16, 2007)

Because most of the pain energy has been transformed during the earlier process steps, *caring for*...is the first place where creative expression becomes possible to create wholeness ...potential creative energy emanates from the transformed pain energy. It allows the program to evolve and caring for the whole to emerge... Caring is for that persona, consciousness, and the whole self. It's interdependent. (September 13, 2007)

Caring for finds how this persona can help care for the whole more effectively and how the magical self can newly participate in ways it is now aware of ... the needs of the parts of the whole. (December 5, 2007)

In addition to our self-awareness, we have imagination – the ability to create in our minds beyond our present reality ...and we have independent will – the ability to act based on our self-awareness, free of all other influences ...because of our unique human endowments, we can write new programs for ourselves totally apart from our instincts and training. (p. 70)
 Covey *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* 1989

While cultivating self-compassion through this process various situations arose.

Sometimes I hit blocks and had to utilize both heuristic and theoretical solutions to get

past these difficulties. Here are a few examples:

If the self-compassion does not go deep enough, then utilizing the spiritual triad can enhance the effect. It takes a deep listening inquiry to be aware of what is creating the pain energy and what my body-mind needs in order to help alleviate the pain. (My Heuristic Journal: August 28, 2005)

Pain energy gets transformed by not trying to transform it. Trying to change the energy can actually increase the pain. (October 5, 2005)

Difficulty *just being with* the pain energy may be because the area that is creating the pain is not where the pain is showing up; it could be referred pain and not originating in that area... If you can connect to why the program was installed, the persona's need, or what it does not want that the pain is in reaction to, then it is more likely to be able to be re-programmable as you are dealing with the actual cause. (October 3, 2005)

When choosing between personas to be compassionate with during the inquiry step, choose the one that is most available to be worked with. Hubbard would go for the one with the largest read on the E-meter which meant that the charge it released was an indicator of the potential charge that was available to be released. That means to me that I choose the persona that has pain energy that immediately begins to release when I address it... I will note which connection brings about the most pain energy release. Andreas does something similar. (January 16, 2006)

Programs are not the only items that are addressed. Now my body hurts from the toxicity of the car repair shop. My lungs are poisoned and damaged. Instead of pushing on and ignoring it, I can transform the pain energy through the process of self-compassion. (October 28, 2005)

Connect with the body-mind. After the inquiry, if a process is necessary then do it. Otherwise, go directly to the integration into life section. (December 19, 2005)

In the process, I am transforming the pain energy by being self-compassionate to get to my presence. If I can feel my connected presence then I can continue with my integration into life. (June 2, 2005)

Having connected to all parts of me that were not integrated and having applied my Process of Self-Compassion to those parts, I can feel whole. This, then, is the completion of *connection births wholeness*. This personal integration is akin to what Maslow (1968) has called self-actualization in *Toward a Psychology of Being*:

It looks as though there were a single ultimate value for mankind, a far goal toward which all men strive. This is called variously, self-actualization, self-realization, integration, psychological health...but they all agree that this amounts to realizing the potentialities of the person... becoming fully human, everything that the person can become. (p. 153)

The integration of my parts need to occur before I can be in the here and the now. It is a giving birth to wholeness after the long separation. Yes, it is the birthing of the new organization of self. (August 5, 2005)

Integration into Life

I am then ready for *Integration into Life*, the last section in my Practice of Self Compassion. It has three steps: *being my presence*, *tasting the Oneness* and *being free to sense how to serve compassionately and creatively*. Through *integration into life* I can ready to apply the Process of Compassion with others - educator *compassion in action*.

The *integration into life* portion of my practice is where self-compassion has the opportunity to become *Greater Compassion* – that I define as simultaneously being self-compassionate while being free to sense how to best be compassionate to others as well as oneself. This is my purpose for cultivating self-compassion. As a freer compassionate educator, I can move towards a greater embodiment of Greater Compassion.

Being my presence:

Being my presence does not just mean being my soul but the presence of the soul and the body-mind integrated and harmonious. I am like a new born infant about to interact in this world in a new way. I am unable to walk at first; I simply crawl and view the world with interest and apprehensive respect. There are unwritten policies and structures yet un-built. Slow, easy and mindful is my new *modes operandi* so I don't slip back into old patterns. Continued self-compassion can bring the wisdom of how not to sacrifice to serve others. (My Heuristic Journal: August 3, 2005)

Just being myself, feeling my energy and letting it move or just be. I am free to let the energy move. Electrons are always moving. That is what just being present means. Without anything being suppressed and my not having to do anything – just being with my energy. It is also being as the energy – it is all a part of me. (September 23, 2005)

One large difference between *just being* and *being my presence* is when I am being my presence I am conscious of the here and the now; I am being present somewhere and experiencing all of me. Just being is consciously deciding to just be in, and sense, my body. (November 7, 2007)

Being my presence then is not the presence of mere core essence spiritual presence, but is also my human presence, acknowledging and accepting the fullness of all of me. (July 19, 2007)

Presence is about “being here now,” being accessible, ready, available. Being present means that we are awake, aware, alert. (p. 9)

Nelson *From the Heart Through the Hands* 2001

To live in full embodiment of our humanness, in passionate presence (p. 63)
Ingram *Passionate Presence* 2003

When you have spent much of your life wanting to be other than where you are, or wanting conditions to be somehow different from what they are, it comes as a relief to know the pleasure of home, both in yourself and in the world... the feeling of being at home in our own skin. (p. 174/5)

Housden *Seven Sins for a Life Worth Living* 2005

Tasting the Oneness:

I am part of all I see
And all I see is part of me.
I am my hands. I am my feet.
I am the puppy across the street.
I am the moon. I am the stars.

I'm even found in candy bars.
 I used to think that I was small
 A little body, that was all!
 But then one day I asked the Sun,
 "Who are you?"
 He beamed, "We are One!"

Curtis *All I see is part of me* 1994

Through self-compassion I saw that we are the integration of all of our parts, our environment and the universe. I began to experience that as human beings we are our spiritual consciousness, our mind and our body intelligence. Once I could *be my presence*, I expanded into the recognition of my universal interconnectedness. This seemed to be necessary before perceiving the interconnectedness in a classroom.

Tasting the Oneness means I let the experience of *being my presence* extend beyond the boundaries of the personal self. I am not claiming to be in the Oneness. I am giving myself permission to contemplate and feel the oneness.

This concept is so vast, the truth of it so mysterious, that it would be presumptuous for me to say that I was able to but taste its wonder. I could not say, with all honesty, that I could do more than sense the Oneness. And even that is a challenge!

We may listen longingly to the message that wholeness and goodness have always been our essence, yet still feel like outsiders, uninvited guests to the feast of life. (p. 10)

Brach *Radical Acceptance* 2003

I needed to be able to not only be my presence, but taste the oneness in order to be able to serve. The evolution is using consciousness of the Oneness to bind my body-mind survival instincts with others' survival instincts of their body-minds. (My Heuristic Journal: September. 27, 2007)

It's a leap of faith to go from *being my presence* to *tasting the oneness*; there's a leap from *tasting the oneness* to *being the oneness*. I want to be free to sense how to serve. If I am only going to be serving myself, *being my presence* is enough; if I want to serve someone or something outside of myself in addition to myself, then I need to be able to taste the aspect of the oneness with whom I am going to be of service. (October 2, 2007)

The point is to be in the real world and do what is best in the real world... The practice of self-compassion is not specifically a spiritual preparation; it gives you a chance to be your full self. Being my presence and tasting the oneness are not only spiritual activities. They integrate us into life. The oneness is not necessarily spiritual – it is the fullness of everything: spiritual, physical, etc. the oneness is what is real. (October 14, 2007)

All True Meeting is Living: ...We speak of being at one with the world. We call it Shalom, being in harmony with the world, at-one-ment. (p. I-12)
Buber in Levy *A Mahzor for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kipper* 1994

It is from the center of ourselves - a center steeped in humility and awe as we recognize and reverence the wonders of the universe, the patterns of nature and the gift of life. (p. 36)
Wolf *Nurturing the Spirit: In Non-sectarian Classrooms* 1996

To measure one's step [to] a universal rhythm and thus to bring one's life into harmony with a universal order – this is *contemplation*... (p. 17)
...to attune ourselves to that harmony to which the whole universe dances
...to attune ourselves to the dynamic order of love (p.18)
Brother David Steindl-Rast *A Listening Heart* 1988

The true Christ is in every being. ...the Buddha is in everyone... Only the Oneness within can perceive the Oneness... If you think everybody is separate, you will send out this signal, no matter what you do. (p. 124)
Adyashanti *Emptiness Dancing* 2004

As we tune into the deeper life rhythms, we no longer depend on philosophy to tell us that we are interdependent. We viscerally experience ourselves as inseparable from our surroundings (p. 73)
Ingram *Passionate Presence* 2003

Free to sense how to serve compassionately and creatively:

The free man is he who wills without arbitrary self-will...He believes in destiny, and believes that it stands in need of him. It does not keep him in leading strings, it awaits him, he must go to it, yet does not know where it is to be found. But he knows that he must go out with his whole being. The matter will not turn out according to his decision; but what is to come will come only when he decides on what he is able to will... then he intervenes no more, but at the same time he does not let things merely happen. He listens to what is emerging from himself, to the course of being in the world; not in order to be supported by it, but in order to bring

it to reality as it desires, in its need of him, to be brought with human spirit and deed. (p. 59)

Martin Buber *I and Thou* 1958

Each of the above self-compassionate actions led me toward my ideal, the attainment my core purpose - to be of the highest service. Being free of the impingement of pain energy and feeling my relationship with the Oneness, I can now be free to sense: observe, listen, hear, understand, intuit (et al.) my immediate environment and all that is a part of it. Although I may be free to sense, I still need to re-make the *choice to sense* for me to be of interdependent service.

I begin to move from the whole me in touch with universal energy into the greater Self. I want to keep myself aware enough to stay free so that I can choose wisely how to be and do compassionately and creatively for the highest good, for myself and others; if need be I can always remember to give myself compassion if I once again become triggered in the next moment. With a heartfelt compassion I could then sense what would be of the greatest service to the Oneness, to those around me, while always also being of service to myself, Greater Compassion.

I needed to take the opportunity to experience the world in which I was a part and be compassionate while not compromising my personal self. To care for the world around me requires that I observe what it needs. Then, since I have learned how to successfully give myself compassion I can offer the same quality of compassion to others.

The freedom to sense how to serve - serve this moment - does not come from dissolving my personas or leaving the *bad* ones out of the equation. They are all necessary. When all parts are connected and can interact respectfully, without rejecting

any other part inside or outside of me, the magic of surprise happens. I then can sense how to serve all of myself and everything that my actions or inaction touches.

Compassionately and creatively, theoretically and hopefully practically, each and any doing or non-doing activity I perform remains in harmony with everything and everyone – harming no one and benefitting the most aspects of the universal Oneness as possible.

By service here I mean a serving of anything involved in the moment - a serving of the teacher and the student and the educational environment. It is an extension of the interdependence acquired on the connection births wholeness step. (My Heuristic Journal: June 19, 2007)

It begins with taking in my immediate environment and expands to include... everything I am affecting and that is affecting me... in order to be able to be sense how to serve whatever I will then engage in. I can sense if I can then taste what I am of service to as part of my oneness. Simultaneously, I am sensing my physical, spiritual and body-mind connection. This requires an increase of the quantity and quality of my sensing ability in any given moment. (October 20, 2007)

Free to sense how to serve refers to being of service to life in this moment. It's not only being free of pain energy, but also being free to be joyful. I'm free of pain so that I can be joyful, not to be in a neutral place. The pain energy is transformed into life force that can be creative energy and potential creative energy – for instance, to create joy. (April 18, 2008)

When we feel our togetherness there are countless ways to express our care. (p. 241) ...Because we are interconnected, when we awaken love in ourselves and express it, our love changes the world around us. (p. 272)
Brach *Radical Acceptance* 2003

Applying my Practice of Self-Compassion

In seeking to find what would transform... major life issues I... [developed] a process that went deep enough... to be effective with everything from the seemingly trivial to our biggest life issues. (p. x)
Andreas *Core Transformation* 1994

Being in burnout, it was vital to find some practice that would lead me towards recovery, could help me prevent a burnout reoccurrence and could make me stronger than

ever. Re-exploring earlier practices, I honestly sought to discover which parts of them worked for me, and which did not, so I could create a truly viable practice. I had to abandon every healing practice; even those I had once *believed* were my saviors. Putting myself into Tolle's *being present* state caused me to bypass and not honor *my now moment*. Buddhist mindfulness breathing practices interfered with *just being*. Jewish and New Age efforts at purification were not self-compassionate.

It was time to stop my theoretical research. My answers had to be practically accurate and come strictly from personal experience. I heuristically worked and re-worked every line until I created my own workable, solid practice.

The practice sentences answer *how* and *why* questions.

For instance: ...the vow answers *how* questions:

"I will liberate myself" "How?" "...by consciously evolving." "How?" "...by transforming pain energy." "How?" "...by being self-compassion"

Connection births wholeness answers *why* questions:

"Why do I want wholeness?" "Because I want to be able to be my presence" "Why do I want to be my presence?" "Because I want to taste the Oneness" "Why do I want to be in my presence while tasting the oneness?" "Because I want to be free to sense how to serve compassionately" ...for educators: "Because I want to be compassionate to my students and I want them to be able to have that compassion in the classroom. (My Heuristic Journal: January 29, 2005)

Over the years I developed many versions of the Practice of Self-Compassion (see *All Practice Versions* document in *Appendix*) each for a different intention: Simple Practice, Basic Practice, Mindfulness Set-Up Practice, Educator Preparatory Practice, Transformation Practice, and the Independent Process. Noting difficulties I had in acting compulsively and prioritizing my daily activities, I even made a Life Care Acts Procedure which served as a preliminary action for major compassionate activity. All of these could compassionately assist me in preventing, as well as healing the causes of, burnout.

My practice teaches me that being me is being alive. The mindfulness set-up brings me back to 'being self-compassion' so that I am free to choose my life actions and perform them with care, meaning and joy. The basic practice helps me to be my presence and return to me core connection with the Oneness. It could prevent new acute and chronic educator pain energy. (November 15, 2007)

The Independent Process of Self-Compassion is not intended to prepare me to serve others, for conscious evolution, for transforming pain energy, or for birthing wholeness - although it may inadvertently accomplish these personal and educator goals. If it has any goal at all, it is that of being with me in the name of self-love and self-service. Rather than transforming pain energy, it cultivates self-pleasure. (October 14, 2007)

Do the Basic Practice as a set-up for Life Care Acts. When I notice I am being run by my... programming, this is a wonderful time to do the Mindfulness Practice as it brings me back to being mindful of my vow, my body and my spiritual connection. (November 18, 2007)

To deal with my educator pain energy during this study I created educator pain energy narratives, inspecting what triggered me in the classroom and the times I was incapable of being compassionate. Within these healing narratives I noted educator pain energy areas and educator pain energy personas, both of which I entered into their respective lists. These items could then be addressed via my practices of self-compassion.

Though I had the practices, I sometimes had a problem getting them practiced and found myself using them sporadically. I was most able to maintain a daily practice when pressing pain energy needed transformation. Putting these practices to different tunes I was familiar with, turned them into mantra chants which brought me into a more meditative state and better helped me to remember them. But maintaining a daily practice has stayed difficult for me, even though my life seemed to depend on it. Unfortunately, insufficient practice had stood in the way of my dissertation writing, book writing and workshop presentations, so I was committed to handling this.

When this becomes a real practice, I will be continually giving myself compassion and not requiring it from another. I will be free to do my process with them: just be with them, be aware of them, appreciate them, and care for them. That is being of service to them. (September 24, 2005)

Having a set-time allotted to cultivate my physical and spiritual connections is a way I can be more compassionate to myself. It has the potential to both strengthen and deepen all of the versions of my practice since these steps are integral parts of them. (November 24, 2007)

I need to see what is standing in the way of my not practicing self-compassion and be compassionate to myself for not doing the practice. There must be a persona countering that happening. I have to address it and give it the necessary compassion it deserves. I will have to strengthen my vow in order to do that. Practice, practice, practice! (October 3, 2005)

I found many self-compassion tools that helped me with my practice. Some of these are: prayer, pendulum dousing to increase connection with my innate body intelligence taught to me by Dr. Anderson, Levine's (1987) sweeping the body meditation, Barrett's (2006) unwinding technique, Huang's (1989) dance of the five elements, Chia's (1986) circulation breathing, and the biofeedback programs my son Ryan created for his SomaticVision company.

SomaticVision's biofeedback programs bring peace as they work more with the nervous system energy, the brain, the mind. When my mind is not cluttered or distracted peace can occur... The medulla oblongata is at the brain site. When the mind is relaxed, I see the changes in measurements of skin conductance levels. It activates through the heart. When the heart is relaxed, I see the changes in measurements of heart-rate. (June 7, 2005)

The Magic of Self-Compassion: A Transformational Practice for Educators

In March 2008, I was inspired to write a new book for educators as a new *work of excellence*. I wrote 100 pages of a draft which elaborated upon the importance of self-compassionate subjects. The chapter titles included: self-awareness, burnout, whole self preparation, a vow, a practice, connection births wholeness, Transformational Education,

integration into their personal and professional life, transformational education and stopping (a section of this incomplete draft is in the *Appendix*).

The primary intent of this book is to introduce educators to the concept of self-compassion and how self-compassion can be used to increase joy and reduce stress in their personal and professional lives. The secondary intent is to offer a variety of practice tools for the purpose of cultivating self-compassion. (Intro Draft of book)

Although Irv, from IUPS, discouraged me from continuing to write this at the time as he did not deem it theoretically appropriate for a PhD degree, organizing this material and writing an incomplete draft helped me to better clarify my understanding of self-compassion and how I could utilize all I had discovered as tools for educators. And, I did appreciate Irv inspiring me to write this book once I completed the dissertation. Perhaps it could be a mini-series!

Self-Compassion: Preparing Your Whole Self for True Success

The creation of this last book possibility included interviewing educators on the subject of self-compassion so that I could become better aware of the views and needs of the public I was addressing. This led me to go to a Montessori teacher training class at the training center I had attended. The teacher, who was the school's director, when hearing the subject I was writing on encouraged me to write a proposal to present a workshop on self-compassion for educators at the next major Montessori convention.

Hoping to bring Patty aboard again, our proposal write-up (which was based on my recent book draft) was eventually accepted. Despite her recent brain difficulties which precluded her from teaching, I wanted my Montessori mentor with me both to honor her by offering her an opportunity to be in the Montessori community she loved

and because her compassionate presence alone would be a major asset for this event. I created a workshop outline that would compassionately not necessitate Patty having to perform any activities she would be unable to do in the moment or even attend the workshop at all. Her recent interest in art inspired me to include creative projects.

As I was in the midst of writing this current dissertation, I spoke on the educator problems study, including the internal and external sources of educator stress with a focus on educators' ill-preparedness and educator burnout. I shared ideas and activities relating to how through self-compassionate preparation we may be able to reduce stress, prevent burn out and increase joy. Cultivating self-compassion spoke to whole self honoring, awareness and preparation, through making a vow, holistic connection, inquiry and mindfulness, touching on transforming pain through my process of self-compassion.

I dedicated myself to a daily practice in preparation of this workshop. Though there was insufficient time to accomplish everything I set out to do, I was pleased to have this be my first workshop on compassion for educators that was successful. Visions of how I could now utilize this format for teacher retreats, teacher trainings and parenting classes brought this study to a practical level that I was enthusiastic about manifesting.

Writing this Final Dissertation

The evolution of this study ends with the writing of this final *work of excellence* and dissertation. As it was very difficult to get started again after I had to put down the last book effort, my mentor Dennis helped me to figure out how to present an acceptable study and sweated out each submission with me. I was shocked by the amount of difficulty I had with theoretical research writing until I recognized that this style of

thinking was laborious because it rubbed against my natural mental grain (my brain actually hurt). With the use of my practice, and the encouragement of my partner Stephen and my mentor, I successfully completed IUPS's requirements.

Only by applying this myself could I see how to apply the practice to myself as an educator and then how this could be utilized by other educators. (My Heuristic Journal: October 3, 2005)

Deciding to write on the viability of compassionate educators, I was amazed to discover (through my theoretical research) educator ill-preparedness as the core problem underlying educator burnout. This then geared me towards investigating compassionate educator holistic preparation. If I was going to research effectively healing educator pain energy through compassionate self-awareness, it had to begin with me. After writing those theoretical chapters I was then propelled to walk my talk via the experiential writing of this voluminous narrative journey.

My earlier theses and workshops focused on compassion and empathy for educators. I believe none were arbitrary, but the path that needed to be taken to get to where I have arrived. It was really not that I kept changing the thesis topic, but that this was the evolution of the study. I went deeply into each topic that seemed like the greatest value. Then during my research and investigation I began to realize the deeper question and its core. Dropping each previous *work of excellence* turned out to be positive as it forced me to write this most fulfilling dissertation. (July 30, 2007)

My research into compassionate holistic educator preparation to prevent and deal with educator burnout taught me how vital heuristic and narrative inquiry is. Together with theoretical research they form a workable model for transformational education. Only through the use of this model could I have cultivated enough self-compassion and transformed enough educator pain energy to be able to approach this final leg of compassionate educator journey: *greater compassion* as an educator - staying fully compassionate to myself and to others in any moment in life!

Epilogue

As an educator, as an educator of educators, and in the name of my Bodhisattva vow to liberate myself and all beings, I committed myself to the task of finding everything that might stand in the way of my becoming a fully compassionate educator. In order to discover if this in fact would be a worthy and effective journey, and before pronouncing its efficacy and benefits for other educators, I needed to first take this educator journey myself.

By investigating the four roles relative to education (being parented, being a student, being a parent and being a teacher) I took this opportunity to compassionately confront all possible areas of educator pain that consciously or subconsciously had reduced my ability, as well as contributed to my burnout, as an educator. Utilizing this research method, I vowed to dive into each area deeply and completely. Throughout the writing of these educator experiences, I also applied any needed aspects of my self-compassion practice to help heal myself along the way.

As an educator preparatory action, this compassionate educator narrative is far broader than would normally be necessary. However, because this is a dissertation work as well, I included an extensive narrative review of the literature as well as researched and found many citations appropriate for every area I investigated. Unexpectedly, I often wound up agreeing with concepts that I once disagreed with. The many theoretical viewpoints I cited helped me to embrace a fuller meaning of each subject.

Creating this narrative *work of excellence* was sometimes amazing, other times grueling, often embarrassing, seemingly frightening, frequently inspiring, but ultimately healing and transformative. Transforming my arising deep-rooted pain energy increased

my understanding. The result of taking a journey that exposed both me and the reader is that I became a transformed educator!

...need to be able to learn from our mistakes, the shadow cost of what we do. From the broken pieces of our lives we become rich and get a better understanding of the law we stumble on.

Schacter-Shlomi *How Yom Kippur Resolves Karma* 2003

Through this compassionate educator storytelling, all the relationships that I re-experienced have also evolved. As I learned more about myself in each of these educator roles, and gained new awareness of my family, students, their families, my colleagues and my friends, whether living or departed, my educator self-compassion increased; this made room for me to have more compassion and turn all of these educator associates into my allies. Every story I wrote changed my internal life which soon manifested in a shared reality, such as the mutual appreciation and love with my son and daughter-in-law:

A couple of weeks after writing the narrative on being a compassionate mother to my son, I helped him take care of my grandson for 4 days when my daughter-in-law went to Mexico... I sensed that this would be a good opportunity to let Ryan experience how I worked with Tal... My last night there... Ryan told me he truly liked the relationship I had with his son and appreciated how I dealt with him. I was shocked that he had been watching and learning from me and had already begun implementing new actions that brought more enjoyment for him as a father. I was most surprised that I hadn't, as his original teacher, recognized his learning style: learning best from observing and doing, not from hearing or reading. He suggested that we spend time together - just the three of us - so that he could continue to learn more from me and that he trusted me totally with Tal now. Then we enjoyed watching a TV series together while we ate a meal that he made for me. This was the closest that we have been since his early high school days. Quite sweet... quite amazing! (My Heuristic Journal: January 18, 2009)

My daughter-in-law called after she returned and we shared a beautiful conversation. She expressed heartfelt thanks for my caring for Tal and especially for showing Ryan new ways of being with Tal which resulted in making them more aligned in their parenting. None of this would have happened if it wasn't for my writing of this narrative. (January 19, 2009)

As I look over my journey towards being a compassionate educator, I see that during my life, as a way of my dealing with pain, I have vacillated between being self-determined and being compassionate to others. Not until the middle of my heuristic research, did I bring these two together with *self-compassion*. Then, not until the end of this narrative research did I realize what I now needed to be going towards – the missing piece in my own puzzle, the current new direction of my life, my gift to myself and potentially a gift for others.

Since I no longer have to focus on transforming pain energy to *birth wholeness*, I can begin to concentrate on my *Integration into Life*. Due to the positive affects of this narrative work, I am now embodying *being my presence* more often. In the past this was more of a spiritual presence; but now it has become a holistic human presence. In the past *tasting the Oneness* was a universal, spiritual, airy Oneness; but now I can also sense a more grounded, personal oneness. I am enjoying this every day oneness, the *I and Thou* that Buber (1958) appreciates, which is teaching me how to better sense and better serve. *Integration into Life* is an important compassionate educator preparatory skill to cultivate.

This brings me to the second result of this research and written work. I have become aware of an area still requiring compassionate cultivation and further study, the actualization of *greater compassion*. Having transformed sufficient pain energy being self-compassion during this narrative research, I have begun to evolve to this richer level of compassion.

Greater compassion includes the holistic approach to compassion, that the *evolution of the study* outlined, as well as an interdependent one. Educators lacking in this ability would be an example of education ill-preparedness as noted in the theoretical

research of *The Statement of the Problem* and *The Background of the Study*. Balancing the yin/yang experience of the inward flow of self-compassion while simultaneously being compassionate to another or others, can definitely be tricky and requires practice.

As I now need to focus on this expanded form of compassion, I just created a new practice version. I will still apply any of the versions of my practice when needed or appropriate. This next evolutionary step that will further my cultivation as a compassionate educator is *A Practice of Greater Compassion*:

I will liberate myself, consciously evolving, being Greater Compassion;
Being self-compassion; connection births wholeness;
Being my presence; tasting the Oneness;

Sensing the other, being self-compassion, transforming any pain energy;
Tasting the oneness, sensing how to serve compassionately and creatively;
Being Greater Compassion!

Educator compassion is becoming not only what I had so skillfully trained myself in, *Namaste*, the God in me acknowledging and appreciating the God in you, but also the humanness of me acknowledging and appreciating the humanness of my students –with all of our joys and sorrows, our talents and deficiencies.

Ultimately, for the fullest meaning to emerge from our story we need to offer our learning – both joy and sorrow – to a story larger than our own. By connecting the suffering in our story with the larger story of the human family and the earth, we achieve a sense of proportion and find our place in the vast scheme of life and find the grace inherent in our fate. At this intersection we find healing and spiritual wholeness, and we lean to offer the lessons of our story in service of others. (p. 60)

Straub *Rhythm of compassion* 2000

Cultivating compassion through writing this narrative was an act of self-compassion leading me towards becoming a greater compassionate educator. It served as a wonderful educator preparation, freeing me to gracefully return to the field of education with greater strength, more clarity, and a loving compassion for myself and my students.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND RESULTS

A primary intent of this final study was to be compassionate to, and have a positive affect on, educators (initially on myself) who have experienced burnout which negatively affected them and their educational environment. During this study I expanded this to include educator stress and the various dimensions of burnout, such as depersonalization, alienation and devalued personal accomplishment, especially given the apparent educator problems that the corporate /political machine has found to have in the current field of education. Relevant topics, such as *connection, mindfulness, awareness* and *presence*, were revealed as being parts of compassion that I may be was still ignorant about, and therefore not fully embodying. I began to investigate these in greater depth so as to potentially shine a light on compassion's relationship to educator stress and burnout. As I had just discovered self-compassion, I wanted to now find out the relationship between self-compassion, compassion and burnout.

Some of the many heuristic research inquiries were: *How can I successfully prevent and deal with educator burn-out in myself and in other educators? What prevented me from being free to confront my problems in my educational setting? What prevented me from eventually being free to sense how to serve compassionately? What would I, as an educator, have to do in order to be free to sense how to serve? As I was unable to maintain compassion, why was my level of compassion inadequate? Can a self-compassion practice for educators prevent and deal with educator burn-out in myself and in other educators?*

The results of this study then relate to the answers to these questions I received through my heuristic, my theoretical and my narrative research. The questions were many but the combination of these efforts continually pointed to my first answer: educator pain energy needed to be transformed as an educator preparation – before, during and after being involved in an educational setting. Once I understood this, my trigger-able patterns came into plain sight.

I also discovered that this educator preparation needed crucial elements for pain energy to be successfully transformed, such as commitment, moment to moment self-awareness, presence, empathy and insight through mindfulness. This led me to vow to consciously evolve through the cultivation of the beingness of self-compassion. Through interconnectedness, I realized, I could then extend true compassion to others. This combination was the missing link I had been looking for. Having the answers meant acting on them. My first fruitful method was heuristic - constantly inspecting *the now!*

I try to stay open in the calmest way to all of my experience - every aspect of it as it arises. When for whatever reason, the experience arising is too frightful, too agitating... too upsetting, too difficult, one of the things that makes it possible for me to stay present, is... to feel the spirit of metta:

...May I be open to this moment!

May I be present for my next moment of experience!

Sylvia Boorstein *Practicing Vipassana in the Spirit of Metta* 1990
(My first Vipassana teacher)

Applying the above transformational actions have brought about transformational results. I was inspired to stretch beyond my comfort zone and create practices, processes and exercises, write articles and packets, as well as formulate and deliver workshops for educators for the purpose of holistic preparation and the cultivation of compassionate educators. I have elaborated upon these in the *Evolution of the Study* and the *Epilogue* of

My Journey towards Being a Compassionate Educator. Additionally, I have included portions of these creative results in the *Appendix*.

When my theoretical study revealed educator holistic ill-preparedness as the core cause of the problem of burnout, I realized that a compassionate holistic educator preparation could potentially be effective if it could transform educator pain and liberate the educator personally and in their educational settings. Since I was the primary educator participant in this study, I postulate that its further results could be adjudicated by investigating how my various educator roles were affected by the compassionate holistic educator preparation I was making throughout the study's duration to deal with the causes of my own burnout.

The educator roles I am currently involved in are as a parent (of my son, my god-children and my daughter-in-law), as a teacher (of educators, my grandchild, and others wanting to learn from me), as a daughter of Mom, and as an IUPS student. During this study I have been compassionately preparing myself to be a more compassionate educator in all of these roles. For each of these roles, I have transformed pain energy through many compassionate procedures, including all of the research methods.

Many of the educator role results of this study are already infused within this dissertation. At the end of each educator role section I have stated the results of that section, including various revelations. These roles and positive results are integrating me as an educator because these educator roles are interdependent. All of my roles affect one another within myself, as well as with all my educator settings.

For instance, as a student I realized this study helped me to develop a holistic approach to research which resulted in my discovering that my favored learning style is

concrete, active, right-brain hemisphere dominant which meant I need a practical and creative engagement with any study. Being compassionate to myself, I then let my best learning style lead the way. I then learned how to self-compassionately use other research methods until they suited me.

When my effort with theoretical research and writing brought about discomfort, I applied the *stopping and just being* principle and then used my self-compassion process to transform the pain energy that arose before returning to my study. Eventually, I found ways to minimize this discomfort by creatively applying concepts such as L. Ron Hubbard's *balancing of mass and significance* and ensuring that I was physically and spiritually prepared before engaging in any theoretical activities. I notice I have been less overwhelmed with mental confusion thereby making me less frustrated as a student. Becoming aware of my educator pain and dealing with it began my own transformational education process.

This was not only very helpful to me as a student, but as a teacher as well. I applied my newly understood primary learning style when I created my recent educator workshop. I had to honor this learning style while teaching others so I included many practical and creative applications for each theoretical concept I taught other educators.

I also wanted to account for those with a different learning style preference than my own. Having to also address left-brain students made me appreciate having done the scholarly research. It not only broadened my understanding of who my students were and what their current problems may be, but also gave me the opportunity to present them with the necessary theoretical input to give the work more credence.

This also applies to me as a parent as well. During this narrative I took personal responsibility for getting triggered by my family. Through my self-compassion practices I transformed large quantities of my pain energy that was underlying those triggers. This freed me to better sense how to serve all of our needs and feel an increase in joy and love. I was then able to provide them with a higher quality of service.

My communications became more compassionate. This produced further positive results as I was being less controlling and more sensitive to their learning styles, as well as to that of my grandson. I have now been included more fully in my grandson's educational decisions and even asked me to set up an appointment to meet the director of the new school he will soon be attending. How compassionate they are now being to my needs as a grandmother and educator! I am continually amazed at the elevated, more relaxed, affectionate and quite loving relationship we are all now creating.

Evolving into the *compassionate matriarch* has been rewarding. Even my dear ex-husband has validated and appreciated me for keeping the family together. But I know that I have to maintain *being self-compassion* and stay aware of the parent/child dynamic that can always get triggered. Fortunately, instead of reacting, I now have the means to holistically prepare myself by transforming my pain energy before sensing and responding to difficult situations which will inevitably arise as an educator.

My partner Stephen has seen me through this most recent dissertation phase of my journey towards being a compassionate educator. He has been an excellent student and is himself now on the road towards mastering *greater compassion*. His optimal learning style, I now realize, is sensing and understanding how it works for me, rather than

reading what I wrote about it or having me show him how it can be applied in his life. My narrative account may then be valuable for educators with a similar learning style.

I have found that heuristic inquiry, narrative inquiry, techniques to compassionately transform pain energy, as well as scholarly research, have all made it possible for me to become a more compassionate educator and feel confident in helping other educators find ways that they can be compassionate as well. Citing my own heuristic journal alongside of other author's works put me in the community of educators writing on this subject. My theoretical research went far beyond the amount of research I had ever done before in my life. Yet, paradoxically, it helped to take me out of my Ivory Tower and, via heuristic processing, to enter into the shared educator inner experience. Since I was willing to bare my soul as I did, I would never again be justified in having a pseudo *holier than thou* attitude as an educator.

My main educator pain energy areas that greatly contributed to my burnout were having fixed agendas, my Virgo criticalness and perfectionism, my tendency towards workaholism and compulsively giving advice; those all can still taunt me. Although I transformed much pain energy in each of these areas, I am only at the beginning of my journey of consciously evolving these programs. I know I have to stay vigilant at the first signs of these personas taking over.

It is evident that I have already healed much of my pain energy in these areas, as I now compassionately understand that taking care of myself is more important than being perfect. I am seeing these results practically as well. For instance, perfecting this project (after editing each section twice after I wrote it), correcting all of my errors and ensuring there were absolutely no mistakes, I now can actually *feel* is junior to my maintaining

holistic health. Cultivating self-compassion as my first responsible action, allows me to calmly and more joyfully review this study. Being willing to turn this in without having to compulsively perfect it (and doing so without regret) is a major achievement for me.

My dearly departed friend (and a part of *My Sacred Sangha*), Robert Frey (1986) once told me that I will do amazing and powerful things once I deal with whatever inside of me that is holding me back. I believe he was unwittingly referring to the above educator pain energy areas that needed transformation. My self-critical, perfectionist, insecure, pouty voices relax as they hear Robert sing his self-compassionate reminder:

Go easy, go easy on yourself.
You've been putting yourself down; giving your good side the run around
Filling your head up with so much doubt - turn it about; let it out!

...You want me to conspire with you, finding fault in the things you do
Looking for negativity - Well I don't agree; I like what I see!

...Everything inside and out is a part of you
There's a lot of grace in all you do

My daily practice of self-compassion has been assisting me in actually living my educator self-compassion, from my heart and my gut, the wisdom of lovingkindness and courage. With awareness of, acceptance and appreciation of the personas that correspond with my programming I can realize similar personas with similar needs in other educators. Self-awareness and self-compassion has been further increasing my humility and consequently my ability to sense how to serve children, and other educators in my educational settings, more compassionately which is leading me towards *being greater compassion*.

Not being perfect allows us to feel empathy and compassion, not just for ourselves but also, and especially, for others. We see our own frailties and shortcomings in our friends and lovers, or we see that they stumble in their

own way just as we do in ours. Not being perfect together joins us in our humanity. (p. 118)

Housden *Seven Sins for a Life Worth Living* 2005

I have now been grounding my understanding of compassion with the trials of being an educator by embodying these concepts. This is what the cultivation of a compassionate educator as a holistic educator preparation is for me. My final result is that through holistic research and transformational education techniques I can now sense within me my pending *doctor* status in the field of Transformational Education.

CHAPTER 6

RECOMMENDATIONS, INSPIRATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

If holistic educator preparation is essential to prevent educator stress and the dimensions of burnout, then training and recovery programs could be beneficial to help our educators; this in turn can positively affect the field of education. I recommend these programs include *compassionate self-awareness* as a means to heal educator pain energy. I have read of a few semi-successful programs that were organized to achieve these ends, such as Dan Siegel's book, *Parenting from the Inside Out*, and Parker Palmer's work.

My greatest hope came from Palmer (2007). Just recently I found his book, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life*. I was happily surprised to read the words from a seemingly compassionate educator who is actively involved with educator preparation. His compassionate questions and his comprehension of the relationship of self-awareness to educator pain mirrored my own. "How can we take heart again so that we can give heart to others?" "...inner work can help teacher's connect with their students... and empower them to resist the forces that threaten to undermine real teaching" (p. xiii, xiv). Touching into his own pain energy and that of other educators, he created an educator preparation program which apparently was so successful, that he then created similar ones for other service professions.

The year I taught at Brea was the most difficult in my life. ...Every day... I had to climb a mountain of personal grief and professional failure to drag myself back into the classroom ...it left me with a pearl of great price: deepened empathy for teachers whose daily work is as much about climbing mountains as is about teaching and learning ...I designed and facilitated a program called "The Courage to Teach." Working with ... teachers... I became an "inward-bound" guide, helping them explore the

inner landscape of their lives through eight quarterly retreats of three days each, following the cycles of the seasons. (p. xi, xii)

The Center for Courage and Renewal... offers programs to help people in many walks of life 'connect who they are with what they do'. (p. xv)

Through story-telling, questions, and a relaying of information (that all align with the results of this study) he speaks of “the heart of the teacher”, “the teacher within”, “when things fall apart” and “hidden wholeness.” However, I see no mention of any particular process, practice or technique that he and his staff use to accomplish the task of educators connecting with these educator self-awareness concepts or to transform their educator pain. Despite this, I am still quite amazed to see how many of his educator preparation concepts harmonize with my own, and I am truly glad that he is shining a bright light on them.

Within Palmer's, or within other similar structures, I would like to see all of my practice versions of compassion be used as potential transformational education tools. I am hoping that educators who are experiencing symptoms of burnout can be given the opportunity to cultivate self-compassion until they are able to begin to embody greater compassion. I recommend a study be made on these practices' viability as holistic educator preparation activities. Changes in educator experience and in their educational setting can be noted, thereby adjudicating its workability with other educators.

INSPIRATIONS

I spent the last many years predominantly focusing on the in-breath. Research, in all of its forms has meant sensing, reaching out in order to bring in information which could then be processed, analyzed and integrated. I was inhaling everything possible to holistically prepare myself as an educator to compassionately cultivate wholeness. My inquiry

seclusion has lasted quite a long time, but I am just now ready to come out of my cocoon.

At this point I am content with the results of this inward journey; this winter is coming to an end. I am now readying myself for the beginning of spring, my exhale into life. During my inner journey many seeds have been planted and watered and are slowly beginning to sprout.

I am now inspired to increase my self-discipline and my commitment to a daily practice to maintain *birthing wholeness*. To stay confident and inspired as a greater compassionate educator will require me to create an even stronger practice so I can really live *being self-compassion*. Practice brings all of the thoughts I amassed through this research into action.

I will still keep inquiry alive, such as Palmer's: have I developed "the authority to teach, the capacity to stand my ground in the midst of the complex forces of both the classroom and my own life" (Ibid p. 34)? And mine: have I developed a forgiving attitude to mistakes (my own and my students) and recognize them as learning opportunities?

In every season, there are reasons for the path we take.
There are no mistakes, just lessons to be learned.

B. Streisand *Higher Ground: Lessons to be Learned* 1997

Through my personal investigation of all of my educator relationships and my theoretical study I came to understand who I have been as an educator and how I have been developing myself as a more compassionate educator as a result of this. I am compelled to sense being my *new* presence. Thus, a new compassionate educator identity is now revealing itself. My desire to have a strong, but compassionate, educator presence inspires me to then be what has been arising within me, of *greater compassionate* service. With the coming of spring, my roots need to be secure. I need to remain mindful of any

triggered pain energy and utilize my practice to transform it. Even a 9 year old ill boy knows the importance of mindfulness and appreciates the hidden treasures it can uncover.

Hidden Treasure

Life is a treasure. People should enjoy it,
Even if digging into it, or through it, is a challenge. (p. 45)

Mattie Stepanek *Journey through Heartsong* 2001

Thankfully, I am beginning to now experience that my practices do not have to be serious, laborious processing, but could actually include joyful self-awareness and a tone of curiosity. In addition to transforming pain energy, I am inspired to use my practice to become aware of the unconscious abandonment of my joyful essence. Without my joy how will again be a joyful educator? This is an expansion of my sense of *being my presence*. It newly answers Palmer question, “Who is the self that teaches” (Ibid P. 7)?

I need to feel the joy and the depth of my laughter
I need to know the love and the depth of my soul
I need to feel my life here and now not hereafter
To know that I am whole - Knowing me, knowing myself!

Charlie Thweatt *Knowing Myself* 1997

My inner educator is being restructured as a result of my educator self-awareness and my transformed educator pain energy. I am now open to the creation of a new educator identity: being a *greater compassionate educator*. This includes the *action triad of a compassionate educator* which I developed during this study: a balance of warmth, sensitivity and control.

As a *greater compassionate educator* I am inspired to re-emerge into society once again, freer to sense how to serve compassionately and creatively – the accomplishment of my purpose. The inhale of sensing and the exhale of serving can keep my *greater compassion* flowing. My educator preparation stage is well under way, so I can move into my next phase of greater compassion, *compassion in action*.

As my research results have been positive and I am becoming personally ready, my next step is to work out how I can successfully apply my findings to other educators as a compassionate holistic educator preparation. I can no longer be held back by any external reflections of my inner *petty tyrant* persona. Instead, I will use my process for transformation to keep me *being compassion*.

To be of optimal service I feel inspired to be an active part of the field of Transformational Education by engaging in various compassionate actions for educators. Having a more in-depth understanding of the main obvious problems of educator's today and a recognition of many educator's core problem of holistic ill-preparedness, I feel more confident venturing out to be of service to educators.

For instance, I now feel empathy for the difficult educator role of being the disciplinarian which can easily trigger educator pain. Additionally, the current climate of cultural distress may now be even greater than what this study has revealed and potentially causing families and educators to require extra attention and care. It is now even more important to transform the traditional educator/child relationship. I believe that educators who cultivate self-compassion can then be prepared to create a compassionate classroom. This will bring about an evolved relationship between adult and child, and between child and child, which could be quite helpful in dealing with both of these real educator problems more easily.

The role I am drawn to now take is that of an educator advocate to fulfill my child advocate goal. My job will be to stay true to my whole self, maintain being my presence, sense what is in my field and then act from my intuition in each moment.

What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and in intellectual life, may serve for the

whole distinction between greatness and meanness (p. 7). I must be myself ...I will not hide my tastes and aversions. I will trust that what is deep is holy... I do this not selfishly, but humbly and truly (p. 20).

Emerson *Self reliance and other essays* 1995

My research increased my awareness by giving me the necessary information about the current climate in the field of education, which then increases my confidence to engage in this educational world. Walking the path of holistic educator preparation via the cultivation of compassionate educators seems to suit me, given my interests in compassion, relationship, holistic studies and education. This also fits my spiritual given name: *Source of Inspiration*.

Being inspired to transform the educational system through the cultivation of compassionate educators might mean developing holistic preparation curricula for teacher training and personal development programs, creating a home schooling program for parents, creating a workshop series for parents, completing the books I began during this study, writing a series of mini-books, being an educational consultant, creating and delivering my own educator retreats, working with my son to create a biofeedback program for educators, being a part of Palmer's team and delivering my self-compassion piece, writing articles for educator magazines using my heuristic and theoretical research material, and, (I am even considering) addressing educator administrators and government officials to advance this area of Transformational Education. Any combination of the above inspirations can be successful if in the spirit of self-awareness and self-compassion.

With that in mind, cultivating holistic educator compassion for me means an honoring of me which includes my love of creative expression. Any program I deliver will reflect this aspect of my educator identity and will be chock filled with practical

exercises, therapeutic art projects and movement. It will also include a variety of activities to cultivate wholeness and compassion.

As my new educator identity is not separate from other parts of myself, it includes my tendency towards workaholism and perfectionism. This means that I will be mindful of not taking on too many projects. Ensuring that I schedule periods of stopping and just being to occur within each program as well as during its inception and after its completion, will help me maintain my presence and limit the possibility of burnout.

REFLECTIONS

I believe I won first prize for the IUPS student who spent the greatest amount of time producing a dissertation potentially worthy of being called a *work of excellence* - this distant dream pulled down from the heavens and sweated through on earth until sufficiently realized after 10 years. Humiliating as the seemingly infinite prolongation of this study has so very often felt to me, the gifts of *greater compassion* that have been revealed throughout this evolutionary ordeal of heuristic and theoretical research mostly outweigh the embarrassment.

Perhaps instead I should I have just thrown a decent paper together of my earlier work sprinkled with fellow educator comments. Or possibly it would have been more prudent for me to have followed through on some of the other juicy research thesis projects I had not completed in which I was accumulating data that would prove the answers to the proposed questions that I believed I already knew even before I had begun. Pursuing either of those paths, I could have managed to succeed indeed performing a fraction of the work and passing the inspection.

However, my truer path would have been lonely without my footsteps plodding in sweet surrender. Although I unwittingly fought this path choice for quite some time, I finally conceded to its severe requirement that I strip down and get knee-deep dirty in the pig trough to find the occluded morsels of potential truth of the stories that were mine to tell. I have always loved Robert Frost's (1920) poem, "The Road Not Taken" as the positive sentiment it poignantly expresses seems to parallel my own path choice.

...Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
 I took the one less traveled by,
 And that has made all the difference.

<http://www.GreatBooksOnlineBartleby.com>

Taking the more challenging, yet gentler, journey required intensifying and strengthening my courage and vulnerability. This self-compassionate version of *lifting myself up by my boot-straps* reaped real rewards. It gave me the opportunity to pick and taste the fruits, even the tart and rancid ones, producing the enzymes needed to digest my progress along the path of healing emotional and physical pain of a personal and educational nature that were inhibiting my ability to optimally educate. And to my fascination, turning down the authoritarian temptation that the other paths symbolized, has blessed me with the chance to take meaningful steps in the direction of humility.

As a result of choosing what turned out to be a *choiceless* journey, a new psycho/spiritual grounded work has arisen. Throughout these past few years, I have grown to be able to depend upon this structure as my bridge over many troubled waters. Following this practice has been balancing service and responsibility with joy, love, creativity and relaxation.

I am gratefully honored to be able to offer to educators as potentially valuable tools everything in the *Appendix*. May they be utilized for the good of all educators and

for everyone in their educational settings! Although I project and expect that these practices can be equally effective for other educators, I can only be assured of the long-range potential worth of this study of self-compassion and greater compassion for me personally as it has only been I who have truly utilized its gifts in this way over time.

Who among us is an expert on the human experience? We have only the gift of sharing perceptions that hopefully can help those on their journey.
(p. 14)

Zukav The Seat of the Soul 1989

Time has been a loyal friend to me as it has proven the workability of these practices of compassion each day in my own life. While realizing that I can not predict how many other educators will ever treasure or even also reap benefits, with heartfelt wishes for similar soaring success I have presented the fruits of my labor as a viable gift to those parents and teachers who can resonate with the magic that compassion, self-compassion and greater compassion can bring into their lives and to all they serve.

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APPENDIX

All Practice Versions

Life Care Acts Procedure

My Sacred Sangha

Application: Educator Pain and Creative Expression

Application of Mindfulness Set-Up

Pain Energy *Tara* Narrative: Excerpts

Emotional Feeling Work

Working it Out – Summary

Working it Out – For Educators

Compassionate Communication for Teachers

Inquire / Inspire: Excerpts from Introduction to first book

Stopping: Excerpts from Chapter draft of last book

Educator Interview

Holistic Self-Compassion Educator Workshop: Excerpts

Creative Expressions for the Narrative

Compassion Practice Versions

O. Simple Practice

- a. Vow
- b. Connect
- c. Integrate

1. Basic Practice of Self-Compassion

Purpose: A daily practice for cultivating self-compassion;
For self-liberation & to be of service

I Will Liberate Myself Being Self Compassion

Connection Births Wholeness

Being My Presence

Tasting the Oneness

Free to Sense How to Serve – Compassionately & Creatively

2. Mindfulness Set-Up Practice of Self-Compassion

Purpose: preliminary for a new activity, or first aid.
Do upon arising, before ‘life care acts’

- a. Basic Vow [was called short form of vow] - I will liberate myself being self-compassion
- b. Physical Connection – stopping, just being
- c. Spiritual Connection - sensing earth, heavenly energies & being self-compassion

3. Educator Preparatory Practice of Self-Compassion

Purpose: Do this version before engaging with children at home or at school

- a. Mindfulness Set-Up Practice of Self-Compassion
- b. Life Care Acts
- c. Basic Practice of Self – Compassion
- d. Continue with Practice Version #4: “Transformation Practice of Self Compassion” if:
 1. pain energy arises and persists, or
 2. a body-mind connection can’t be comfortably made, or
 3. unable to be ‘Free to sense how to serve compassionately and creatively’ by end of this step

(continued)

4. Transformation Practice of Self-Compassion [“Long Form”]

Purpose: to transform pain energy compassionately

I Expanded Vow:

1. I will liberate myself
2. Consciously evolving
3. Transforming Pain Energy
4. Being Self Compassion

II Expanded Connection Births Wholeness:

A. Physical Connection

5. Stopping
6. Just Being

B. Spiritual Connection

7. Spiritually Connecting
8. Conscious Self Rebirth
9. Becoming Self Compassion

C. Body-Mind Connection

10. Inquiry
11. Just being with
12. Awareness of
13. Appreciating
14. Caring for
15. Connection Births Wholeness

III Integration into Life

16. Being my presence
17. Tasting the Oneness
18. Free to sense how to serve compassionately and creatively

5. Independent Process of Self-Compassion:

If it has any goal at all it is that of being with oneself for self-care in the name of self-love and self-service. Rather than being the transformation of pain energy, it is the cultivation of self-pleasure.

- a. Just being with me
- b. Awareness of me
- c. Appreciating me
- d. Caring for me

6. Practice of Greater Compassion

- a. I will liberate myself, consciously evolving, being Greater Compassion;
- b. Being self-compassion; connection births wholeness;
- c. Being my presence; tasting the Oneness;
- d. Sensing the other, being self-compassion, transforming any pain energy;
- e. Tasting the oneness, sensing how to serve compassionately and creatively;
- f. Being Greater Compassion!

Life Care Acts Procedure

A. Purposes:

*Taking care of the present moment- for, in and of, itself

* As a preparation or preliminary action for any major compassionate activity [i.e.: the transformation practice, narrative writing, handling a classroom problem, etc.] These actions directly deal with re-programming, so allow a block of time to be made available.

Use to have a self-compassionate day getting all necessary life care acts done compassionately.

B. Procedure:

1. **A quick check - First aid** or emergency relief for myself, another or the environment.

2. **Basic Practice**

3. **Choose** from the following Life Care Acts as it applies:

a. **Body needs:** H2O, food, supplements, warmth, bathe, rest, stretch, exercise, groom, massage, healing machines

b. **Emotional needs:** check e-mail; check in on relatives or friends in need, play piano, play with cat, solitaire

c. **Environmental needs:** make beds; feed cats, water plants, etc.

4. **Mindfulness Set-up Practice:** make & carry out all of Life Care Act choices

C. During this procedure:

a. When distracted from Life Care Act, return to the Mindfulness Set-Up Practice. Consciously stop reacting to the stimuli in my environment when I get distracted.

b. Stop carrying out the orders of any personas before knowing if they are present self-compassionate activities. This is an act of self-compassion.

My Sacred Sangha

“Taking refuge in the Sangha in myself”

From the monks and nuns chant: Thich Nhat Hanh *Body* DVD 2004

Hashem - Universal Wisdom Connection

Daddy - Gentle Loving Connection

Leni - Intuitive Constant Guide

Robert – Receiving and Expressing Angel

Tara - Compassionate Heart Connection

Cal - Knight/Warrior Connection

Mum Phyllis – Fiery/ Righteousness Connection

Mystery Man - Spiritual Lover Connection

Silk - Slow & Deep Earth Connection

Experience their energies associated chakras.

This sacred archetypal family converges to form the wedding within.

Alas, enjoy my sacred rebirth!

Application of Transformation Practice of Self-Compassion: Educator Pain and Creative Expression

Hip Pain

My left hip problem developed while I was teaching and continually worsened over the years. I needed to work from a moving ball chair. I had major problems sitting with the children and bending over continually to work with the young children. It was eventually one of the reasons I burned out as a teacher. This is educator pain energy.

I wondered if I would ever be able to teach young children again.

As part of my self-compassionate attitude in life, I got insurance and have been investigating all possible sources of this problem through doctor visits, chiropractic sessions, x-rays, ultrasounds, physical therapy, blood tests, etc. there are some situations at hand, but the major pain seems to now be due to inflammation. I have been having resistance to taking the anti-inflammatory medication.

While doing my daily practice of self-compassion, my left hip pain revisited me. It seemed too chronic to be able to heal through the practice the way I was using it. It came to me to utilize creative expression for dealing with this pain energy. Since I was dealing directly with known pain energy, I began what I used to call the long form, and what is now the Transformation Practice of self compassion.

I prepared a space for creative expression, getting appropriate paper and art materials set up in a comfortable place. I began the expanded vow and felt the pain energy very strongly in my hip.

Before going into any of the connection births wholeness steps, using colored pencils and oil pastels I drew a picture of the pain expressing in color and shape what it felt like with my hip. As I began I 'saw' browns and blacks and some red running through the area and deeply expressed all of this onto the page. I needed to do this before going on to "stopping" to know what in fact it was that I was temporarily stopping connection with. It felt wonderful to make each and every stroke and mark on that paper. When I felt the abstract represent my inner experience, I felt some relief and realized that some of the pain energy had been transformed in this initial address of the pain energy through the practice.

I had to have this first piece – the pain energy - as a final creative product before moving on in my practice, so I entitled it "hip pain" in browns. Then I included a red "Stop". It changed the entire image, moving it into the state I was in; I felt great deeply expressing.

I then taped down another paper onto the table before I continued with the practice. The next creative expression piece was my connection to the pain energy as I did the practice. I started the picture by expressing the 'being self-compassion on top of the page in colored pink, coral and yellow colored pencils. I then made a similar representation of

the pain energy, but much smaller, in the lower left had side of the page. The magical self and spiritual energies encircled the pain energy. The process conversation created different sections of color and connection and purpose on the page. Every time I expressed something creatively I spontaneously moved to the next step of the process. I connected and embraced the pain in a very real way while I was expressing the process creatively. It was like Hubbard's "mass" and "significance". I needed the mass to balance the significance of the doing the process alone. I did the process through a number of times to get the fullness of it and to transform more pain energy.

I came to realize that the pain was maintaining itself because I was not taking care of it or embracing it. Because of my hip dislocation at birth and baby Tara dying on my left hip, and layers of adhesions due to my uterus and bladder explosion and repair, I was prone to be weak in this traumatic area, yet I never paid it much attention, and just increased exercised when it hurt, as was recommended to me. I had been trying to get rid of and ignore the pain rather than being compassionate to it.

Its associated persona was definitely trying to protect me. It did not trust me because I was not working with it. The main thing that came out of this process was how important it was for my whole self to work with my left hip.

The conscious evolution began when I started to feel real compassion for my hip, rather than resenting it, trying to continually change its condition and feel sorry for myself. To my astonishment, I felt a total relief of the pain energy when the process was completed. I even had the inclination to take the inflammatory supplements.

Later on the pain area sensation returned, but more as an ache. Pain energy had definitely been transformed. I feel that I am in the beginnings of a major heal cycle with my left hip that arose while I was running, directing and teaching at my caring adventure school. I realized that I had the inclination, even intuition to not take on another group of children for the next three year program. I was in conflict about whether I should continue teaching or I should be doing something different at the time. I did not know what I would do instead, and the parents were giving me all the space I needed to make it easier on me, including registering a whole new student body for me. I violated my true direction, which started the pain in my hip. This is then actually educator pain energy. I was not compassionate to myself. I taught when I sensed I should not. I did not follow my path; I followed the path of the other parents who wanted their children in my program, and it was difficult to leave something was so successful for the unknown.

I now realize that my hip pain did come about during the burn-out phase of being a teacher! Using creative expression with the process was very successful in the transformation of my hip pain energy.

Application of the Mindfulness Set-Up Practice of Self-Compassion:

I did this set-up practice and realized I needed some hot water.

I pendulum tested for which tea was best and found the 'Herba-Tussin' to be best, which aligned with the lung issue I had the night before, and began to make it.

When it was ready 15 minutes later I did this set-up practice again, created an uncluttered environment, poured the tea and decided to have it on my patio. Once sitting there, I saw so many things I saw *needed* to be done: plants to be watered, leaves to be swept up, soot to be dealt with, etc.

I resisted the inclination to do them and instead repeated my mindfulness practice and began to accept my patio as it was, with all of its imperfections – such as life is - enjoying the tea and my beautiful environment.

This is a self-compassion tool for me to create a wonderful life – moment by moment!

It is, indirectly, a self-compassionate way to transform the pain energy of the workaholic syndrome.

(Excerpts from)
Pain Energy Narrative:
Events leading up to the death of my daughter Tara

red bold italics: pain energy items/areas

underline **highlighted** personas

bold: practice

bold italic purple: non-narrative

Even with this first pregnancy, with my son Ryan, I had *rejected anyone who had the view that I could be a part of a significant percentage [33% - 55%] of women who would need a c-section; a main situation that might necessitate a c-section is a breach presentation. I had been a breach baby; the doctor's forceful action of turning and pulling me out ...was a very painful event...a result of this unmindful turning and pulling, my left hip became dislocated and I wore a brace for the first half of the first year of my life - this was the onset on the current chronic pain in my left hip.*

...In the midst of a midwife examination during my end of the 9th month of pregnancy, which was being photographed by a writer for Parent's Magazine, I was struck by the *terrifying thought* that the baby was breach - even after I was told by the midwives at that time that the baby's head was in the exact right position; I still kept thinking "but that could be his butt". Unfortunately I was right! *Having a breach presentation was horrifying to me. I madly researched for any person or group that would be willing to do a breach delivery without giving me a c-section, being a male doctor or necessitating a hospital stay. I resisted having any type of hospital delivery especially one that might include any potential for having a drugged cesarean delivery.*

...When my water broke and my baby did not 'drop' within the 24 hour period that the hospital gives a woman in labor who has a breach presentation to deliver whose 'water has broken', I panicked; I refused to let Doctor D. prep me and cut me open. I had pain energy triggered that I would die and that something horrible would happen to my baby that would cause him immense suffering.

...Right before I gained consciousness after the surgery, I got caught up in a drugged dream that felt like reality...Later, the Doctor wanted to give the baby to me. I did not know if he was really my husband or if that was really my son. All I could say in a voice hoarse from the anesthesia tube having been put down my throat, 'Who can I trust? ...I rejected my husband and refused the baby whom my husband had been caring for during the time period of my recovery...I now see that I was being a hysterical, fearful, reactive, perspective mother.

Eventually the doctor came into the recovery room with us, grabbed the baby away from my husband, and put the baby on my breast. My consciousness was steadily returning and I became aware of my baby feeding on me and I fell in love with the experience of breastfeeding. When I was at home with my baby three days later, I cried ecstatically at the meaning of birth and motherhood. I quit my job and decided to stay home and care for and teach my newborn baby as the most important job on earth that I could do.

...in January of 1984 I was being the personas of both a mother of 4 year old son [relaxed, content, affectionate, and attentive teacher] and a spiritual Scientologist ...I took a solo leisurely walk down my drive. While enjoying the environment, I sensed the presence of

someone else accompanying me on my walk. It was a **beautiful, gentle being with a feminine presence**; I felt her energy all around me, but predominantly just above and to the left of my head. My awareness of this being and her intention to communicate with me increased. Her strong, yet subtle, desire for me to listen became quite apparent. Although I had never experienced anything like this before, I did not doubt my experience. As I heartfully paid her heed, her powerful, yet light, presence held my attention. She surrounded me with the energy of her non-verbal desire of me: to conceive and mother her. More than a request, it seemed to be a movement of our parallel paths unfolding. The **mother** felt, and the spiritual **Scientologist** perceived, that this was something worthy of my full attention. The **mother** opened my heart, emotions and body to her as her love embraced me as well; the **Scientologist** opened my mind, spirit and space to her because a part of Scientology's belief system included connection possibilities with beings who are not embodied and who consciously decide on which newborn baby body to inhabit.

... Writing this narrative is very interesting. By having to see the main personas I was being at that time, my current awareness of this relationship and the events surrounding the pain energy greatly increases. The more I sense the events through these personas, the more I presently re-experience the incidents; it is no longer the story I have told others and myself ... During the narrative writing be open to new awarenesses and to pain energy areas I had been unwilling to admit to having and/or confronting the personas I was being in the past.

... Around the fifth month of pregnancy, I was approaching my 35th year, the year that the medical profession encourages doing a procedure called **amniocentesis** which gets fluid from the amniotic sac which helps to determine if the fetus has chromosome irregularity that could predict the possibility that the newborn has Down Syndrome. If they found this to be true through this procedure, they could legitimately **terminate the pregnancy** within the next few weeks. One of the problems with this procedure is that it had a **2% risk of death to the baby**. Another is that it had only an 80% rate of accuracy.

*Getting an amniocentesis was frightening to me. This is initially due to my **anti-doctor persona**: I did not like or want any invasive procedures. The thought of being responsible for the death of my new baby - killing her - was unbearable. This could potentially occur in different ways. If I did the 'amnio' she could die due to the puncturing not being precise - the 2% figure; I feared her being one of the 2% that was killed by the procedure. I also feared that if I did the procedure and it was found that she had Down Syndrome, and I chose to end her life because of it, I would find out after her death that she, in fact, was part of the statistical inaccuracies never had Down Syndrome.*

.. I was strongly encouraged to do this procedure by both the doctor and the midwife; I was treated as irresponsible if I did not. It was difficult to know what the most responsible thing I could do as her mother.

I now notice the many fears I have had around being as pregnant mother, childbirth and the postential risks and pain energy for my child and myself.

... I practiced yoga and relaxation techniques daily throughout the pregnancy and ate exceptionally well. I was being told by many of my friends that I had a glow. Again, I figured this was all because of the being that was with me. I had the feeling that when the baby was born what I and others might have perceived as me, would be really her. I felt

ready to serve her and her purpose on this planet.

The only places that were a bit stressful during the duration of the pregnancy were:

1...I eventually got from the approval for each of these points from these caretakers that I liked and depended upon the midwives and the doctor

...3. Sometime during my 8th month of pregnancy, my doctor from the midwife center lost his insurance... A new doctor was quickly brought in... He ...disapproved of the whole program that I had been encouraged to write and which was approved of by the midwives and the doctor...Even though doctor D. had said that I could have a v-back, he disagreed. It felt like he was destroying my baby and my chances of having a good childbirth and that his arrogance and non-compassion made it less and less possible to for things to go right. I went into total cope. The "Who can I trust" persona got triggered and I began to lose my confidence about providing my baby with a safe and beautiful birth.

.... My husband felt very uncomfortable with the Bro Hospital, which worked with the midwife center ...He did not trust the hospital and felt sick being there. I did not take his concern seriously and chalked it up to his being triggered. I was not compassionate to his feelings nor did I honor his perception.

5... It was September, Friday 13th and my husband felt superstitious that this was the beginning of a bad omen. I was excited and did not feel fearful or superstitious.

...We timed the contractions and although I still felt comfortable, I thought it was wise to head down to the midwife center and prepare to go into the hospital from there. Leni took care of my 5 year old son prepared to bring him to the hospital shortly to help with the delivery in the birthing room at the hospital.

...I have been taking breaks, doing life care acts, going back to the short form as an introduction to returning to the narrative writing. This last time as I finished the short form of the practice, I realized I wanted to go for a walk and record the next narrative section instead of sitting and writing it as I realized that this would be more self-compassionate.

... I am seeing a persona that got re-triggered and intensified during this pregnancy protector of baby's life / fearful of her death /worrier regarding making the wrong decision for her life. This feels like a death possibility because the creation of this baby's life was for the intention of the gentle, feminine being to live through this body and be our child. If this other being took over, I doubt the baby would have ever made it through the pregnancy.

...Bringing awareness into the numbness – the stress of my own birth arises.

I could not come down the birth canal as I was breech presenting at birth.

I wanted to relieve Ryan of the stress of a c-section – the expense of cutting me open and creating an energy blockage in my pelvic region. If I did not have a c-section with Dr. D., I wouldn't have had to have a c-section with Tara and perhaps she would have never died.

Emotional Feelings Activity

Activity: What is the Emotional Feeling?

Materials: 4 mounted hand-drawn pictures of a face for each of these feelings:
happy (on pink mounting)
sad (on pastel blue)
afraid (on pastel yellow)
angry (on red)

4 photographs or pictures, of a person or people,
expressing each of these feelings (totals 16 pictures)
each mounted on white card stock

Purpose: To learn to differentiate emotional feelings
To refine the recognition of emotional feelings of others

Presentation:

1. Place the four drawn feeling faces in a horizontal row on a mat.
2. Go over each emotional feeling with the child.
3. Explore each of the photographs and discuss them with the child
4. Sort the pictures into categories of feelings.

Control of Error: color coded on the back of each card

Ages: 3 - 6 years of age
Lesley Deluz created this for the "Emotion in Motion" curriculum 1990

Working it Out!

**Teachers, Parents and Children Tools for: Conflict Resolution
& Interdependent Relationships**
(Based on Marshall Rosenberg's Non-Violent Communication model)

Summary

Step 1: Self-Awareness - The Magical Mystery of Being A Human Being

Through various games and exercises, connection and familiarity is made with the magical self, the body, the mind, the senses and emotions.

Step 2: Knowing Me NOW!

This is a tool for practicing self-awareness. It brings great results and is also fun to role-play it.

Step 3: Self-Compassion

Here you will be finding ways to do something that may be new to you -giving yourself empathy!

Step 4: The Listening Heart

Learn the art of compassionately being available to another's magical self.

Step 5: Sensing and Guessing Feelings and Needs

This tool can be used to help children increase their self-awareness during challenging times.

Step 6: Empathy and Vulnerability

"The more we empathize with the other party, the safer we feel" – Marshall Rosenberg

Step 6: "Knowing me NOW" and Expressing It!

Apply step 2 skills and the courage of self-expression in order to communicate with clarity and to receive empathy.

Step 7: Making Requests

Use positive action language to request a reflection of what you just expressed and to help you get what you really want without demanding it.

Step 8: Letting Everyone Win!

Everyone gets their needs met by each person honestly expressing their observations, feelings and needs without blame or criticism, and each person compassionately listening to observations, feelings and needs without taking it personally.

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Working It Out!

Step 1: Sensing and Guessing Feelings and Needs

0. find your “magical self”



1. Guess what action might have triggered the conflict.
Use sensing words.



“When you (saw, heard) ...”

2. Guess the emotions you sense the child is feeling



“Did you feel...”

3. Guess the underlying need



“...because _____ is important to you?”

Step 2: Making Requests

4. Helping the child make a request, rather than a demand,
that could fulfill the child’s desire or need.

“...and so, would you like...?”

ask for empathy

5. Express a request in positive action language(not a demand)
that can fulfill that need, starting with



“...would you be willing to tell me you heard me say ...?” and new requests

Step 3: “Knowing me NOW” and Expressing it!

Review how to apply the steps for self- awareness. Then express them to someone from whom you want, and hope can give, you empathy

0. find your “magical self”



1. observation through senses



“...when I (saw, heard) ...”

2. emotions



“...I felt ...”

3. underlying need



“...because _____ is important to me”

4. ask for empathy



5. Express a request in positive action language(not a demand)
that can fulfill that need, starting with
“...would you be willing to tell me you heard me say ...?” and new requests

Practice the application of these statements one at a time by creating examples and using them in real life situations. Gradually the child will develop the ability to communicate true feelings and needs compassionately, and creatively make requests.

(Practice listening to your own feelings and needs and give yourself any necessary “time out” in order to give yourself compassion.)

Compassionate Communication

Outline for Teachers

(Great Compassion)

(Based on Marshall Rosenberg's Non-Violent Communication model)

Teachers use "A" to practice listening to your own feelings and needs.

Give yourself any necessary "time out" in order to give yourself compassion.

A. Teachers expressing the truth about themselves in a way that inspires compassion without blame or criticism.

2. Express observation in action language
"...when I (saw, heard) ..."
3. Express feelings
"I feel ..."
4. Express underlying desires (needs)
"...because I was wanting (needing)..."
4. Express a request in positive action language(not a demand)
that can fulfill that desire
"...and so, I would like to know what you heard me say ...?" and new requests

Practice the application of these statements one at a time by creating examples and using them in real life situations. Gradually the child will develop the ability to communicate true feelings and needs compassionately, and creatively make requests.

Teachers use "B" to assist children in solving their problems, and as a role model:

B. Receiving the truth from the children in a way that inspires compassion without hearing blame or criticism.

1. Guessing the emotions you sense the child is feeling
"Did you feel..."
2. Guessing the specific action that might have triggered those feelings
using observation words
"... when you (saw, heard) ..."
3. Guessing the underlying desires (needs)
"...because you were wanting (needing)"
6. Helping the child make a request, rather than a demand,
that could fulfill the child's desire or need.
"...and so, would you like...?"

Created by Lesley Deluz; assisted by Patty O'Dea. 1990; Deluz revised 1998, 2009

(Incomplete *Caring Adventures* book Introduction)

Inquire & Inspire

The child brings us a great hope and a new vision. With his unlimited possibilities he can well be the transformer of humanity just as he is its creator. There is much that we teachers can do to bring humanity to a deeper understanding, to a higher well being and to a greater spirituality.
(p. 74) Maria Montessori *The Absorbent Mind* 1967

From One Educator to Another

I wish I could begin this chapter by reassuring you that I am going to place the Truth about learning and teaching directly into your brain (your lap, your soul), so that you will magically emerge as a master teacher once you have finished reading this book. Wow! Now, wouldn't that be wonderful!

Caring so deeply about children and their education as I do, and being empathetic to the many challenges that educators are confronted with on a daily basis, it would bring me such immense joy to be able to impart such a superb gift. Although I wish that I could at least pretend to wield that kind of power and offer this soul food to you, I know that I can not be so pompous as to make that claim. Nor can I be so naïve as to consider that reading about someone else's experiences and realizations can implant the reader with the Truth of how to best educate.

How, then, do I approach the subject of education and its transformation? I have analyzed and synthesized the ways that I have adapted my particular academic learning experiences, as well as my personal, interpersonal, therapeutic and spiritual explorations and study. My pragmatic application of this information to early childhood and elementary school age children has awakened me to my piece in the unfolding transcendence of the field of education. I am hoping that by sharing a passage of my sacred journey, my dutiful passion to help create inner peace globally, I will connect with fellow travelers who have a purpose in alignment with my own. If so, this may give us the opportunity to touch some universal truths together and act upon them side by side. Can my words alone create transformation?

Truth, the capital "T" kind, can definitely be experienced! However, having deepened my understanding of how Truth is actually subjective, I have had to shift my writing and teaching attitude from an authoritative stance to that of a trusted friend. I believe, in addition to understanding it takes a balance of inspiration, perspiration and imagination to transform another's truth into your own.

My hope is that as you read the realizations, experiences, and evolving truths in the area of education which are dear to me, that you will begin to enjoy and taste the potential of incorporating some of these activities and exercises into your own individualized parenting and teaching style. If your unique truth truly emerges, then my desire for this book to be a source of inspiration for you and for others will be gratefully fulfilled.

What have I drawn upon?

What paradigm do I come from? I have taken the Renaissance woman approach to life and have adopted, over time, a variety of systems, which I began to unify into my own practice. This lifestyle has directly affected my study and application in the areas of parenting, education, holistic health, spirituality and conflict resolution. I have separated the wheat from the chaff of these systems, distilled the workable beauty and magic in each for me and am now birthing my own creative contribution to the whole child.

My educational background includes degrees in Educational Liberal Studies, Visual and Performing Arts and Transformational Education. I also hold certifications from the National Center for Montessori Education and the Institutes for the Achievement of Human Potential. I have also placed Abraham Maslow's "self-actualization" educational philosophy and work in high regard.

In the areas of Holistic Health, I have spent many years in training and in practice as a massage therapist, a pastoral counselor and an emotional release facilitator. In addition, I have focused on physical health with an emphasis on nutrition and movement.

My spiritual wings are rooted in the Jewish heritage and have taken flight due to having been blessed with the influence of some great teachers and their eclectic and traditional Buddhist and Taoist practices, such as: Scientology, Vipassana, Tibetan Buddhism, Engaged Buddhism and Tai Chi.

...I have also drawn upon my dedication and my commitment as a parent/teacher for my son. That has been, and continues to be, the most difficult and most rewarding career in my life.

Who are we?

This book is for all advocates of young children – teachers, tutors, coaches, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, grandparents, nannies, babysitters, counselors, etc. It is even for the child within each of us. My intention is to help all of us align with the root of the word education: *educare* – which means to bring forth, draw out. Once we realize this purpose of education, we can begin to realize our incredible position in society.

I am sharing with you what has worked for me, because I believe that all educators can make an incredible difference in our world through children. Each generation has the opportunity – if not the responsibility – to enhance the quality of living and make this world a better place to live in. We are women and men who can help create our own brighter futures by helping to bring forth the gifts, sometimes hidden, in all of the children that we touch. Is this not the function of posterity?

We are the pillars of strength that guide young children to find the modalities that they can utilize to best attune themselves to this world. We are the facilitators of the attainment of each child's birthright to personal happiness. We are the true friends of children as we recognize the individual potential for greatness in each child. We are the "magis" validating the natural universal flow of personal awareness and the development of each child's most precious gifts and talents. We are the believers that know that children who follow their own paths will have the possibility for inner satisfaction. We are the educators who trust that children who know their worth will be enthusiastically compelled to give of their gifts to their family, friends, community and the world.

For the sake of economy of words, and primarily to focus on the vital teacher / student aspect of whatever caretaking relationship we may have with the children in our lives, I will refer to all adult caretakers as Educators. I intend this to be a reminder of our potential to “bring out” rather than to “stuff in” when we have the opportunity to educate.

With regards to teaching and learning, there isn't, and never has been, just one right way to do it! All of us have walked many philosophical avenues and perused a plethora of pedantic windows, each seducing us to buy their latest and greatest variety of teaching trinkets.

We have all been children students and have viscerally experienced what our ancestors have passed down to us through our parents- the gems and poisons of how children learn best and worse. Each Educator sees the world from his/her own unique vantage point and expresses his/her own academic and experiential models, as we all learn from each other how to take care of our most precious gift – our Children!

The Current World of the Child

As we are entering the new millennium, the world is continuing to become a confusing, and often overwhelming, place for many Children. What are some of the difficulties that our Children have to deal with in today's world?

The stability of the family unit is precarious in our present culture. As the traditional nuclear family is waning, society is groping to make workable lifestyle changes. New family structures are evolving which are producing few successful role models. Coping with divorce and new stepfamilies can be very unsettling for a child. Single parenting and double income households often create situations where child neglect seems unavoidable. Parents are struggling to find ways to victoriously balance manifesting their career goals, maintaining a good relationship with their spouse, paying the bills, caring for their home, being available to chauffeur the children to the “needed” after school activities, stealing some relaxation time and creating a nurturing home environment.

Overpopulation is creating increased competition. Children are being pressured to achieve high academic success from a very young age and are often being unfairly judged by their intellectual performance. There is an inordinate amount of Children who know that they do not have adequate academic skills and who feel insecure. They do not have the confidence that they can make it, let alone make a difference, in the world.

The physical health of Children is declining. Due to pollution and depleted soil, the food that we eat no longer contains the nutrients that each child requires on a daily basis. It is more difficult today for Children to eat food that will sufficiently sustain them. With so little available time to shop and prepare meals, the appeal of fast food is on the rise. This brings high fat, sugar and toxic chemicals into small bodies starving for healthy food. In addition, the air quality is so poor in many locations that allergies and asthma, which inhibit their activity, have become common to many of our Children. Poor health translates into decreased ability to function, both physically and mentally.

Enjoying emotional and spiritual health is rare these days. Overwhelmed and frustrated adults have difficulty providing a happy environment and often take out their frustration on Children. The fast paced stressful world, which the adults can barely keep up with, is doubly uncomfortable for the Child. Positive inner direction seems to be unavailable to so many young people. Low self-esteem perpetuates abuse and violence in

many areas of the child's environment. Awareness of what personal actions can be taken to change conditions is negligible. Joy and peace are commodities not easily attained.

How can we as Educators help to make this world a warm, safe and receptive place for Children?

What do Children need from us?

We have all chosen, as a part of our path, to help Children in some capacity. How can we help in such a way that the Child does not become dependent upon the Educator and instead, becomes truly prepared for life?

Firstly, I have found it vital for each educator to discover their own worldview of childhood before they can "grok" the needs of children. I, for one, no longer resonate with the old paradigm that Children are an empty container and that it is the teacher's job to fill these containers with knowledge.

Children are complete human beings, with individualized paths, who are learning lessons about themselves and life. They need our assistance in learning about who they are and how they can most effectively live their life in the world of today and tomorrow. Each Child has personalized purposes that can be discovered together by encouraging awareness. In order to fulfill their purposes, the Child needs understanding, support and direction given in a warm, playful, friendly manner. As they begin to recognize their purposes, they can begin to actualize their potential. This can only be achieved through independence.

Primarily, these little ones need our help in becoming empowered and respected for who they really are! Once recognized, trust begins to develop and their innocent, yet dedicated, spark of life reappears. Utilizing learning as a spiritual activity can allow each individual to be in touch with their inner guidance. Additionally, their present needs can be recognized as indicators of what is currently available to be addressed on their path. That will be where their interest lies. As we offer the child a variety of subjects to open to, we can work together to explore which ones lead to his/her gifts and which ones point to his/her challenges. I have seen my roles as teacher, counselor, mother and big sister as invaluable opportunities to stimulate and revitalize the Child's participation in the creation of their own life, while offering support in their clearing out any obstacles to this creativity. I have observed Children responding beautifully when they were treated with that kind of reverence...

What are the most viable/successful attitudes of educators?

Bringing forth love from my heart and creating an atmosphere of care for others, is the single most effective action that I can take as an educator. The wish for each child's well being can be felt in a room; it's contagious!

The Tibetan Buddhists acknowledge White Tara as the "mother of compassion". Her essence has been an inspiration for me as she represents the place in all of us – both males and females - of unconditional love and service for humanity and to ourselves. Compassion can take time to develop and goes hand –in-hand with autonomy. Therefore, as we allow for true autonomy to develop in the students, we can hold that place of compassion in the classroom. Sometimes I find it necessary to feed myself with my own love when times get rough. I take a moment and realize that "love will survive and love will provide". (*photo of White Tara – perhaps a photo of the Thanka that I bought*)

The loving and enthusiastic presence of the Educator, when received by the student can produce a synergy that, almost magically, accelerates the learning process. Finding a point of true connection with the student establishes the possibility of mutual reality and trust. We need to be "real" with them if we expect our students to truly pay attention to us. Talk to the students at their level and in accordance to their cultural norm. Give relevant examples to the children's current lives and the environment that they are growing up in.

Let's have respect and faith in each and every one of our students' ability to succeed. Educators can believe in the potential of all of their students. The educator can see the path ahead, whereas the student may only see the turn.

Educators who commit to the highest good of the students will not give up hope no matter what the barriers to learning appear to be. We can demand a high level of excellence as we playfully help the students find avenues that allow for their expansion and limit their contraction. We can observe when particular curricula are not working and decide to discover something that will. This commitment will increase our willingness to change our techniques.

There are great merits to being an educator who is willing to blend the mainstream track of making academicians, with a more radical approach of offering the possibility of a fresh viewpoint that can be more beneficial. Educators who are not afraid to use innovative teaching methods often unearth very interesting, exciting and challenging ones for their students. This ethical commitment to the students can extend to encouraging free thinkers who are searching for inner guidance as to what unique gifts they may possess that they will be able to eventually offer to society. Let's encourage students to trust their own beliefs and strive to find their own voice. We can value resourcefulness –both our own and that of our students!

The Wheel of Fortune of Education: The Heart of Learning

ATTENTION
 AWARENESS
 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
 ENJOYMENT
 EXPERIENCE
 EXPLORATION
 INTEREST
 IMAGINATION
 INTENTION

Consider these words as rays of sunshine, as spokes on a wheel of fortune, as points of a snowflake - whatever image works best for you to connect up to the pulse of education - the heart of learning. It is the portal for knowledge.

I have used these concepts as potential tools to center myself in the classroom - or in any interaction with a Child. You may want to use these words above, or any other words that most accurately express the essence of these concepts for you. It can be more functional as a process, than as a linear sequence of steps to be taken. This process can be entered at any opening. The reality of this moment will then dictate what concept will be the most ideal for the next moment. This is a request of Educators to be more creative.

The first time that I loosely apply this as an Educator with a Child is on our first meeting: When I am truly interested in a Child and enjoy the challenge of befriending this new Soul in front of me, I have found that I can then engage in a process of discovery that takes me on a profound journey into the Child's. When I am honored with that Child's trust, I can begin to invite that Child to experience my world. As we continue to independently explore each other in relationship to a chosen activity, I patiently await the Child to accept me. If that occurs, together we can then enter the sacred space of learning as we share our realities and intentions with each other. I try not to run away from fears and pain, but open up to them instead. When true mutual respect prevails, the possibility of actual learning exists.

My Caring Adventure curriculum was based on these concepts. Each month's theme was spearheaded and illuminated by these learning tools. The wheel of fortune offered the children to find out about themselves and the world around them. Every newsletter had the phrases, "we will explore..." and "we discovered..." strewn throughout. I surrendered my fixed ideas on how to teach and began to utilize the fullness that was available from the present moment. I began to recognize that when I was mindful of a having a specific agenda of what and how I wanted to teach while being aware of what was actually going on right now in this moment, that maximal learning occurred. Creative exploration replaced the necessity of saying "no". As with any adventure, there is an additional bonus of having a lot of fun and gaining valuable insight.

Sensory Learning Styles

As Educators we want to help bring forth the greatest potential in our Children, so that they can care for themselves and the world in the most fruitful way possible. We have relied upon traditional educating procedures that work well for some, and not so well for others. Children that do not have a high aptitude for receiving data in these ways, and do not have a particularly high I.Q. , may be still very bright. Once their learning style strengths are recognized, they will too be able to shine through. There is a variety of sensory learning styles that accelerate the receptivity of information to a greater or lesser extent in each individual.

Watch a baby learn to walk. It collides with its own ignorance and the physical universe. How many senses is the little one using while stumbling repetitively? Creatively inviting the conscious participation of as many of the Child's senses as you are will offer the greatest possibility for skills and academic lessons to be successful.

To best accomplish this, we long to capture what the heart of learning is; then find the essence of education - drawing from the child. The following questions are examples of what research can be done on oneself and on each Child when inquiring into which senses are the most acute.

- *What qualities are necessary for learning to take place?
- *How does one learn best: through visual, auditory, or kinesthetic stimulation?
- *Does the auditory learner prefer to:
 - ... listen to an instructor?
 - ... hear their own voice stating the material?
 - ... like background music?
 - ... want a noisy environment in order to focus?

*If you consider someone a visual learner, does this Child perform best when:

- ... seeing the written word,?
- ... receiving a variety of color and shapes in the presentation?
- ... having accompanying drawings?
- ... seeing the real thing?

Experiment with a combination of visual, auditory and kinesthetic experiences while teaching. Notice what helped the child to remember best. Have Children give feedback as to what they personally enjoyed most and what produced the most usable, available knowledge for them.

Awareness of one's optimal sensory learning style combination can best be discovered and utilized in the early developmental stages of an individual. If it is realized by the Educator and the Child in preschool, then the Child will be more successfully prepared to receive the academic curriculum from the elementary school years on without the need for enforcement through rewards, grades, duress and threats of punishment.

Knowledge

The power we have given to the written word has oftentimes seduced us into introducing a new subject by merely reading about it, and never guiding the student to acquire first hand knowledge. Book learning has become the learning style of choice – even for subjects of a practical nature. However, only a percentage of children actually gain their most applicable knowledge by listening to, or reading, the written word - especially while sitting on a chair at a desk.

We can help Children increase their learning potential by lessening the sole power and sacredness we give to the written word. Begin to additionally empower the first hand knowledge that the Child can receive by experiencing the present moment more fully. Fostering personal involvement brings about more available attention units to the learning process. We have depended upon information that has come far from its source. People write on subjects that they have simply read about by authors that are just interpreting what other writers have written about another's experience.

Why must we give such a disproportionate amount of value to the circuits that our minds have developed for taking in and spitting out data? Rote learning can not replace the beauty and effects of gaining knowledge experientially.

Abstract concepts can work hand-in hand with concrete examples to create lasting meaning. For instance, let us disabuse ourselves of the idea that math is purely abstract. There's more to math than just numbers and equations.

Games can portray math in a new light. For example, correlations can be made between math and music via Pythagorean math formulas, between the golden triangle and its proportions in art, and between mathematical logic of the pentagon and all of nature. Even sports can be taught through a mathematical approach.

Having predominantly book knowledge has caused great disappointment and pain to many of our high school and college graduates. They have a rude awakening when they discover that what they have learned is insufficient for them to be highly functional members of society. Neither the diploma nor the degree brings the ability or confidence to perceive, let alone, fulfill, their simple personal dreams for inner peace and happiness.

Let us engage in a revolution, but not rebellion. We need not throw away our books. Nonetheless, let us not overvalue second and third hand information. Appreciating the value one can attain from reading and coupling that with assigning true worth to the information one receives from their own experiences, can more than double the realized knowledge. Knowledge comes from intellectual understanding and heuristic learning.

Discipline

I have longed for an ongoing peaceful and harmonious relationship with children. Although I have tasted the sweetness of that dream, there have been many times that I have been confronted by the sourness of the actual reality. In spite of the fact that I strive towards peace, my personal needs have at times appeared to conflict with the desires of the child in front of me. At those times, I noted that I frequently got triggered, and was inclined to assign the responsibility to the Child for not valuing and meeting my needs. My reactions ranged from being forlorn to frustrated to furious. The survival tactics I had learned, often lead me to act in ways which were contrary to what I knew to be most ethical. After much inquiry and observation, I discovered that many Educators enforce their personal reality, in order to get their needs met. This has been a common way to deal with people in a less powerful position than ourselves. Blaming others for our condition has been an acceptable way to treat people – especially Children.

How can we create peace without engaging in war? This has been an age-old concern for nations and families alike. There are many possibilities, some of which I will discuss below, but the bottom line is that we can not create lasting peace without proactively dealing with what obstructs this natural state. At times when my self-confidence is low, it was more difficult to be willing to work things out. However, I found that by engaging myself and my “opponent” in the re-discovery of our positive sense of self-worth in that moment, that peace was again possible.

I can not advocate, nor justify, using punishment as an attempt to solve a problem. It is time that we cease modeling this behavior to our Children. That only perpetuates violence in our culture. I have found that by engaging myself and encouraging others to discover our positive sense of self-worth, in essence - to truly take care of ourselves - that inner peace is possible. Once that is achieved, we can begin to actually be aware of, and care about, the well being of others and our environment.

A class or home that encourages mutual respect, as well as play, creates an environment less likely to have disobedience. When compliance to a demand does not occur, notice if your words or actions directed towards the Child are those that you would ever tolerate from a friend. If not, why should the Child want to listen to you? If the child does, it may be only out of guilt or fear of punishment or loss of approval. Remember your commitment to Children – to help them to become their potential. Instead of butting heads, can you be willing to let go of what you think is best, and perceive what is going on inside that individual right now? Help the Child express his feelings, attain clarity and discover his unmet needs. Additionally, Educators and other Children can show empathy to an upset child, rather than scold or make fun of him, while assisting the Child in finding solutions that would work for all people involved.

When “undisciplined” Children are aware of their wants, needs, sensations, thoughts and feelings in this moment, miracles can happen. Once Children realize what

is going on with them, the next disciplinary approach can be to assist and encourage them to create alternative solutions and consider the potential effects. In this way, you can support and guide the Children's conflict resolution skills. This, you will find, is a far superior means to effectively settle a problem than lecturing, demanding and punishing.

A common disciplinary approach for Children has been "time-outs". I have found this to be an ineffective means of handling an undesirable situation. Most young Children have not developed the cognitive understanding required to independently contemplate their actions. Can 5 year olds realize why they "chose" to fight rather than "use their words"? Can they find a solution that could meet their own needs, as well as the needs of others, while having to sit alone and perhaps feeling ostracized?

When told to "sit in the corner and think about it", most Children consider they are being punished. This punishment often brings about a sense of guilt and lowered self-esteem. Additionally, the Child's attention then moves from the immediate conflict to the new problem of how to get out of time-out. Children will say whatever it is that they know the teacher/parent wants to hear in order to end the punishment. This usually has little to do with a new understanding of the problem or conflict. This unhandled situation will arise again in the same or another form as the child's true feelings and needs have still not been met and no direction has been offered as to how to handle the conflict more skillfully in the future.

Despite the amount of powerlessness that we all feel in our busy lives at times, it is essential to the child's well-being, as well as invaluable to the future of the family dynamic, to resist using force. When an adult becomes very upset, the Child may feel confused and panicky. It is important to realize that the Child may be especially vulnerable at these times and would just be overwhelmed by any use of force, whether that be in the form of reprimanding, screaming, spanking or time-outs. We can empower Children and ourselves by taking the time to discover their true feelings and needs instead of venting our own frustration. This is a step towards reassuring Children that they are appreciated and loved even when there is a conflict of needs.

Sometimes, however, the Child's actions or words may heavily trigger us and compassionate communication may seem impossible. If so, I encourage your taking a "personal time-out" or "quiet time" and offering this option to the Child as well. Use this time to give yourselves the compassion you may need before you can wisely serve.

Once a parent or teacher feels compelled to be the disciplinarian, we know that both the child and the adult's needs are not being met. Adults have certain standards that they "expect" Children to meet, which justify their disciplinary action when these standards are unmet. Disappointment and blame often accompany unmet expectations. If the adult does not take the time to understand the present needs of the Child, then the adult is at risk of taking a superior, authoritarian, dictatorial role by harshly doling out threats or punishments. However, if the Educator and the Child can be compassionate to each other's needs, then they both can request actions that might meet their standards. This phrase works well for me: Respect & Request, but not Expect!

Self-worth is increased when needs are met. Self-worth can be maintained by giving ourselves compassion and limiting our actions to those that support ourselves and are not self-destructive. This is the first step in self-discipline. I assist in developing self-discipline by inspiring children to act and respond spontaneously while checking their own actions and reactions for appropriateness.

It is necessary to maintain the safety and insure the respect of all children. Consider preventive intervention: redirection of activity; removal from a non-optimal situation, encouragement of personal time-outs, non-punitive effective time-out alternatives. Inject humor and note their positive actions.

There are lessons that all of us can learn in this life. We all make mistakes on the road to learning these lessons. Not everyone has the same lessons to be learned. Allow for and even praise mistakes if offers an opportunity to find a new way of learning something previously too difficult to comprehend. Hopefully, there will be a person with a listening heart nearby who will compassionately be with us without judgment during our difficult times.

Also, children who easily give up when situations are potentially challenging would do well in observing how others deal with this type of situation. Note the importance of the teacher being sensitive to the children's personal goals as being different from the parent's goal. The teacher can tactfully speak up for the children by making personal contact with the parents of children.

When Children have no interest in a subject that is being taught it is usually due to the Educator not having shown the relevance to the Children. If the Educator does not inspire a personal inquiry in the student, then "misbehavior" is likely to be demonstrated. If the Child has lost his/her individuality, then the Child will "obediently" attempt to just memorize the information. If the child has become of afraid of telling the truth for fear of embarrassment or punishment, the Child will recoil and be silent. Children become undisciplined when they get stuck in some past loss or sense of inadequacy. They loose their connection to their path of purpose and "act out".

I usually get disappointed when I teach a lesson, or have any specific expectations, when I do not have the attention of the Children. They may need something else at that time, movement, food, art, individualized work. I am prepared, but flexible.

Some wonderful sources on disciplinary approaches, that I have creatively incorporated into my home and school environments, are Maria Montessori's utilization of "freedom within limits" and "re-teaching rather than correcting" and Marshall's Rosenberg's model of "Compassionate Communication". I highly recommend reading and exploring ways that you too can apply this to the Children in your life.

Ultimately, I believe that by bringing the Child's awareness to their "magical" qualities, their true essence, and by directing them to cultivate self-compassion they will establish true autonomy, regain their confidence, begin to smile and want to understand and be healthily sensitive to the needs of others.

A Curriculum for the Whole Child

The Child in me still wants to learn what is relevant to my life right now. Who am I? What do I need to succeed more successfully? If I am now being a writer, what tools do I need to best communicate, in book form, my passion for Children and Educators to achieve the height of joy and presence in each moment? I need mentors, mid-wives, who value my worth and respect my viewpoints, yet can see beyond my scope and can point out the pitfalls while assisting to birth this creation. If I were a toddler working on potty training, I would be truly engaged by a discussion, pictures and songs of the excretory system and fascinated by the workings of a toilet.

Life asks us to survive and to work harmoniously with our environment. Humankind has been evolving by striving to learn more and more in an effort to survive most effectively. What do each of us need to learn in order to have what we truly want? What do each of us need to learn in order to do what we actually want to do? What do each of us need to learn in order to become who we really are?

From a profound respect for the dignity and uniqueness of each Child, I have created a program whose goal is to support and nurture Children's natural impulse towards positive growth. When I see a whole person in front of me in the body of a Child ...I am blessed this includes caring about the physical, mental, spiritual and emotional well-being of every Child.

Through the process of inquiry the Children learn about caring: which I define as "compassionate responsibility." Through loving attention and encouragement, Children become empowered with ways to search and discover how to care for themselves, others and the environment.

Isn't learning about ourselves and our relationship to others and the environment vital? With this primary information, we have a vantage point from which to further our knowledge of more abstract concepts. The student can then ask, "How does this information relate to me and my life?"

This curriculum is my approach to transformational education – where the parent and teacher can work interdependently to help children transform into the most actualized and productive adult that they can become. This can occur by assisting the children to achieve their potential. This journey of caring adventures will help you to lead the children towards recognition of their purposes, with the confidence that they will be able to fulfill them in this life.

The caring adventures that I have included offer a mindful education for the whole child. This style of teaching addresses not only the children's minds, but their bodies, their emotions and their essence - which I have coined - their magical self. It explores these areas emphasizing awareness, relationship and care for oneself, others and the environment. It is a workable style of early childhood education.

This book will offer a variety of sensory experiences for each area to be learned. These tools can be transformational and can bring great awareness changes. They have the capacity to increase self-awareness for adults as well as for the children.

It is a holistic approach to learning – giving the parent the opportunity to begin to fill in the gaps of their own unfulfilled purposes, communication and discipline problems. This education model has to include parent education. Includes the body mind, includes parents and teachers as assisting the child to become him/her highest self. It needs to be supported by the out of school life: it needs a support system. It utilizes awareness through learning and learning through awareness...

Peace and cooperation and contribution are valued. Two independent individuals can have vastly different perspectives and interests at any given time. So it likely that, despite the amount of love/care between the individuals there will be differences, in momentary feelings, needs and desires. Thus conflict can arise that would require some sort of resolution in order to resume harmony...

Set up the child for successful interactive, non-controlling, learning

Create sufficient amount of autonomy, to be able to receive the assistance from others for their learning - the “teacher” begins to have trust in the student’s decisions about what he/she needs to learn, and helps them to get there.

Basic premise: everyone comes with a purpose. Everyone incarnates into this world with specific purposes which will help the individual attain their highest potential and which, ironically, will best help society – will be their gift to society. If each individual is nurtured to discover their path, then society wins. Facilitate the student to connect to their purpose. What will it take to become autonomous, so that interdependence can actually take place?

...Make sure you are in touch with who you really are and what you are after - without compromising yourself. Then, assure that you are enough inside. A young student could learn that if you are willing to work for something and rise above any difficulties - beyond all odds, that there is personal pride and power that can get developed within.

Each of our children is here to learn and each of us can learn from our children as well. A parent said to me: “I had to learn patience from my child. And now that I am stronger and have much more patience, I have the opportunity through interacting with my son to learn forgiveness.”

Allow for transformational education – where the parent or teacher can help the child to transform into who the whole child by helping him to achieve his potential and not transform the child into what the parent, teacher, society wants him/her to become...

How to Use this Book

This book has been developed as personal life enhancement adventures to be experienced initially by Educators, and then creatively offered to Children.

Embark on your own caring adventures first! I, personally, have taken this as an opportunity to learn about myself and consciously engage in the process of recognizing and increasing my awareness and ability to care about all aspects of myself, my friends, my family, my neighbors, my environment: the world!...

My Aspirations

My implicit belief is that if each child reaches their potential through education – through drawing them out – that we will have the opportunity to bring forth the most productive members of society possible. We could do this if we work together. We, the caretakers of Children, the Educators, can investigate how to best nurture the blossoming of each Child’s unique gifts. We can step across the hierarchical chasm and be willing to develop our listening hearts in order to show sincere compassion and offer useful assistance to the Children as they confront their inevitable challenges. We can be mindful of the child in front of us, and decide to consciously not mold the Child into what we traditionally were told all Children should become.

My intent is to make a dent in the old teaching structure and soften the educational system. It is time to go beyond the industrial revolution’s necessity for schools to create good workers. The new millennium can now mark the transformation of the educational process by altering the teacher / student relationship from that of dependency to interdependency allowing Educators to provide whatever support and encouragement is necessary.

My purpose is to inspire the caretakers of Children so that they will help kids realize who they are and invite all children to actualize their potential.

The fulfillment of my purpose is for a selfless and a selfish reason: I believe that one way to get there is for all members of society to first become aware of their potential gifts and unique talents. Then the opportunity to master the gifts that came naturally to them could bring about such a high degree of satisfaction that they would then derive such pleasure expressing their talents at the same time as society fully benefiting from the contribution of their gifts. What more available time is there for someone to touch into their path, than in their childhood?

Give the Child back to him/herself through education. The world is in the hands of our Children! If we can only trust that each human being has life purposes to be fulfilled which will include the sharing of one's gifts with the world – just the gifts that the world is longing for – then we will be able to have faith in ourselves as Educators.

Can we listen, deeply hear, and perhaps even believe, the children as they sing the words of the inspirational songwriter Karl Anthony?

“We the Children of the world have come to share our love and bring to you a world we hope for.”

September, 1998

The Magic of Self-Compassion: A Transformational Practice for Educators

Excerpts from Chapter Draft: Stopping

Stopping the Pain in All the Wrong Places

To avoid Feeling the Pain:

I fool around and tell some jokes and play computer games
I chit-chat with chums and gab on my cell and surf the net
I clean the house and plant in my garden and cook big meals
I help my friends and family members and pet

To avoid Feeling the Pain:

I play soft music and listen to old tapes and sing aloud
I work-out and rock n' roll and lie in the sun
I take long hikes and go on vacation and spiritual retreats
I watch TV and go to the movies and try to have fun

To avoid Feeling the Pain:

I go shopping and get a manicure and highlight my hair
I dress up and go to clubs and have an affair
I eat cheese and dark-chocolate and Ben & Jerry's,
I drink mocha and red wine and daiquiris with cherries

To avoid Feeling the Pain:

I work and run and work and rush
I think and plan and figure out
I justify - am right and judge
I throw my pain and sulk and pout

To avoid Feeling the Pain:

I worry and suffer and feel laden with guilt
I'm apathetic and overwhelmed and depressed
I get sick and see doctors and take meds
Thoroughly exhausted, though I can never rest

I am avoiding and never stopping!

What is Stopping?

“Stopping is doing nothing, as much as possible, for a definite period of time...
for the purpose of waking up and remembering who you are” D. Kuntz

Stopping, as I am defining it, is a stopping of everything that is not self-compassionate and that does not align with our vow (which for me has included freeing myself to truly be able sense how to best be and interact with myself and with others in every moment). It is important to know what your values, vows and purposes are, so that you know what you want to stop because it is working against these and what you want to keep because it enhances your ability to fulfill them.

This self-compassionate facet, Stopping, is a treasure all in itself. It is for me a sweet presence humbly performing both a practical and a magical function. Just with a mere decision, this potent pause arrives and instantly transforms our sense of being caught in the web of pain-driven habitual activity [Joko – footnote] into a new sense of jumping-back into the invitation of reconnection with ourself.

Stopping is practical because you can count on it. Lovingly it holds my pain in abeyance, always compassionately able to stop any of my unmindful reactions. Gracefully it performs its service of bringing me home to myself with a smile. Efficiently it returns me back to my surroundings. Additionally, when connecting and being compassionate to a part of me in pain, Stopping is magical as it transforms pain energy into available life force. Bowing down graciously it removes the curtain, showing that the pain has vanished. And as with any wise magician, it does not need to reveal the answers to “Where did it go?” or “How did that happen?” We are just thankful that it’s gone.

Hubbard said that an acknowledgment is a full stop. I experience the converse of that: stopping is an acknowledgement; that it why it is such an effective self-compassionate tool. Acknowledging ‘what is’ performs the magic of communion and instantaneous change. Transformation occurs as the sense of impermanence is realized through compassionate connection.

Stopping retains its magical presence even though it has different functions. Whether it is a pausing or finishing up of any kind of activity, it is always for the sake of creating space and time to just be. Even when Stopping is the initiator of the immediate prevention of self-abuse or in the transformation of pain energy, Stopping puts you back in your own driver’s seat.

Stopping is a returning home to ourself when there is not pain energy present that first needs to be transformed. When there is underlying pain, and Stopping can not lead us to “just being” or spiritual connection, then Stopping can be used as the agent of temporarily disconnecting us from this pain so that we can self-compassionately transform this pain.

The Potential Benefits of Stopping

- ❖ Stopping pauses to give a gift of rest to our hectic lives.
- ❖ Stopping offers us time and space to regroup.
- ❖ Stopping ceases our negative triggers.
- ❖ Stopping prevents us from throwing our pain on anyone.
- ❖ Stopping brings awareness to our addictive behavior.
- ❖ Stopping interrupts our automatic mental, emotional, and physical activity.
- ❖ Stopping enhances our self-observation.
- ❖ Stopping reawakens us to the present moment.
- ❖ Stopping restores our joyful and creative energy.

The Values of Stopping

“Through the sacred act of pausing, we develop the capacity to stop hiding, to stop running away from our experience. We begin to trust in our natural intelligence, in our naturally wise heart, in our capacity to open to whatever arises” [Brach p. 53]

In staying with the theme of the definition, that we are stopping whatever is not aligned with our stated purpose or vow, the values of Stopping are two-fold: as a tool to reconnect with ourself when we have unconsciously separated out and as a means of pausing our pain energy reaction causing that disconnection.

Stopping’s main value is in its ability to reconnect me with myself. In this way, it frees me from acting on what the external world is calling to my attention to without being conscious of myself.

Sometime Stopping can not bring me towards wholeness because a trigger keeps me from reconnection. In that case, Stopping’s second function comes into play: pausing my pain energy reaction. Once this energy is paused, Stopping switches my direction and then either gently nudges me back to my path of wholeness or drops me directly home. I am placed momentarily back on my journey once again, ready to fully re-embrace myself through the use of any and all of the other facets of self-compassion.

If the pain energy is so strong that Stopping can not bring me back to wholeness, then it will pause this pain energy reaction so that I can be free to focus my attention on generating the physical and spiritual energy needed to transform the pain energy by being self compassion. Accomplishing this contributes to my consciously evolving, which is a part of what I have vowed to do. Stopping has then proven her worth as one that brings me back into alignment with what is really of value to me - wholeness presence.

I am continually amazed by the magic of stopping in my life! It is its magic that makes life more fun and that is the spark of transformation within the magic of self-compassion!

Pausing “Pain Energy” Reactions

Stopping blesses me with a pause, a resting from my body-mind’s strong control over my whole self in any given moment.

When stunned by my inability to momentarily control my students after a chain reaction outburst in the classroom, my protective, reactive mind “comes to my aid”. It introverts me and triggers two pain energy reactions: feeling stranded in a desert of despair and being tempted to fulfill the impulse of acting out against these children to put them back under my control. With all the compassionate inner strength I can muster up, I tenderly compel myself not to act on that urge. This is the first taste of the facet of Stopping, which becomes my first few sips of refreshing temporary relief. This self-compassionate activity relaxes me sufficiently to now be able to move to the next level of Stopping: quelling the triggered mental urgency of trying to madly figure out what to do. I find where that is originating in me and connect with that part of myself, offering my heartfelt compassion and reassurance that as I am feeling more whole again the answer will naturally be revealed. My shoulders drop and I feel the earth beneath my feet again. I can then smile warmly with the insecure part of me that had felt out of control and together look out and see the sweet faces of the children in the classroom and gently move them on to our next activity.

L. Ron Hubbard (LRH) believed that we are all the effect of our “Reactive Mind”. He described this as a “portion of a person's mind which works on a totally stimulus-response basis, which is not under his volitional control, and which exerts force and the power of command over his awareness, purposes, thoughts, body and actions.” [tec dic336]

This stopping facet of self-compassion actively begins breaking reactive behavior patterns. Hubbard saw this as vital, and therefore was passionate about addressing it, thus coining terms like “reactive mind”, “destimulation”, “key-in” and “key-out” to reveal concepts and potential solutions that he believed to be lacking in other fields.[footnote ‘tech dictionary’ defs]. LRH suggested that when a person’s “reactive mind” got triggered, “keyed-in”, by various perceptions in their environment that matched earlier painful incidents, it was best to take that triggered person out of the triggered area of “restimulation”. He projected that this would thus bring about a “key-out”, “knocking out the point of restimulation”. This is what Stopping is doing, but additionally a heart connection is necessary for more lasting results.

Compassionately stopping our persona in pain can be the first step in momentarily pausing reactivity. Stopping then includes being compassionate to our own pain and modeling that allows us to help our children to be able to stop their reactivity by being compassionate to their own pain.

Stopping What? Stopping Habit Energy

Stopping Habit Energy

Stopping the worry
 Stopping prediction
 Stopping the cravings
 Stopping addiction

Stopping the pain
 Stopping affliction
 Stopping the friction
 Stopping the fiction!

When I use Stopping as a means of pausing automatic mental, emotional and physical triggered reactivity, this can be a stopping of many types of uncomfortable reactions, such as: acute or chronic pain, actions that I have been taking to stop pain, addictions that I have unconsciously been developing to stop feeling or sensing pain, mental and physical compulsions. What these all have in common as the energy that fuels them is what Thay calls “habit energy.” Habit energy replaces choice, free will, with compulsion. The compulsive activity is derived from an intention to avoid or reduce pain.

Habit energy demands respect as it is quite strong and focused. It takes a devout practice to work with this energy successfully. Sometimes when pain energy is triggered, even considering stopping can initially bring terror to the surface. That is why it is imperative that Stopping be compassionate and not creating further polarity.

Stopping is stopping all of the created solutions for suppressing the pain. When our internal programming gets triggered by chronic and acute situations causing pain energy reactions, Stopping is valuable as she is able to separate out from the reaction, compassionately befriend it and lull the habit energy that had swept us away. Pausing pain energy reaction gives me the opportunity to then reconnect with ourselves. Just having the knowledge and the confidence that you can stop the negative behavior that has been heavily programmed into you is healing as it gives hope for transformation.

The compulsion to stop the pain is what can actually create habit energy and addictions. The paradox is that it is not in the avoidance of the pain energy, but in the connection with the pain energy that the pain actually stops! It is the onset of the return from the darkness, the “shadow side”, Tolle’s “pain body”, Hubbard’s “bank”, Thay’s “habit energy”. Stopping is a stopping of the habit energy fueling these reactions of addictive behaviors such as abuse, compulsive doing and thinking, and reacting to triggers.

Everyone is trying to stop the pain, sometimes at very subtle levels. When we are frequently and semi-unconsciously engaging in the use of drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, coffee, food, work, play, sports, exercise, dance, TV, movies, concerts, parties, reading, doctors, chiropractors, acupuncturists, massage, and the latest and greatest physical, mental, emotional and spiritual therapies- it is often just to stop the pain.

Stopping can accomplish the goal of pausing pain energy for a variety of reactive situations. Two different mechanisms of body-mind survival programming that I have found this style of “stopping” to work well with are addictions and triggers. Triggers and

addictions do not have to take over our life if we can be compassionate to ourselves. Stopping is an initial self-compassionate step to healing those triggers and addictions that can be the downfall for educators.

It often seems too difficult to take care of our own pain, so we are anxiously hoping that something or someone else will do it for us. We know that until our pain is stopped we can't seem to be free to be there fully for ourself or for anyone else in a truly optimal way. But how can we deal with our pain so that we can be free?

As James and Friedman discovered and stated in their Grief Recovery Handbook, "As the pressure builds up inside our personal steam kettle, we automatically seek relief. This is when we may start participating in the short-term energy relieving behaviors [STERBs].... They create an illusion of recovery by causing you to forget or bury emotions....They do nothing to remove the cork that is jammed in the spout... Eventually your steam kettle is overloaded and the STERBs no longer create the illusion of well-being." [Recovery Handbook P. 80:]

An inner voice warns me not to stop my short-term fixes -which I am using to avoid the Pain Monster. Otherwise, it will leap out and swallow me up whole! Through fear activation, I am programmed to escape the pain at all possible costs... even if by honestly stopping the truth of this moment could be revealed, even if it costs me my own life!

STOPPING: The First Step of Transformation

In this very instance,
With no 'fix' assistance,
I choose to distance
Myself from my pain

This crucial extraction
From strong held reaction,
A short-term distraction
I can sustain.

Educator Interview Questions

1. Are you currently educating?
2. Can you describe your overall teaching experience?
3. Notice if any situations come to mind as you consider the following.
Sense and summarize the situation.
Consider what it felt like inside of you at the time or now
What response or reaction did you have or do you have now?
 - ❖ Recall a time when you felt successful as an educator
 - ❖ Recall a time period of teaching when you were exhausted.
 - ❖ Recall a time as a student when you felt uncomfortable or upset
 - ❖ Recall a time when you didn't want to teach
 - ❖ Recall a time as a student when you didn't want to go to school
 - ❖ Recall a time when you felt ill and taught anyway
 - ❖ Recall a teacher or administrator who you did not like and why
 - ❖ Recall a student or a class you had difficulty disciplining
 - ❖ Recall a time you were barely able to suppress "throwing your pain"
 - ❖ Recall a time as a student when you felt overwhelmed or confused
 - ❖ Recall a time when your emotional state interfered with your ability to teach creatively
 - ❖ Recall a time when you thoroughly enjoyed school
4. Are there any areas of our educational system that are challenging for you to deal with or to implement? Have you been able to do something about it? If so, what measures have you taken?
5. What guiding principles do you use to mitigate stressful interactions with children?
6. What triggers you the most in your daily professional life? Do you handle it satisfactorily? How?
7. What, if any, are the major obstacles you encounter as an educator? What strategies do you use?
8. Have you been able to balance your professional life with your personal life? If so, what has worked for you? If not, what areas of either your personal or your professional life have suffered the consequences? Do you consciously take care of your mental, physical and spiritual health?
9. Do any of your behavior patterns interfere with your success? Are you lacking skills, techniques or practices to better help you work with a mental or emotional pattern which may arise while being an educator?
10. Did your educator training not fully prepare you to handle real life teacher-student situations? If so, in what areas could you still use some assistance?
11. Are there any particular ways that you prepare yourself for teaching?
12. Do you notice if your past experiences as a student affect your teaching experience or confidence?
13. Are you usually free to sense how to best serve your students? When do you not feel free to serve?
14. What does "self-compassion for educators" mean to you?
15. Would you read a book, attend a class or do a workshop intended to help you experience how self-compassion might help you be a happier and more successful educator?

(Excerpts from last workshop I created & delivered at the Montessori convention)

Self-Compassion: Preparing Your Whole Self for True Success

Maria Montessori valued the teacher's whole self:
"The real preparation for education is a study of one's self."

Care for the teacher who cares for the children!
 Prepare yourself to be a more successful and joyful teacher.
 Experience self-compassion and self-discovery practices!

c. Prepare art table by projects

"Honoring Myself" Self-Compassion Project

1. Separate frames
2. Wallpaper cutting

"Cultivating Wholeness" Self-Compassion Project –

1. Magazine pictures
2. Smaller art materials
3. Words

2. Set-up our whole selves

- a. Patty and I prepare with TR 0 together.
- c. Cultivate a state of being self compassion: do the practice with patty
- d. Imagine the students there to be compassion with

4 b. Getting started Presenters when seated with students

- a. Silence with ourselves
- b. Get located and present in this room. Feel ourselves in this chair
- d. Sense the other teachers in this room
- e. Maintain 'being compassion' as ourselves
- f. See each teacher as one of my personas
- g. Be Self-Compassion and compassionate *with this class*.

5 b. Getting started With Students:

- C. I invite us to explore the possibility that by being self-compassion we can
 Reduce our Stress and Increase our Joy
 + That by preparing ourselves to be Self-Compassionate
 We can cultivate a State
 That could be More Beneficial both to ourselves and to our Students

C. Educator stress:

Stress: "the body's reaction to the stressors we encounter" [Kaiser & Polczynski, 1982]

1. INTERNAL SOURCES OF EDUCATOR STRESS:

- a. SELF-ESTEEM
- b. EDUCATOR ROLE PREPAREDNESS

2. External stressors: Educators ILL-PREPARED TO DEAL WITH

a. DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS & related CULTURAL DISTRESS

D. Burn-out

“...a state of mind resulting from prolonged exposure to intense emotional stress and involving three major components: physical, emotional and mental exhaustion.” [Pines 1981] 1. Depersonalization 2. Alienation 3. Devalued personal accomplishment

❖ **2nd Exploration** in our meeting here this morning: Whole Self Preparation Study’s finding: CORE EDUCATOR PROBLEM: Holistic Ill-Preparedness

“*The real preparation for education is a study of one’s self.*”

Whole Self preparation will reduce stress!!

Being self-compassionate includes becoming aware of – studying - our whole self

0. Whole Self Preparation requires: Awareness of our Whole-Self

- a. What comprises the whole self that we are preparing to study?
- b. Ask group: What parts of yourself are you aware of?

1. Connection births wholeness: Feel whole self once c/w the parts
 b. i.e.: Let’s Make a Physical Connection – Breathing Stretching Tapping
 This is important for me since my enthusiasm in teaching often superseded my physical connection & its needs.

2. Honoring your Whole Self

a. Look over the personal section:

Purpose, Goal, Need, Pleasure, Displeasure, Pain or Dreams

e. Creative Expression of Items: Increases Joy!

2. “Honoring Myself” Self-Compassion Project:

**This is a self-compassionate practice to be completed over time! Imagine doing it!

3rd intent: Why **Cultivate Self Compassion?**

Maria Montessori says, Secret of Childhood, p. 15

“The adult must find within himself the still unknown error that prevents him from *seeing the child* as he is.
 If such a preparation is not made,
 if the attitudes relative to such a preparation are not acquired,
 he cannot go further.”

*the teacher needs to be free to sense how to serve

Being Self-compassion is an attitude that can be acquired – cultivated –

To help prepare yourself to deal with the error

To make your unknown errors known, correct your errors and *see the child*.

Once we can compassionately correct our own errors, we will be able to serve the true needs of the child.

Self-compassionate practices address:

1. How do I deal with my emotions?
2. Can I heal my pain?
3. How can I deal with conflict in my educational setting with less difficulty?
4. How can I stay present with myself and my students when I get triggered?

Dan Siegel's book, *Parenting from the Inside Out*, shows that when parents make better sense of their own childhood and understand it, it helps them to be better parents, particularly if there is trauma and pain involved.

I am moving towards a life where *Being Self-Compassion* is leading my actions

Cultivating Self-Compassion

[Student pack - p. 5]

I. First practice of self-compassion: My Vow

2. An honoring of your whole self

Hanh - The basic thing is you have the vision. – 5 precepts = vows

3. Examples:

Tara Brach (p. 35) “May I love and accept myself just as I am”

Tibetan Bodhisattva vow ‘to liberate all beings’

One of Mine: I will liberate myself, transforming pain energy, being self-compassion

II. Second practice of self-compassion: Stopping and just being

Value of Stopping:

- * as a means to pausing our pain energy reaction
- * as a tool to begin reconnecting with ourselves
- * as a preparation for Shabbat

Just being:

- * just being in my body
- * just being there allowing my body to relax

...When my creative juices were flowing, which before my burn-out was happening quite regularly, I used my physical body for its adrenaline rushes not realizing that I was depleting my adrenals. In addition to ignoring my physical signals I became less and less in touch with the needs of my body.

*Use it in life when you notice you are in the control of a compulsive behavior

*Use it in the classroom at the first sign of being triggered

III. Third practice of self-compassion: Mindfulness Set-Up [Stud. Pack p. 4]

Montessori: Paying attention to details Bringing the Present Moment to Mind

Definitions:

1. Mindfulness is a non-judgmental, receptive mind state in which one observes thoughts and feelings as they are, without trying to suppress or deny them. We cannot ignore our pain and feel compassion for it at the same time. At the same time, mindfulness requires that we not be “over-identified” with thoughts and feelings, so that we are caught up and swept away by negative reactivity. <https://webpace.utexas.edu/neffk/pubs/JRPbrief.pdf>

2. Hanh – wisdom: Mindfulness is the capacity of being aware of what is going on.

b. It is both a good daily preparation for the students and the ourselves.

c.. Thay’s walking mindfulness meditation + Montessori’s *walking the line*,

[Includes elemental connections w/ the earth and the heavens: *feeling them inside of our body*]

a. Spiritual Archetypes b. Magical Self c. Being Compassion in your Heart

i.e.: * “Right now I am noticing I feel apprehensive: I might not get to share all that I wanted to share!”

In Classroom: Break for Mindfulness set-up:

1. If it is only my problem: find a private space or go to bathroom.

2. If I am in reaction to the class: do mindfulness with the class

Doing this with the children helps us to be and stay present in the classroom.

A. Body-Mind Awareness Practice: Inquiry Doll

0. Movement to music to begin inquiry:

2. Inquiry: Physical or emotional pain or discomfort – what needs attentions?

3. Locate area of body - touch that area on self

4. Find where it would be located on the doll

7. Make a Pain Energy List of those items that need self-compassion

These are the parts of you that need your compassion

Cultivating Wholeness

What is healing for me?

1. What makes me feel relaxed, releases my triggers, transforms my pain...?

5. Creative Expression for self-compassionate transformation

Take the time to love yourself - You are beautiful

Take the time to heal yourself - You are beautiful!

Michael Stillwater



CULTIVATING COMPASSION

Heuristic Creative Expression

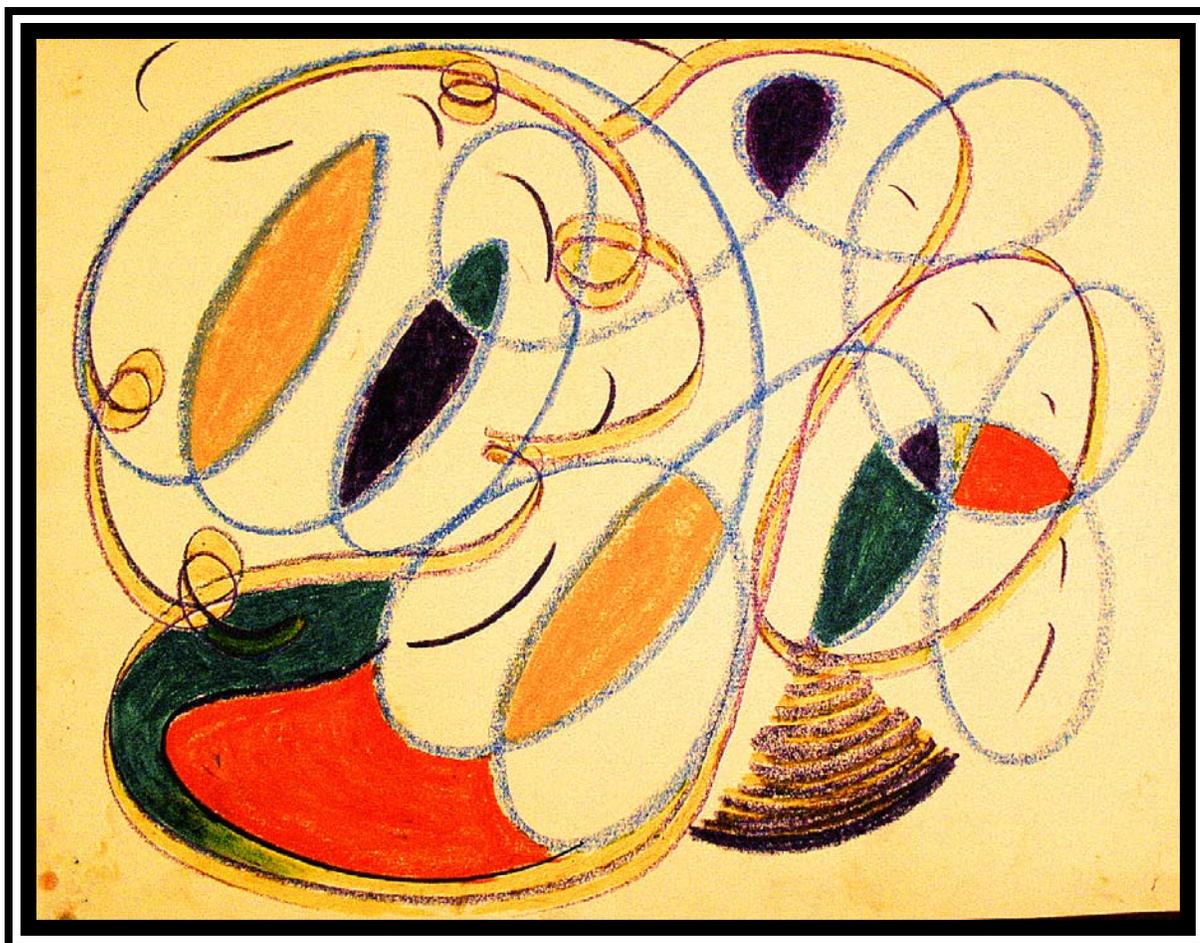
The Process of Connecting to, Evolving, and Cultivating Compassion



CONNECTION BIRTHS WHOLENESS

Heuristic Creative Expression

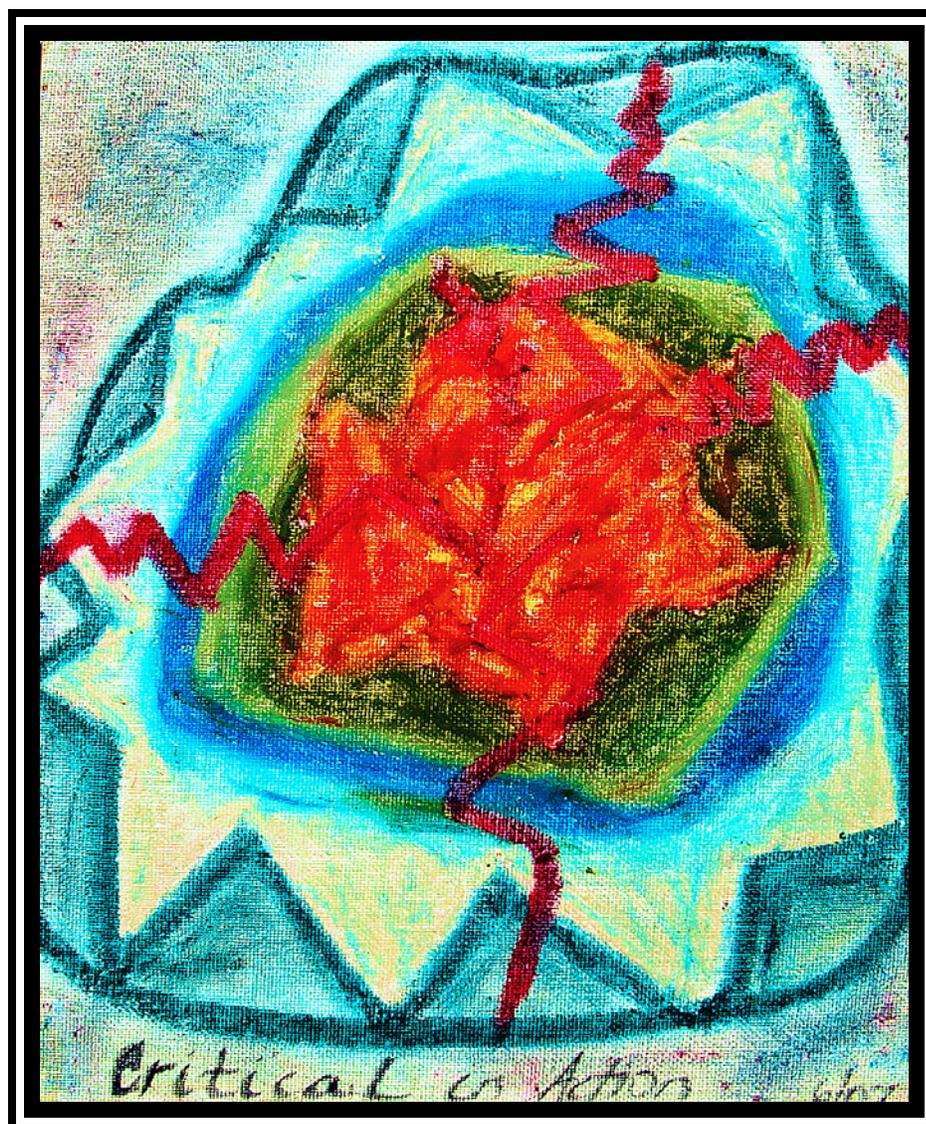
How Connection with Various Parts of Myself Births my Wholeness.



FREEING PAIN ENERGY

Heuristic Creative Expression

The Freedom Resulting from Transforming the Pain Energy of *Self-Indulgence*



CRITICAL IN ACTION

Heuristic Creative Expression

Transforming *Critical* Pain Energy Triggered as an Educator



MY ANCESTRAL PALETTE

Narrative Creative Expression:

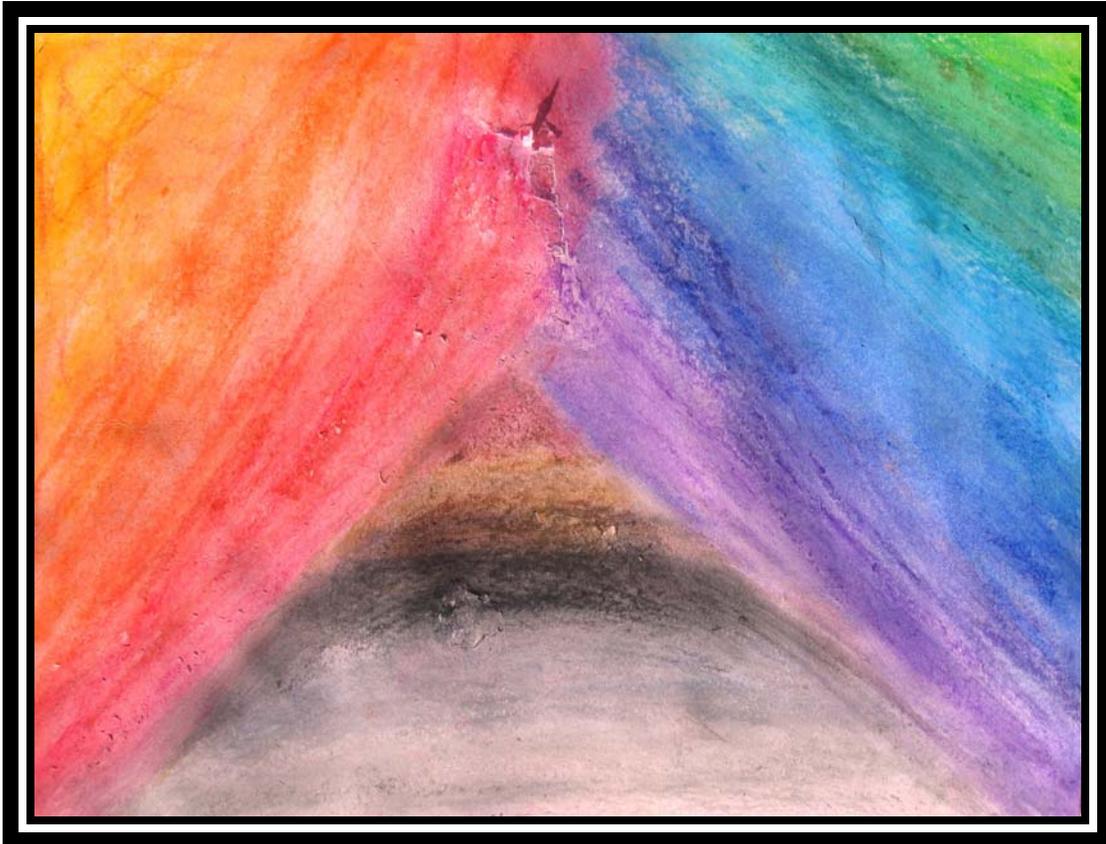
Part 1 - Being Parented: Exploration and Insight into My Family History



REACHING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Narrative Creative Expression

Part 2: Creating my Own Transformational Holistic Education Curriculum



THE ACTION TRIAD

Narrative Creative Expression

Part 3: The Action Triad of a Compassionate Persona



A TRIBUTE TO:

SOUL – SISTER LENI



Combined Heuristic and Narrative Creative Expressions

My Heuristic *ShowTime* CD Inspired Part 3 Narrative Compassionate Cultivator: Leni