

VISIONARY

Volume 9, Number 3

THE JOURNAL OF GAY SPIRIT VISIONS

Fall 2003



Daily Spiritual Practices

Keeping our hearts and minds open to Spirit each day can surely keep us grounded to allow grace and peace into our lives. How do we do this? Five GSV brothers describe their own daily practices to keep themselves receptive to the gifts of Spirit.

Visionary (ISSN 1533-8231) is the journal of Gay Spirit Visions and a publication of The Council of Trusted Elders of Gay Spirit Visions, Inc., a Georgia not-for-profit corporation recognized under Section 501(c)(3) of Internal Revenue Code of the United States. Copyright, 2003.

Gay Spirit Visions

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 339, Decatur, GA 30031-0339

Voice mail: 404/658-0221

E-mail: info@gayspiritvisions.org

Website:

www.gayspiritvisions.org

Council of Trusted Elders

Craig "Craigalee" Cook,
Presiding Elder

King "Wing of Men" Thackston,
Presiding Elder-Elect

Bruce Parrish,
Elder of Finance

Jennings Fort,
Elder of Communications

Jim Jones,
Elder of Service

George Miller,
Elder at Large

Chase "Skywalker" Robinson,
Elder of Archive

The 2003 Gay Spirit Visions Planning Committee

consists of the Council of Trusted Elders plus Thom Gresham, Tony James, Ben Linton, Brad Pitts and Michael Varnum

Advisors: Martin "TreeWalker" Isganitis,
Andrew Ramer, John Stowe

Journal Committee:

Jennings Fort, *Editor*
Mike Goettee, *Design & Production*

Submission Queries:

jenman@mindspring.com
Please put "GSV *Visionary*"
in the subject line.

Address changes & advertising queries:

visionary@gayspiritvisions.org

Copyright ©2003 Gay Spirit Visions, Inc.

ELDER'S CIRCLE

Dear Gentle Men:

The conference is behind us. Our year is almost over. I write this letter wanting to say something inspiring and wise, words



BY CRAIG COOK

that might give our year a finish and energize us tomorrow. What comes to mind are words others have spoken to me about this year and what GSV has meant and continues to mean to them.

With Patrick McNamara's Gay Spirit Culture project and GSV as the model, many questions and a lot of focus and energy around gay spirituality is in the air, on our screen. Out there in the real/unreal world as well, we can see how much focus is on us. Seeing our culture portrayed on TV often makes me uncomfortable because it's so skewed and hyped. I wonder even more if our quest for spirit in this world is more timely and serving. How does gay spirit hold up against "Queer Eye"?

In the last few years, spiritually minded men from all over the Americas and Europe have visited GSV. Some of these men come from retreat centers, facilitated gatherings or both, all seeking, asking and serving that same quest for spirit. Our visitors and guests are often quite notable figures, men of true accomplishment. They are in OUR circle and part of this burgeoning gay spiritual ground swell in our gay-influenced, broadcast, print world.

That said, I hear from our brothers that we are central to this movement and important in their lives. William from the northern Midwest says that if GSV met

there, only four or five men might participate. There is almost no gay community, spiritual or otherwise. He is grateful for the 14 years we have persistently held our original goal with the ability to recreate our conferences again and again. He thinks our longevity and purity of purpose may happen because we pass our work and leadership on to "new" men while the "old" ones hold the space and intention. How tribal does that sound? Toby expressed his pleasure in our circle, finding getting there and being there a challenge. He knew how it should be and, as it turns out found, that "this IS how gay spirituality can be." After years doing this work, I found men actually achieving this at this conference. John tells me, traveling the world teaching Body Electric, that no where in the U.S. is there a gay men's spiritual group quite like us. Steve says GSV is on the edge of something big—for us and maybe the world. Hunter, in all that he has done, expressed joy upon finding such a sweet loving tribe, authentic and real.

Are we a model? Are we on the front edge of something big that really makes a difference? Do we bring out the best in each other standing in spirit? I ask you these questions.

What I know for sure is that this work is good. It has taken me to places I could only have imagined. It fills me. I am so excited to be in the thick of it.

We go into the future, holding our intention, our history, our space and, who knows, maybe a TV show: "Queer Guys with the Spirit Eyes." I am honored to have shared 2003 with you. Stay tuned my brothers. The "new season" is upon us. ▼

In love, as ever,
Craigalee

Craig Cook is a long-time Atlanta resident and can be reached at Craigalee2@aol.com.





REKINDLING THE FLAME

Every year when I came down from the Fall Conference on The Mountain, I wonder how I can keep that warm, positive energy and feeling of peacefulness going. Some years I'm more successful at doing it than others. This year I haven't been able to keep it going so well. Mounting pressures and time demands from several



BY JENNINGS FORT

sources have kept me from feeling that sacred flame. Now I'm pissed. But it's brought up some interesting questions: What's really important in my life? Why can't I spend more time

with these things?

I've heard other GSV brothers talk about these same issues, mostly about job demands that add stress, take up too much time and keep us from doing what we really want to do. For me it's spending too much of my free time worrying about what I can get done at work. Then I worry about spending too much time worrying. This, of course, pisses me off even more. This also involves my poor, long-suffering partner, John, sitting at the dinner table over a meal from a plastic bag in the freezer, listening to the latest ridiculousness from my work day. Our schedules give us precious little time together during the week and I hate wasting part of it reliving meaningless work experiences that I want to forget anyway. My work has pushed several of

my old and sensitive buttons – fear of rejection from not doing a good job and fear of finding myself in stressful situations I'm powerless to change.

I think we all have to consider these issues every so often - we want to open our hearts and rely more on Spirit to help us through these tough times. How do we do this? A few years ago, the *Visionary* featured a special section on "Spirituality in Everyday Life," including articles about altars, gratefulness, nature and self-made beauty around us. In this issue, we've revisited that theme with "Daily Spiritual Practices." Five of our brothers have written articles about what they do to keep themselves grounded and more aware of Spirit. I hope these articles can offer some new insight to help us all stay grounded so we can determine and embrace what's really important in our lives.

I have to smile a little at myself when I think seven months ago I was praying to Spirit to help me find a job. Well I got one. I remind myself almost daily that there are people in far worse situations and that I should stop whining. There's a lesson in here somewhere and if I can quit worrying and stressing, maybe I'll find it. For me, part of the lesson could be getting more assertive, making some changes and taking better care of myself. Then hopefully I can rekindle that familiar and beautiful flame that we feel at The Mountain and feel the warmth all year long. ▼

Jennings Fort lives in Atlanta. Contact him at jenman@mindspring.com.

GSV potlucks in Atlanta, are held the fourth Saturday of the month at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted.

GSV yoga in Atlanta. For more information, contact Jim Braden 404-627-2438 or buffalonimbus@yahoo.com.

GSV Heart Circles in Atlanta are held the second Sunday of every month, hosted by Ben Linton at 7:30 p.m. For location contact Ben Linton at 404-373-9869, benlinton4@aol.com.

November 22 – GSV Potluck Hosted by Doug Caulkins and Mikel Wilson, 535 Watergate Ct., Roswell, GA 770-993-9959, snakeowl@yahoo.com

December 27 – GSV Potluck Hosted by Wendell Johnson, 1608 Asheforde Drive, Marietta, GA, 770-552-4744, Louis8@hotmail.com

January 24 - GSV Potluck Hosted by George Miller, 339 10th St NW, Atlanta, 404-875-1061, aagm8888@aol.com

Brothers – We need more volunteers to host potlucks. This is an important part of our efforts to keep the GSV spirit flowing all year long. If you live in the Atlanta area and are interested in hosting a GSV potluck, please contact service@gayspiritvisions.org.



Gay Spirit Visions

A Mission Statement for Our Second Decade and A New Millennium

We are committed to creating safe, sacred space that is open to all spiritual paths, wherein loving gay men may explore and strengthen spiritual identity.

We are committed to creating a spiritual community with the intent to heal, nurture our gifts and potential, and live with integrity in the world.

We are committed to supporting others in their spiritual growth by sharing experiences and insights.

To fulfill these goals we facilitate annual retreats and conferences, sponsor social events, publish a newsletter, and maintain web-based communications for men who love men.

“Heart Circle”

A TRIBUTE TO THE LOVE OF MEN

Giclee print from the original painting by Michael Goettee

Reproduced on heavy watercolor paper using archival inks. The painting was inspired by the late Ramon Noya's photograph from the GSV Fall Conference. This is a gallery-quality print. Its color is true to the original painting.

To view the artwork in full color, please see my website:

http://maxglitz.home.mindspring.com/portfo_fine.html

e-mail: maxglitz@mindspring.com • *Home phone:* 404-292-5825

19" x 28.5" with 2-inch border.

(Original painting: acrylic on canvas 28"x42")

\$275 plus shipping.

Cash or checks only.



COUNSELING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

Individual, couples and group psychotherapy with a focus on:

- Intimacy and relationships
- Sexuality
- Spirituality and spiritual direction
- Coming out and other gay-related issues
- Depression and anxiety

Visit my web site for links to health and spirituality-related resources, articles I've written, workshops and other events I facilitate and a sign-up for my free email newsletter.

I'm a member of the American Counseling Association, The Association for Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Issues in Counseling, the Licensed Professional Counselor's Association of Georgia and the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality.

John R. Ballew, M.S.

Licensed Professional Counselor

(404) 874-8536

jballew@mindspring.com

www.bodymindsoul.org



Advertise in

VISIONARY

Reach a special audience of more than 600 open-hearted men around the U.S. and internationally.

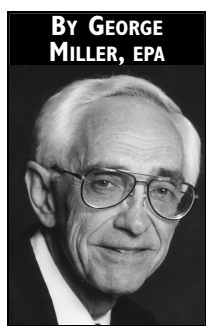
For more information, please contact us at visionary@gayspiritvisions.org



Daily Spiritual practices

Waking up body and soul

In his book, *Gay Spirituality*, Toby Johnson states, "The goal of any spirituality is to experience heaven now." I'd tried to do that with alcohol and drugs for 35 years until it no longer worked. When I was 54, I was confronted with an intervention for chemical dependency, was in treatment for four



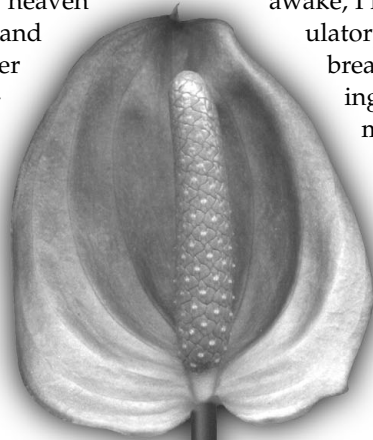
BY GEORGE
MILLER, EPA

months and became a member of a 12-step recovery program (and still am with much gratitude). There I began to develop daily spiritual practices, initially to stay clean and sober. Now these practices let me thrive as I follow my bliss.

In early sobriety I discovered I was a "morning person." My spiritual practices had to begin when I opened my eyes and the best time was 4:30 a.m., still my practice. I begin in bed with 10 minutes of deep breathing and toning, make a bathroom call, drink a liter of reverse osmosis water (never tap water) and do a brief Chi Kung wake-up exercise of touching my body from scalp to feet (sometimes using a soft-bristle skin brush to stimulate blood flow and remove dead cells). The cleansing process continues with teeth-brushing and flossing, irrigating the sinuses with saline from a Neti pot and clearing the rectum with a low level sea-salt enema as a colon "wake up" call. I use a little freshly juiced wheat grass in all these procedures.

Then I'm ready for deep-breathing yoga for 20 minutes then a short session on a mini-trampoline. Prayer, meditation and spiritual reading follow and lead to one of my most intuitive times of day—shaving. In front the mirror I've had some of the most miraculous insights.

As an EPA (Erotic Pleasure Activist) I've realized that, for me, eroticism is a direct path to spirituality. Seven years ago, coming out after 26 years of marriage and three children, I was filled with body shame, guilt and was shut down erotically. My therapist recommended a Body Electric workshop. In that safe, nurturing, erotic space I healed my trauma and discovered I could access daily spirituality through sexuality. At 61 I was amazed that it wasn't necessary to ejaculate every time I masturbated (which I prefer to call "mindful self-pleasuring"). I could use that orgasmic energy to reach a higher erotic and spiritual plateau.



After shaving, with my body physically and emotionally awake, I make love to myself with 30 minutes of non-ejaculatory, mindful self-pleasuring while dancing and breathing in a re-birthing fashion (rapid, deep inhaling with relaxed exhalation). The goal, my erotic mentor, Bruce Grether, says, is "to experience a prolonged *erotic trance state* which has the power to soothe your psyche and nourish your famished soul." To me, this is true spirituality, keeping me grounded and focused. I use this energy throughout my day for creativity, healing and occasionally for sex with others.

Meeting my need for touch is important in my daily spiritual practice. I receive many necessary hugs in recovery groups, from GSV brothers and others. Also, I don't "do" cars, houses, clothes or shopping (can I really be gay?). My resources go for weekly Swedish non-genital massage, monthly acupuncture, Rolfing, colon hydrotherapy, tantric and Taoist erotic massage and an invaluable visit to a safe, supportive psychotherapist.

Another daily spiritual practice is singing which reminds me that I have a voice I never knew existed when I was in my addiction. Two years ago my Rolfing therapist massaged my lower neck and asked, "Have you ever sung?" She suggested a voice coach. After weekly lessons singing only scales for six months, I auditioned and joined the Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus.

So, my brothers, it's now 6:30 a.m. and I'm off to my gym for a workout, steam room and hot tub—all spiritual experiences to further prepare me for my day. Then I go back home to bed (Just kidding. I wanted to see if you're still with me). Actually, I continue my day with a high spiritual and erotic charge (like I felt when I recently came down from The Mountain). I'm present for myself and others, for a compassionate and loving life. Take a BREATH with me.

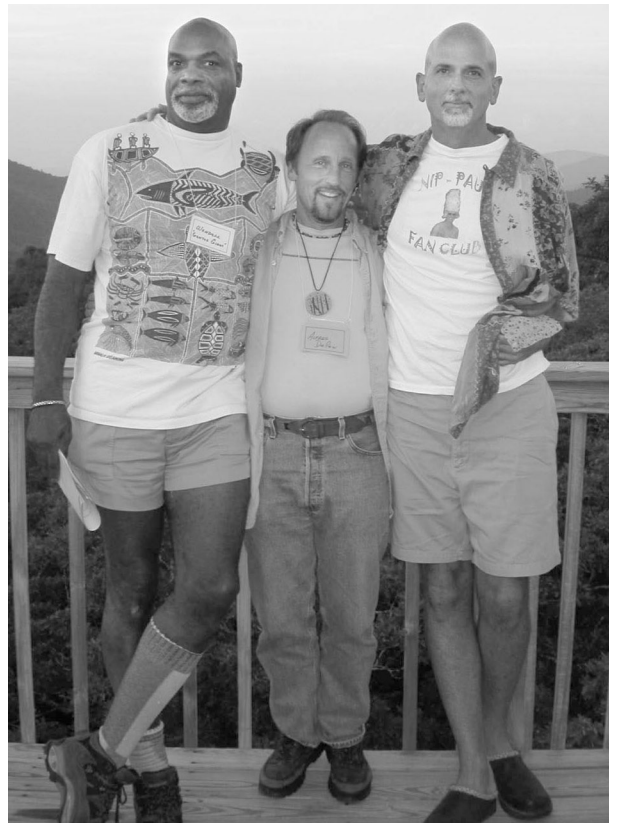
Much love to each of you and All My Relations. Namaste. ▼

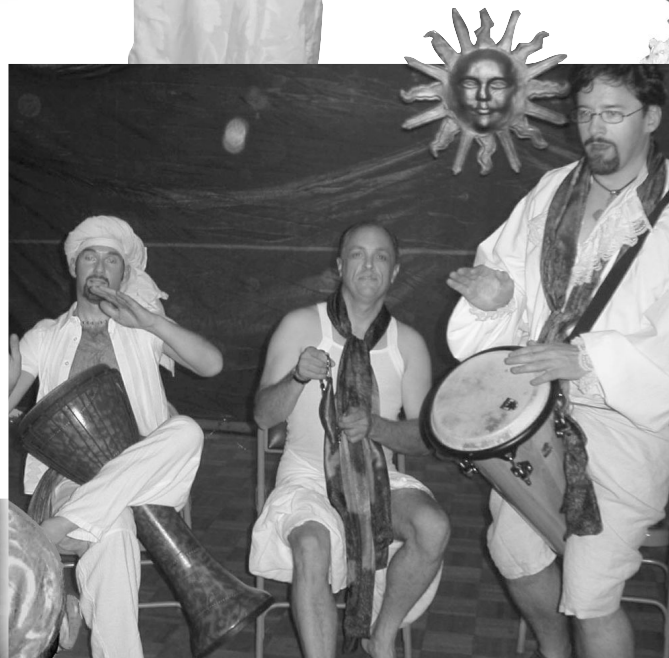
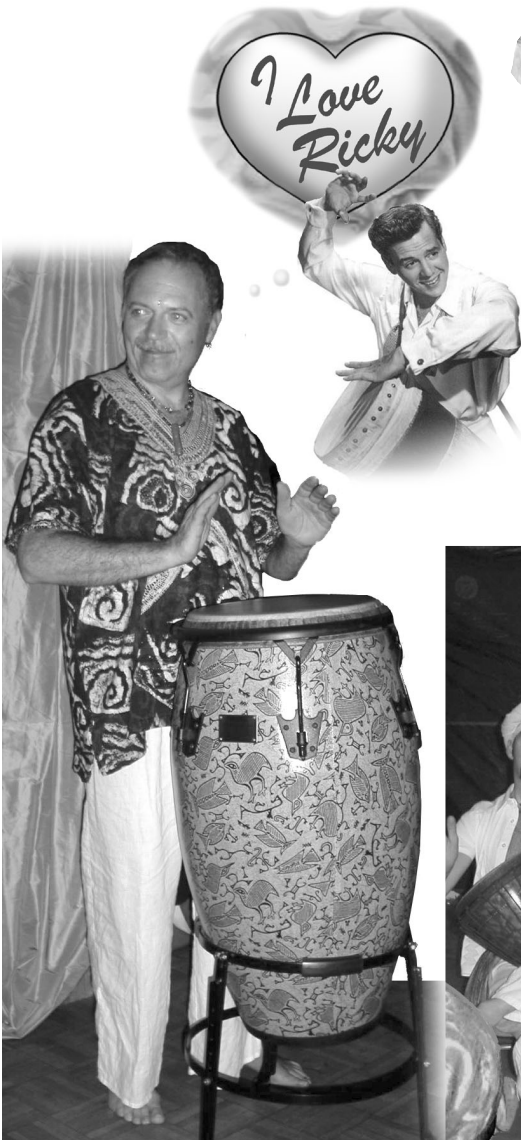
George Miller is a retired Atlanta dermatologist, a practicing colon hydrotherapist certified by the International Association for Colon Hydrotherapy and medical director of the Physicians Well-Being Program of the Medical Association of Georgia. He is a member of the GSV Council of Trusted Elders, a passionate Erotic Pleasure Activist and has five grandchildren. Contact him at aagm8888@aol.com.

14th annual GSV
Fall
CONFERENCE 2003
Sept. 18-21, 2003



Photography
by Lem Arnold





SINGING THE KIRTANS

*Sri Ganesha, Pahi Mam, Jaya
Ganesha, Rakshi Mam...*

This is one of the kirtans (devotional chanting) I sing daily as part of my spiritual practice.

I've been a practicing pagan for almost two decades, but until recently my focus was on the gods, goddesses and

mythologies of pre-Christian Europe, particularly those of Celtic derivation.

I had grown complacent in my daily practice in the past few years. I still observed the sabbats, the cycle of the earth marked by the

solstices and equinoxes, the times of planting and harvest. I still revered the deities of Wicca, the god and the goddess in various forms. But I had not found an outlet that I actually enjoyed enough to practice daily.

Then I went to a *puja* for the Hindu goddess Lakshmi, goddess of good fortune, at the Kashi Center in Atlanta. A *puja* is a joyful celebration of, and prayerful devotion to, the various Hindu deities. The singing of kirtans filled the room.

The Kirtan spiritual path of devotion comes from India. The path of devotion is one of the most direct routes to connecting with God in any religion. The greatest source of love blazes continuously in our hearts but the flame is often deeply

hidden under layers of concerns that typically weigh us down. Kirtan opens the heart and allows a lightness to rise and the energy of the chant in the present moment fills us from within. The devotion that naturally arises within an open heart guides and illuminates our way home to our true nature.

Kirtan is typically chanted in a call-and-response format in which the leader sings a phrase and the group sings it back over and over again. The chant's energy and pace build according to the inspiration of the moment as the mind quiets and the heart begins to soar. A kirtan typically lasts 1½ to two hours, and can also include poetry reading and spiritual teachings through stories and anecdotes.

I so enjoyed this experience that I began to collect recordings of kirtans and starting singing them in the evenings to unwind after work. As I memorized the words, I began singing kirtans while driving instead of listening to the radio. I feel better as I start each day to chant to

Ganesh to remove all obstacles from my path. I chant to Shiva, lord of destruction and creation, to remind me that growth sometimes occurs in painful ways, but ultimately for the good. Shiva is the strong, calm axle upon which the universe turns. I chant to fierce Kali, she who burns away all that is not truth, so we can see with a clear eye. I've even incorporated chanting to Ganesh before beginning Wiccan ritual.

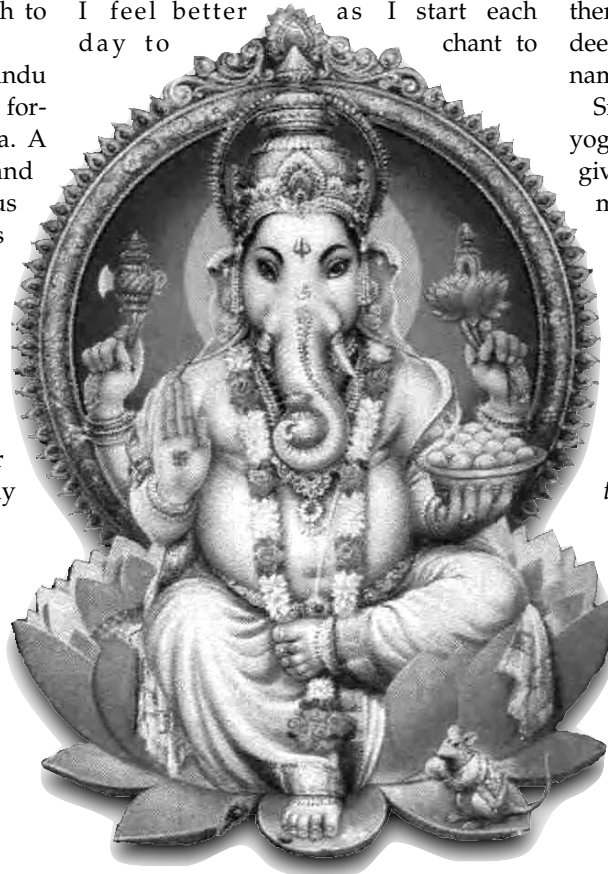
I don't consider myself Hindu; I am a pantheist, one who honors the many paths to the Divine. The Hindus themselves are both pantheist (many gods) and monotheist (one ultimate creator of all).

Kirtan gives us an opportunity to strip away the layers of conditioning that separate us from our naked hearts flaming with love, at least for a moment, maybe longer. And, it's fun! It's not important to believe in the particular names or forms of God sung in the chants or even to know what they mean. The ancient sounds themselves carry the energy that brings us deep inside ourselves where our own nameless, formless connection resides.

Singing the kirtans, with a practice of yoga, has done much to relieve stress, give me strength to do the things that must be done and help me remove obstacles to my growth. They have given me a sense of daily personal communion with God.

Brad (Meadow) is a floral designer by day, eclectic witchypoo in his own time and believes that there is more sacredness in most orgasms than in most churches.

BY BRAD
"MEADOW" PITTS



YOGA

MY SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

The practice of yoga continues to have a profound effect on my spiritual journey as it has over the last five years. Originating in India 5,000 years ago, yoga is often associated with the practice of Buddhism. While the teachings of Buddha provide great lessons for life, my personal journey of yoga is Christian-based. The true practice of yoga incorporates the three facets of being: mind, body and spirit.

By ROCKY BEELAND



My personal yoga journey continues to enlighten my path each day. By turning my attention inward through focusing, movement and allowing inner feelings of peacefulness, serenity and clarity emerge. Through my experience of yoga on the mat, I have learned to take it "off the mat." Since I don't practice meditation as a seated experience, I use my yoga practice as my form of meditation. Even though movement is involved with my yoga practice (sometimes vigorous movement!), I still have the sense of meditating throughout my entire practice. Incorporating the breath work and focusing on the movement give me the meditation experience.

As I come to my yoga mat, I always have a strong sense of God during my practice. It is through this gift of yoga that I am able to experience God speaking to me. As a believer that all gifts come from God and that He dwells within each of us, I experience my yoga practice as a spiritual experience that is both uplifting and humbling. That is why I begin and end my personal yoga practice with a prayer. This is also the reason I incorporate prayer position throughout much of my yoga classes. Prayer position denotes both a physical and emotional position of reverence to a Higher Being (whatever form the student envisions) and to one's own self. The beauty of yoga is that it does not dictate with what Higher Power a student identifies.

My spiritual journey with yoga, with the teachings of yoga, continues to give me the gift of growing toward being a better person in this world – not just on

the mat. I learn compassion, patience and confidence along with learning to "let go," "release," and "focus on the moment." As my body becomes more flexible and stronger over the years, my body and spirit continue to move in this same direction. Each day on the yoga mat brings a new and different experience for me – even though I do most of the exact same postures. It is this familiarity that allows the mind to focus even more, trying to move deeper into what may seem "the routine." And what surfaces is not "the routine" at all, but a new light or a subtle, yet important difference.

My spiritual journey continues day to day as I add, mix and blend the teachings of yoga and Christianity—along with sprinklings of other great teachers and spiritual practices of the world. As I listen to my inner being, I hear echoes of what is coming deep from within my heart. And it is these echoes that carry the true message of the spirit on the winds of my soul.

Rocky Beeland is a Certified Kripalu Yoga Teacher and teaches at Jai Shanti Yoga Studio, Atlanta. He alternates teaching every other week the Gay-Lesbian Yoga Class on Sundays at 6 p.m. and the Saturday morning Gentle Yoga at 8 a.m.

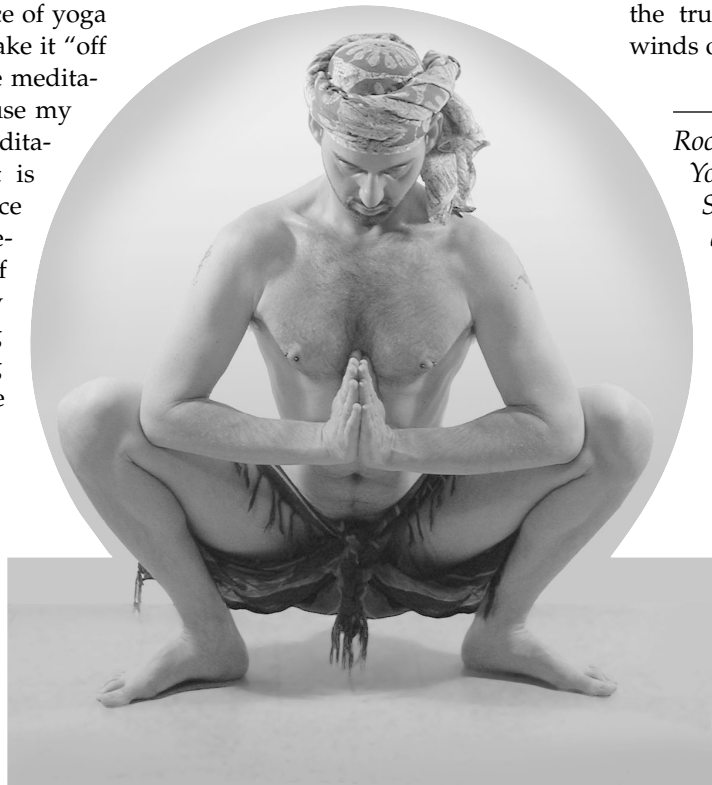


Photo: Mike Goette

MEDITATION/BREATH

Everyday meditation

The usual vision of meditation is someone sitting in a special position, quietly alone or in a group. My understanding of this is to calm the mind's chatter and to begin to seek that inner "space" where doors are opened to the meditator.

But there's another approach. While you're in an occupation such as massage, counseling, manipulating clients' bodies or relaxing muscles, there's a definite non-physical link to the client. Receivers respond well to your work, relax and generally shift to another awareness level. Sometimes your actions will trigger an emotional response in a person's body or mind and they will need to express verbally. They will begin to discuss an experience, perhaps traumatic, or a long-forgotten drama that has been confronted.

All of this appears on the surface of the world of form and is merely a trigger for you to remember why you're doing what you're doing. This shifts you into another awareness while you allow healing to flow through you into the receiver. And while the session may appear to be physically healing, the type of healing you transmit may be to the emotional, memory, chakra, seeking, higher self, inner child, soul or other aspects unknown to you.

Many who interact with others in a significant way have to develop this ability and intention through many years of individual meditation and seeking. This "tool" then becomes available every moment. It can occur during conversation, scheduling appointments, relaxing with friends, whenever you become acutely aware that what happens in the world of form isn't what it's all about. You have shifted from a time-scheduled and arranged meditation to a walking, breathing meditation. Your attention is focused on this "other" level of communication, unverifiable in what we call the

real world. Every moment you move, breathe and interact with another being, you pay attention to the other level of transmission and perception.

All your skills and experience are essentially an excuse to contact and interact with this other person. But giving and receiving aren't time-related. You give while receiving. This is outside the realm of the conscious mind and some may consider this rubbish.

Here's an example: Part of my vocation is teaching terminally ill people how to die. One client was comatose and I connected with him by sitting by his bed, touching his arm and matching his breathing exactly. After an hour, I left. After coming out of his coma, he spoke of this experience. And while it didn't bring physical healing, it did bring resolution of some resentment he couldn't release. He said he felt much better and relaxed. He could then deal with dying.

Your work-related accomplishments or the setting don't matter. It does require a different way of perceiving meditation and your ability to focus on the unseen drama.

This is what I call "everyday meditation." In my opinion it holds keys to transformation on levels we don't quite grasp.

Breathe

We can develop breath to honor and worship our being in a holy way. The development of breath determines how we interact with others, the way we respect, honor and see them as brothers. It's also the way we worship ourselves and God in pushing the walls of con-

sciousness. This is the secret of our well-spring, the source of our being. *A Course in Miracles* discusses this in terms of form. But although we may appear to be so, we're not essentially form. Form is only a casual part of what we have to deal with here in our limited time.

To deal with this we must deal with breath. It's the gift of grace, the gift of the universe, which sustains us in our time on this planet. It's the only aspect that accompanies us on our journey. The minute we begin to breathe is when our experience on this planet begins and the minute our breath ends is when our experience here ends. All our dreams, experiences, sex, loves, adventures depend on retaining breath. Without breath we don't exist here – at least according to the other inhabitants.

Spiritual scholar Neil Douglas-Klotz writes:

God is breath.

All that breathes resides in the Only Being.

From my breath

to the air we share

to the wind that blows around the planet:

Sacred Unity inspires all.

Alternate readings of John 4:24 (God is a spirit):

Ripe are those who reside in breath;

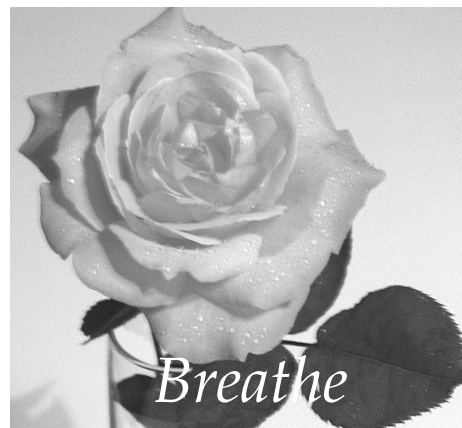
to them belongs the reign of unity.

Blessed are those who realize that breath is their first and last possession;

theirs is the "I Can" of the cosmos.

When you walk down the street, align the rhythm of your footsteps with the rhythm of your breathing. Try inhaling to a count of four and exhaling to a count of four, and use the balanced rhythm to harmonize breathing and walking.

This my dear friends is the essence of breath. I realize that we don't think much about this aspect of our being, but without it we are not here. ▼



Harold Cole is a retired person in his eighties who spends much of his time counseling, teaching and writing. He lives in a log cabin in Kentucky.

LISTENING TO THAT INNER VOICE

Breathe with me, beloved brothers.

When I was asked me to write about meditation I was at first a little frightened. "Oh no," I thought. "I don't follow any particular discipline of daily meditation. What could I have to share with these deeply spiritual men?"



BY MARTIN
"TREEWALKER"
ISGANITIS

So I took a breath and meditated on the request.

I guess I do practice meditation. I think of it as being still, quieting my mind, so I can listen to that Inner Voice.

I've explored various expressions of spirituality and the key for me is to be able to listen. Emotions and thoughts too frequently cloud my mind. Meditation is a way for me to allow those clouds to pass.

The most effective way for me to meditate is to follow my breath in and out, and to relax my body. I first relax my feet, allowing them to feel their roots, my roots, go deep into the Earth. Next come calves, knees, thighs, hips, back, chest, arms, shoulders, neck, face, and head. Then I allow my crown chakra to open to the heavens. I've often imagined light of

various colors flowing in and through me.

Some people like to start their day with a meditation, like a reading from a book of daily reflections. There are many really good ones available and many are focused around a theme, like living with HIV or recovering from addiction or even being gay. I've found different ones helpful over the years. I have a little tool to determine if one of these books is right for me. I first look up the reading for my birthday. And then I look at the reading for the current day. If either of these resonates with me, then that book's a keeper.

I want to spend some time on why I meditate. After all, if I don't know why I do it, how will I know if it's been helpful to me? Or, as the Native Americans say, "Does it grow corn?"

One of my mantras, or focus phrases, is: "Let me be Your instrument in this situation." Or, "Let this person hear what You want them to hear; let him receive what You have to give. May I be a worthy instrument of You in the world!"

Over the years pursuing a spiritual path, I usually remember to meditate *during* my day, especially when I hit a bump in the road. I've noticed that these bumps are fewer. I also find it helpful to meditate when I'm blessed with something special. These "gratitude" meditations are the best and they've become

more frequent. My best days seem to be one continuous meditation in gratitude and awe for Spirit unfolding – creating – this world I experience. Some days it's hard to maintain that level of connection. But the effort is worth the result.

I've learned most of what works for me from the men of GSV. In your company I've sorted out some of my personal spiritual dilemmas, like sacred versus profane. I struggled with the idea that the flesh was wicked and the spirit was the only valuable thing about me. (I guess that was how I internalized my Catholic upbringing.) I've learned from you that this world—flesh included—is being created by God/Goddess/All That Is, and this world is sacred. Each person is a unique expression of the Divine coming into being. This planet is too.

The goal of my meditation practice is to see the Divine create and express The Divine Self in this world. I want to be a grateful witness to that, to see flesh and spirit rise together like smoke from two cones of incense, dancing and swirling together in an ever-expanding spiral of sweet homage to the Creator.

Blessed be. ▼

TreeWalker lives in Decatur, GA.

The third annual Gay Spirit Visions Winter Meditation January 16-18, 2004

The Mountain Retreat and Learning Center, near
Highlands, NC

Returning guest speaker: Daniel Helminiak,
former Catholic priest and author of

*What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality, The
Human Core of Spirituality and Religion and the
Human Sciences*

Join us by the crackling fire in the Lodge as we listen
to the spirits that have guided us for over a decade.



Planning ahead –
Join us for our

Spring Retreat

April 9-11, 2004 at The Mountain.
Watch for more information in future
issues of the *Visionary*.



VISIONARY

GSV

P.O.Box 339

Decatur, GA 30031-0339

FIRST CLASS MAIL