

connection

The Newsletter of Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. Vol. 40, No. 2, February 2016

I'M **POSSIBLE**
Don't be afraid!

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WHO WE ARE...

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. is a non-profit support organization. We minister to the spiritual, emotional, social, and physical well-being of current and former Seventh-day Adventists who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex individuals and their families and friends. Kinship facilitates and promotes the understanding and affirmation of LGBTI Adventists among themselves and within the Seventh-day Adventist community through education, advocacy, and reconciliation. Kinship is a global organization which supports the advance of human rights for all people worldwide.

Founded in 1976, the organization was incorporated in 1981 and is recognized as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in the United States. Kinship has a board made up of thirteen officers. There are also regional and population coordinators in specific areas. The current list of members and friends includes approximately 2,500 people in more than forty-three countries.

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship believes the Bible does not condemn or even mention homosexuality as a sexual orientation. Ellen G. White does not parallel any of the Bible texts that are used to condemn homosexuals. Most of the anguish imposed upon God's children who grow up as LGBTI has its roots in the misunderstanding of what the Bible says.



PO Box 244 ♦ Orinda, CA 94563 USA

or visit Kinship's website www.sdakinship.org/resources for information about

- Find a Gay Friendly Church
- *Homosexuality: Can We Talk About It?*
- *Living Eden's Gifts*
- Previous *Connection* issues
- ... and more.

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SUPPORT KINSHIP

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship operates primarily on contributions from its members and friends. Help us reach out to more LGBTI Adventists by making a tax-deductible donation to Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International. Please send your check or money order to SDA Kinship Int'l, PO Box 244, Orinda, CA 94563 or donate securely online at sdakinship.org. (You can also donate using your Visa or MasterCard by contacting treasurer@sdakinship.org. You will be phoned so that you can give your credit card information in a safe manner.)

RESOURCES

- www.someone-to-talk-to.net
 - www.buildingsafeplaces.org
 - www.wearesdas.org
 - www.sgamovie.com
 - www.facebook.com/sdakinship
- ... and more

From the Editor

Well, there you have it. Just happened again. For the last several weeks, articles, thoughts, and stories have been showing up in my computer's mailbox, almost "asking" to be included in this issue. I thought there would be a hodgepodge of valuable or, at least interesting, thoughts. And then, as I go over our contributions to write this intro and to send the issue off to the proofreaders, a theme crystallizes - *Don't be afraid*. Don't, just don't. I think a lot about the function of word concepts in the Hebrew language. It's a concrete way of communicating. It's about action. Love is not a feeling; it's a series of actions (1 Corinthians 13). Wrath isn't a feeling; it's actions. Brave isn't what you feel; it's what you do. I work with soldiers and I read about their lives. All those people who won medals, they weren't *feeling* brave that day. We can't control our feelings; they come out of our past, the full moon, our hormones, what we eat, how much sleep we got last night or this entire week, how much stress our mothers were under when we were gestating...and the list goes on. We *can* control how we choose to act. We can look around and see our resources: our support networks, our own gifts, and opportunities, and make decisions that are bigger than what we feel. I hope you enjoy this issue. I hope you are inspired to make choices beyond fear. I hope you will know or somehow learn that your decisions, like ripples in that pond, can have effects far beyond what you ever dreamed. Whatever decisions you make, I hope you do or will learn to take care of yourself, for you are infinitely valuable.

Catherine



People We Appreciate

By Miles Thomas

During the 8 years I lived in Bangkok, I developed a close friendship with a Thai man. He attended the Mission Hospital Church where I did. He was not Seventh-day Adventist but a good straight Christian who thought nothing of my gayness. A person listening to one of our conversations could get the wrong idea when they would hear him say "I miss having you to sleep with"! The fact of the case was that we always sat together in church and we both invariably went to sleep during the sermon. He felt more comfortable when he was not the only one snoozing! Now we both have to sleep alone. **L**

Book and the Beach — The Kind God of the Old Testament? October 26-30, 2016



Cost \$240.00 per person

Many of us picture a gentle Jesus in the New Testament and an Old Testament God of wrath. This year, our study time will be a mix of presentation and discussion. We'll look at Old Testament stories, their contexts, and the ways actions we've often considered vindictive were actually examples of Divine grace, patience, and protectiveness. For Sabbath, we'll be joined by David Dildy, a local lawyer, who is a student of history and the character of God. We will, of course, continue our tradition of afternoon adventures.

As of March 1, you can begin a monthly payment plan of \$30.00 per month. You can register at

<http://sdakinship.org/events/78-book-beach-mini-kampmeeting.html>.

We look forward to seeing you!

We must be willing to let go of the life we have planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us.

--E. M. Forster, novelist (1 Jan 1879-1970)

We all live under the same sky, but we don't all have the same horizon.

--Konrad Adenauer, statesman (5 Jan 1876-1967)

Don't be Afraid

By Kent Hansen

The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord gave them into the hand of the Philistines forty years.

There was a certain man...whose name was Manoah. His wife was barren... The angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, "Although you are barren, having borne no children, you shall conceive and bear a son... Then the woman came and told her husband, "A man of God came to me, and his appearance was like that of an angel of God, most awe-inspiring; I did not ask him where he came from, and he did not tell me his name. But he said to me, "You shall conceive and bear a son..."

Then Manoah entreated the Lord, and said, "O Lord, I pray, let the man of God whom you sent come to us again and teach us what we are to do concerning the boy who is to be born." God listened to Manoah, and the angel of God came again...

Manoah said to the angel of the Lord, "Allow us to detain you, and prepare a kid (young goat) for you." The angel of the Lord said to Manoah, "If you detain me, I will not eat your food, but if you want to prepare a burnt offering, then offer it to the Lord." (For Manoah did not know he was the angel of the Lord)...

So Manoah took the kid with the grain offering and offered it on the rock to the Lord, to him who works wonders. And the flame went up toward heaven from the altar; the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame... while Manoah and his wife fell with their faces to the ground... Then Manoah realized it was the angel of the Lord and he said to his wife, "We shall surely die for we have seen God. But his wife said to him, "If the Lord had meant to kill us, he would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering at our hands or shown us all these things, or now announced to us such things as these.

The woman bore a son and named him Samson.

(Judges 13)



It was a graceless time of evil, oppression, and spiritual barrenness. Yet, Manoah's wife carried a seed of faith in her heart in the hope that God would water and nurture it into new life. The seed attracted the attention of God and he brought her seed to life with a message of grace.

Manoah, too, had faith that God could and would do something more before their hard, eked-out existence. The proof of Manoah's faith was his prayer for more God and a deeper understanding. Faithless men and women don't pray for God to come again because they don't believe He exists nor came to us in the first place. The reality of God to us is expressed in our prayers.

But, in the moment of crisis, when what Manoah and his wife believed about God was put to the test by sacrifice, God's revelation evoked a different reaction from each of them. Manoah falls apart in fear that close proximity of God means death. His wife thought about what she had seen and heard and understood God would not have revealed Himself, accepted their worship, and given them a message of grace and love in a time of barrenness, if He meant to kill them. Her reaction evidences her belief that God loved them and could be trusted.

When put to the test, what do you believe about God? Are you afraid of Him or do you trust Him?

Men and women write and speak to me about their fear of God. I don't mean the riveting focus on God and his expressed

Image: *Brazilian Landscape and The Sacrifice of Manoah*
by Frans Jansz. Post
Museum Boymans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

will that the Bible refers to as "fearing God." They claim a cringing fear that keeps them from a close relationship with God and denies them joy at the thought of His presence.

Manoah's wife was living in a time of evil, oppression, and spiritual barrenness as do we. Things were dark and getting darker. But she made the choice that faith must always make (Galatians 3:6). She chose to believe that God meant it when He told her, "You will conceive and bear a son." The God who told Manoah and her such wonderful things, accepted their offerings and showed them spiritual fire, is not a capricious trickster like the gods of magic and superstition worshiped by the pagan Philistines.

Faith may require us to trust God beyond the point to which our thinking leads us, but that is a belief that God is good and bigger than we can ask or think. Superstition is a fearful bargaining to earn the blessing that faith trusts He will give to us. The woman had faith that God would act consistently with his Word.

She also believed God was just. The angel had given express instructions for the upbringing of the child they were being given, and how she was to conduct herself as his mother. Why would God ask for their faith and obedience just to kill them? That would be neither righteous nor just and she was convinced that God was both.

Her third argument for God's trustworthiness is God never contradicts himself. She logically and respectfully concluded, "If the Lord had meant to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering at our hands or shown us all these things, or now announced to us such things as these" (Judges 13:25). It is inconceivable that God would give his word and go back on it.

Centuries later after Christ proved on the cross that God would keep his word to us, the Apostle Paul wrote, "I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). Paul said this to the Romans in even stronger terms, "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with him graciously give us all things?" (Romans 8:33).

But, Kent, the cringing legalists say, "Paul also tells us, 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.'" And I say in response, "Would you please read the whole verse. Paul actually says, 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure' (Philippians 2:12-13). Salvation requires you to put yourself in the hands of a loving God and trust Him to do in you and for you what he says He will do and wants to do with you. Your responsibility is to let nothing come between God and you."

The Apostle John could not make it any clearer that it's God's love that gives us the confidence to face judgment and removes the fear of punishment.

God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in them. Love is perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect (complete) love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment and whoever fears has not reached perfection (completeness) in love. We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:16-19).

It is a maddening struggle to get men and women to believe God loves them specifically and completely. He loves you and me today as much as He will ever love us. Nothing we can do can lose His love and nothing we can do can earn His love. He loves us at our darkest and worst (Romans 5:8). He doesn't quit on us.

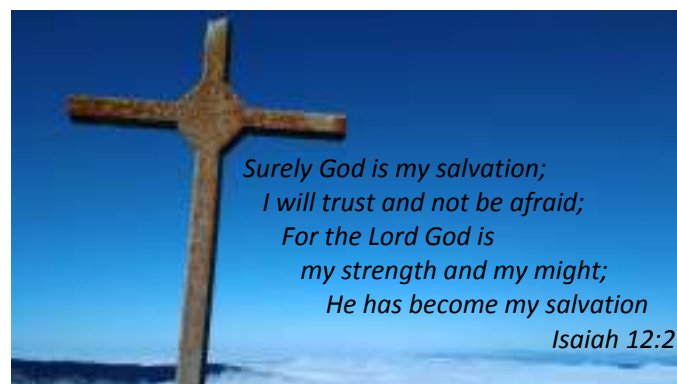
We can search the Holy Scriptures through and through and never find reference to a point when God stops loving us. Because true love is un-coerced we can refuse it, of course, and choose eternal oblivion.

I think so many of us struggle with accepting the unconditional love of God because our rebel hearts refuse unconditional surrender. "All of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," and know what we deserve for this offense against the Creator and are afraid. We find it hard to believe that we would be "justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 4:23-24).

Jesus Christ, God incarnate, suffered the worst humans can dish out on the cross and the dark second death beyond; but "the glorious love of the Father reached into the grave and drew Jesus from the grave and us with him" (Romans 6:4). All of this was for love. All of this was for us.

Manoah's wife took God at his word and so should we. The priests and shamans of other gods say, "Be afraid, be very afraid." The most frequent instruction Jesus gave in the gospels was "Don't be afraid" or a variation of the same thing.

God's focus is salvation, not punishment. That's why we can focus on Him with the confidence of Isaiah who said—



And that's why each week, I extend the invitation, "O taste and see that the Lord is good. Happy are those who take refuge in Him" (Psalm 34:8).

Under the mercy of Christ. q



Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all.

—Dale Carnegie

I Chose Hope... and That Has Made All the Difference

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Yes, indeed! I owe a great deal to teachers—two in particular. Most people are impacted by their teachers, negatively or positively. Fewer analyze and identify the impact. With some thought, I was able to pinpoint how the influence of these two individuals changed the entire course of my life. Because of them, I learned to hope. In fact, I may even be alive today because of them; because back then my life was not working. Being sick frequently with at least one bout of walking pneumonia annually for five years in a row, continual fatigue, experiencing my then-husband run off with my secretary, feeling as if I could never succeed at anything—no, my life was not working. I had taken a new job, hoping it would be less stressful and a better fit with my aptitudes. So far, so good. Until my first performance evaluation at my new job as director of infection control at an acute hospital.

“It’s time to start working on a master’s,” my boss said, smiling encouragingly. I smiled back but doubt that the smile reached my eyes. How could I explain that, as much as I loved to learn, getting a master’s degree was simply not in the cards? Not for me. I wasn’t very smart. Besides, I would have to take a statistics class. And pass. And my brain didn’t do math. My boss wouldn’t let it go. She kept bringing the topic up and I kept making excuses.

Enter Terrence Roberts PhD, or “Doc T,” as I thought of him.

In a serendipitous coincidence, my boss asked Doc T to provide some lectures, assessment, analysis, and personal feedback to middle-management personnel. As a member of the faculty at a local four-year college and director of Behavioral Health at the acute hospital where I worked, he was eminently qualified to do so. At our first one-to-one meeting, he asked about the stressors in my life and what I planned to do, career-wise, with the rest of my life. I laughed (not a happy laugh), tearing up as I repeated

the pressure I felt to enroll in a master’s program. I detailed the whole litany of reasons this wouldn’t work for my brain and concluded by reiterating the fact that there was no hope of my ever accomplishing something like that. I was lucky to be doing as well as I was (which, by the way, was not doing very well at all, but I didn’t know the difference at that stage of my life—believing that struggle, illness, and exhaustion were what adulthood was all about). Astutely, Doc T must have seen through my convoluted and constricted thinking.

I have little recollection of anything he explained about my Johari-Window results. I do remember his posing half a dozen questions and suggesting I find time over the next few weeks to arrive at answers. Over time I’ve come to believe there are few accidents in life—just opportunities that we so often miss. Doc T was one of my great opportunities. Fortunately, I didn’t miss that one! I already held him in great professional regard, knowing that he had been one of the Little Rock Nine, one of a group of

African-American students who had been enrolled in Little Rock Central High School in 1957. I figured that if he could survive that unspeakable hardship and abuse and go on to get a PhD, I could trust that he must know something. Maybe even something that could help *me*. After all, what did I have to lose?

I took his questions one by one and tried to answer them against the backdrop of my life experiences to date.

- What made me think I was not smart?

That one was easy. First, I’d always felt “different” from others—in a minority category in so many ways. Second, when I made comments at the dinner table, family members frequently laughed. It had never occurred to me that I might actually have said something rather witty. And third, as I listened to other people talk, my brain’s perception of the topic often differed from theirs. Greatly! In my brain, these and a hundred other examples had come to be equated with not smart.

- How did I know my brain didn't do math?

That was one easy, too. At age 16, taking trigonometry by correspondence, I had actually equaled my age on the final exam grade. 16%. My mother had been horrified. "When I was your age," she had said more than once, "I scored a perfect 100% on my trig final. How could I have a daughter who flunked? If you didn't look so much like your father and me I'd think the hospital had given us the wrong newborn..." And so it went between sighs and moans. That 16% score, coupled with my mother's bewilderment, had translated into: I'm math illiterate. After that, I had simply accepted the fact that my brain just didn't do math. It could do other things: write verse and short stories, sight-read music very well and play several instruments, brainstorm new games, problem solve on the spur of the moment, glide around the ice rink...it didn't do math.



- What stories had I heard over the years about my abilities?

That one was harder. I had been homeschooled for nine of my K-12 years. My internal explanation for being homeschooled was that my parents thought I wouldn't be successful in a real school setting (although that had never been verbalized). At home, I was the only student, and my "homeschool teacher" (my mother) was a very high-IQ adult. A continual emphasis on missed test questions, versus affirmation for the ones I had gotten correct, contributed to a sense that "I couldn't get it right." There was also a big push for me to work

on areas of weakness, rather than concentrating on what my brain did energy-efficiently. Current brain function rhetoric strongly suggests that such an antiquated view is not only unhelpful over the long term but also can contribute to multiple problems ranging from an increased risk of illness to managing one's weight, to a potential decrease in longevity. But that information—in the era of brain imaging—was half-a-century away. So, concentrating on tasks that were difficult for my brain to accomplish led me to believe that my abilities were few and far between, and the ones I did have were not particularly admired or rewarded.

- Did I know the stories I was telling myself about my abilities?

No, not until Doc T suggested I identify them. They weren't pretty, those stories. They related primarily to fears of what I could NOT do successfully. Fears related to what others would think, of not fitting in, that my mother would die of breast cancer, that my father would not recover from "jaundice" (Hepatitis A), that I would forget the music for the piano recital (rote memorization being very energy-exhausting for my brain), and on and on. No wonder I was tired and sick and sick and tired. I had obviously accepted the mantra of fear as my own. That's a load for any brain to carry!

- Had I grown up in an optimistic or pessimistic environment?

I grappled with this question. Using the definition that optimism is a conclusion reached through a deliberate thought pattern that leads to a positive attitude, I had to conclude that my childhood environment veered toward the pessimistic side. For as far back as I could recall, the comments and instructions directed toward me had been couched in the negative: don't, can't, shouldn't, oughtn't, won't, and so on. Much later in life, I would be told by a brain-function specialist that although no family is ever truly functional in all aspects, there are degrees of dysfunctionality. In a mildly

dysfunctional family, estimates are that children hear nine or ten negatives for every positive. Double that for a moderately dysfunctional family environment and triple it for an environment considered to be outright dysfunctional. People tend to do what they have experienced and you can only pass on what you know. Therefore, it's no wonder pessimism can be transmitted down the generational corridor.

- What had happened in my life to deprive me of hope?

That one definitely set me back on my heels. Until then I hadn't even realized that I had none. According to Erik H. Erikson, the well-known developmental psychologist and psychoanalyst who postulated that a human being goes through eight stages from birth to death, hope is both the earliest and the most indispensable virtue inherent in the state of being alive. If life is to be sustained, hope must remain, even where confidence is wounded or trust impaired. Hopefulness is the clear sense that something I wished for might actually occur, that what I wanted might be possible. Somewhere during my childhood, I had stopped wishing or wanting—just plodding along, one foot in front of the other, not thinking about anything I didn't already have. Double ouch!

It was several weeks before Doc T and I chatted about these six questions. It was even longer before I found the courage (at his suggestion) to take an IQ test. Part of me said it was better to wonder how non-smart I was than to have my beliefs confirmed. If Doc T hadn't kept encouraging me whenever our paths crossed in the hospital cafeteria I might never have screwed up the courage. His premise was that my score would fall within the bell curve of distribution and that, with a good teacher, there was every reason to believe I could pass statistics. Right. The teacher could not be the issue. I'd taken a correspondence course, for heaven's sake, and a teacher must have written the course. The issue

was my brain's inability to do math. That was my story and I stuck to it.

In retrospect, it is amazing how tenaciously we are wont to hang onto our stories and interpret everything that happens in their light. Eventually (about nine months later), I showed up in Doc T's office to take an IQ test and returned a few weeks later to learn the results. Eyes twinkling, Doc T told me that my score was definitely above 85—that being the lower end of the first deviation from the mean on the Bell Curve of Distribution. This removed all doubt (his words) about whether or not my brain could wrap itself around statistics. “The issue,” he pointed out, “is whether you can alter your perception enough to risk taking a statistics course. I think you’ve given up hope.” He was right. I had. But at his words, the dim outline of a door marked hope began to materialize in my mind.

More time went by as I tried to picture my life differently, as I tried to rewrite parts of the script I had been handed at birth. Looking back, I was dragging my feet on the one hand. On the other, it gave me time to consider and reconsider the beliefs and attitudes I had consciously and subconsciously absorbed—many of them no doubt before the age of three. I was struggling to develop new habits of joy in an effort to change my mindset from pessimistic to optimistic. Once again this brilliant teacher came to my rescue. Drawing on a paper napkin during a lunch break, he introduced me to Paul MacLean's Triune Brain Model.

Basically, think of the brain as three functional layers: two subconscious and one conscious.

The brain thinks in pictures and deals easily with positives—a one-step process. What you see

is what you get. The third brain layer can process negatives, but it is a challenge—a two-step process—that involves the reverse of an idea. There's a huge difference between “Don't touch the stove”

and “Keep your hands away from the stove.” What you think in the conscious third layer filters down to the second and first layers and provides a map for them to follow. (The first and second layers are unable to use language, but they can perceive language.) And here's the rub. The first and second brain layers may be unable to process negatives at all. That's the reason affirmation is considered to be the programming language of the brain, the most effective way to communicate with the subconscious layers. It was a slow process to learn to recognize a thought as negative and figure out a way to state it as a positive. Slow but possible!

D-day arrived when, during one of our lunch visits, Doc T tossed a college summer-school bulletin across the table and casually remarked, “Go register for statistics. Keep it a secret, if you want to. When you pass you can enroll next fall in a master's program.”

“And if I don't?” I asked, half seriously and half in jest.

“Get a math tutor and retake the class.” He was nothing if not direct. “Go ahead. Risk it.”

Risk it?

I looked up information on risk. One person defined it as a function of three variables:

- the probability that a threat exists
- the probability that there are significant vulnerabilities
- the potential impact of the vulnerabilities

If any of these three variables approaches zero, the overall risk approaches zero. My conclusions were that there was no real threat—only the possibility that I wouldn't make a “C grade” and someone else would find out about it. The only vulnerabilities were my abilities and my own perceptions. The impact of those vulnerabilities? Hmm-m-m.

Doc T triggered the first major change in my life.

It changed for the second time when I met Dr. Bill Hoyer. Already teaching at Golden Gate University, he had agreed

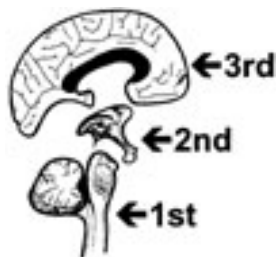
to teach a statistics course at the local junior college. Along with 58 other adult learners, I signed up for his class. Believe me, I kept it a secret. The only people who knew were my immediate family members (I would be in statistics class four nights a week for the next six weeks and spending every available minute studying) and my best friend in San Francisco.

And then it was ground zero. I slipped into the lecture hall. Dr. Hoyer was middle-aged and bearded, with a PhD in mathematics. *Wow! What a brain he must have!* Filled with apprehension, I snuck over to a desk at the back of the room and did all those nervous little things I would have preferred to avoid: dropping my pen, knocking over my bottle of water, stuttering out my name when the instructor reached my desk creating a roster.

“What is your reason for taking this class?” asked Dr. Hoyer. “You look like you're headed for the guillotine.” *Perceptive man*, I thought to myself. The class laughed. Blushing, I explained that my boss was pushing me to get a master's degree, that statistics was a prerequisite, and that my brain did not do math—unfortunately. Looking at me from the corner of one eye, he calmly and deliberately tapped his pen on my desk. “Your brain will do math in my class,” he said, matter-of-factly. *It would?* A tiny crack appeared in my door marked *hope*. From then on I thought of him as Doc H, only the H stood for hope.

During the next six weeks, my brain worked beyond diligently. It overlearned, but I was still terrified that, when push came to shove, it might not have learned enough to pass. I doubt I've ever been as stressed in any other class, before or since. I know that no other class has ever been as impactful!

I still can recall in living color how my brain felt in his presence. He *believed* that my brain could pass his statistics course and I slowly absorbed some of his certainty. To my amazement, the classes sped by. My brain not only seemed to “get it” at some level but also started looking forward to solving some of the



statistical problems, many involving aspects of epidemiology, an area of study that intrigued me due to my background in public health. As each class morphed into the next, terms such as probability, reliability, mean, median, mode, and p-values actually took on some meaning. Gradually my apprehension lessened and my interest in the subject grew. Doc H made it relevant. The crack in the door marked *hope* opened wider.

Each week there was a quiz. "Think of them," Doc H explained, "as tools to tell you what you have already learned and what you still need to figure out." *What a concept!* "Your final exam will be your grade." *Oh, oh. Everything was riding on the final.* Hope plummeted.

One evening toward the end of class, Doc H happened to be near my desk for one of his famous informal chats. He had a habit of wandering around the room and engaging students in conversation. His question to me was whether I knew what had triggered my math phobia. *Phobia? Did I have a phobia? Not me.* "So many bright women have one," he said, "and so often it is a figment of their imagination, albeit based on a real experience." My face must have mirrored puzzlement because he continued. "What they do is take one incident and build any aspect of their self-concept around it."

In response to his question, I told my 16% final-exam story, much as I had with Doc T. When Doc H found out that I had been taking trigonometry by correspondence he fairly howled with mirth. "That is simply rich," he roared, the hairs in his beard quivering as he went into gales of laughter. "You tried to teach yourself trigonometry and thought your brain did not do math? Oh, the stories we tell ourselves!" Somehow his laughter was infectious and soon we were all laughing as if it was the biggest joke in the world instead of the greatest tragedy in my math life to date.

"A student's success in math is a function of how well the teacher teaches," Doc H said decisively when the laughter had died down. "And my brain's opinion (that phrase would become a

lifetime favorite) is that the overwhelming majority of individuals need a teacher. Trig by correspondence?" And he shook his head and burst out laughing all over again.

Years later I would discover that study after study confirmed his opinion:

- The quality of the classroom teacher is the single most important factor in predicting student success.
- **Teacher quality more heavily influences differences in student performance than does race, class, or school of the student.**
- A teacher's knowledge of math matters for student learning in math at all school levels, but especially at the secondary level. Teachers who are more math-knowledgeable produce better student math achievement.

I chose to forego the family's annual 4th of July camping trip on the Mendocino coast. Oh, I went, but rather than lazy days of light reading on a chaise lounge listening to the music of the wind in the trees and the slap of water against the rocks, I studied. Statistics. Only the studying didn't seem the drudgery I had initially imagined. Images not only flashed onto the screen of my mind when I thought about the bell curve of distribution, probability formulas, and statistical significance, but the pictures made sense. During breaks from study I began to throw around possible topics for a master's program. *Imagine! Doc H had convinced me I could pass.* By the end of the camping trip, I had my topics narrowed down to epidemiology and adult education—if I got a "C," of course. Hey, might as well go for a double major while I was at it!

The final exam was scheduled on the next-to-the-last night of class. Dr. Hoyer planned to score the papers over the weekend and give out grades the following Monday. It was a timed test. As I did a quick scan of the exam I was surprised to note that the questions seemed familiar, and I thought I knew the answers. At least most of them. If it had been almost

any subject but math, I would have considered *passing* a done deal. All I needed was a solid "C" to get accepted to grad school. Finishing well within the time frame, I turned in my paper and went home. To *hope*. Well, to agonize, if truth be told.

Monday night a large sheet of paper was taped to the blackboard. It was hiding the list of students who achieved a grade of C or higher. When everyone was settled in their seats, Doc H said he had enjoyed the last six weeks and expected we would be as successful in our next educational endeavor. He knew we could be. I heard virtually none of it. *Blah, blah, blah*, my brain thought. *Let's get to the scores and find out if he really knows what he has been talking about: that a student's success in math is a function of the teacher's ability to put the subject across in a way that enables learning.*

Doc H removed the paper. A list of names sprang into view, arranged in descending order of the number of points received out of a possible 500, along with the point spread for each letter grade. I looked for my name at the bottom of the list. *I only need a C! ... Not there.*

My eyes moved up the list of C's. My name was not there. That must mean I got a D, I thought. And I really had tried! Oh well. How kind of him *not* to list my name, sparing me some humiliation.

"Yes!" The word exploded into the silence. It came from Yan, a young Asian immigrant who was taking one evening class after another in his quest for a degree, all the while working full time to support a wife and daughter. "Yes!" he shouted again.

Dr. Hoyer smiled and said, "Congratulations, young man! You earned 500 out of a possible 500 points." We all clapped.

Turning to me, Dr. H continued, "And you, young lady, aren't you proud of yourself?"

"Yes," said Yan, "you give me running for my dollars." *No one mentioned he meant a run for my money.*

My face must have mirrored total confusion. "My name isn't on the board," I managed to squeak out.

"Yes, it is," they chorused in unison. "Perhaps you didn't look high enough," Doc H said, glancing at me from the corner of one eye as he slowly moved his finger inexorably upward beside the list of 58 names. Through the C's. Past the B's. Into the A's. *Into the A's?* Up, up, up until it finally stopped at the second name from the top. The second name from the top was my name. *It wasn't possible!*

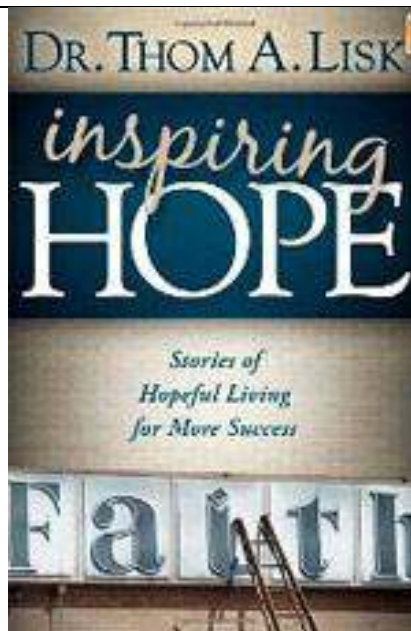
Arlene Rose Taylor: 499 points—A+.

I had never exhibited behaviors even close to the famous *vapors*, but for a few moments I actually feared I was going to pass out. *499 points? I'd missed a perfect score by 1 point?* My mouth gaped open in disbelief. *Unbelievable!*

In the moment of silence that followed, Yan patted my shoulder awkwardly and repeated a story he had heard in childhood. It seems, eons ago, a famine had struck a remote area of China. A father, seeing that he and his children would not live much longer since all their food was gone, filled some bags with ashes. Tying them with ropes from the ceiling, he told his little children, "There is roasted corn in those bags, but we have to save it for the future." Time passed and the father died of hunger. The children survived long enough to be rescued. They survived because they believed they had food. Their father died because he had lost hope.

"Your brain can do math, young lady," Dr. Hoyer said. "In fact, your brain can probably do most anything you need it to do—if you *think* it can."

In that instant, the course of my adult life altered. Passing the statistics course and enrolling in graduate school was the least of it. Dramatically, albeit slowly, my brain's perceptions changed. I came to understand the power of my own expectations to either limit or enable. And although I never saw Doc H again, during those six weeks of summer school I had experienced the power of another brain



believing in mine, completely and unequivocally. Incontrovertible lessons—that changed my life forever.

A couple of earned doctoral degrees, several published books later, and a rewarding career that has taken me around the world speaking about brain function have conspired to convince me that no one is an island. In the words of John Donne, "Each is surrounded by a continent." These two teachers, Doc T and Doc H, formed part of the continent around me. Their lessons positively impacted my life in ways too numerous to count. They have my undying gratitude. Oh, I know my brain did the work—no one could do the work for me. But I also know that Doc T and Doc H exemplified the marine saying, *Ductus Exemplo* (leadership by example). They gave me hope and affirmed me to success.

Hope. The only blessing that remained in the Babrius jar, all that was left in Pandora's box.

Hope. The quintessential catalyst, waiting to be chosen, to be embraced.

Christopher Reeve was right: "Once you choose hope, anything's possible."

Thanks to these two gifted teachers, I chose hope—and that has made all the difference. q

(<http://arlenetaylor.org/articles-monographs/news-articles-articlesmenu/5648-i-chose-hope>)

Kinship's Older Adults

Touch

By Mary Gergan

The Positive Aging Newsletter by Kenneth and Mary Gergen
Sponsored by the Taos Institute
(www.taosinstitute.net)



As we grow older we are in danger of losing touch, that is, physical contact, with other human beings. There are no more parents to cuddle us. The days of courtship have largely passed. Close dancing is now passé. The grandchildren pass the stage of curling up on your lap. And as we feel less and less physically attractive, we begin to doubt that others should wish to join in an embrace. Among those most deprived of physical contact may be the elderly widows. In part, this could serve as an invitation for all of us to be more sensitive and creative as we grow older, so as not to lose what many scholars feel is a vital source of well-being. In the '70s, everyone was hugging, on any possible occasion. Although no longer so fashionable, we have been loath to give up the pastime. With some friends we do backrubs. And we don't let our grandchildren grow up as fast as they might wish. These are just a few ways we try to keep in touch (not to mention how we two keep in touch as bedtime partners). We were recently struck by a news article describing the use of dogs for boosting the spirits of hospital patients. Patients are especially fond of

patting the animals. It is also apparent, then, that humans are not the only ones to provide us with creature comforts. Our dog Julian liked to sit under Ken's desk when he was working. At the same time, when Ken hit a hard patch in his writing, he would often go and lie down beside Julian, stroking his fur and feeling his warmth. As Ken said, it was a great way to relax and restore



his brain. A good friend of ours recently told us of the pleasure she experienced having her dog curl up with her in bed. Another friend likes her cats beside her as she sleeps. There are even some clothing materials that seem to have some nourishing qualities. I think of angora and cashmere, for example. The nourishing pleasure of touch is subtle. It is like the shade of color on the wall, the amount of light in the room, the number of hard surfaces surrounding us, or the presence of grass and trees. While scarcely noticeable, all can affect our well-being. So, my crusade of the moment is to put touch higher on the list of contributions to aging well. q



By Michele O'Mara

I was exchanging some emails on this blistery winter day with a friend of mine. She made an innocent observation that "the Internet gives the illusion of connecting without really actually having to connect." I should mention that there's a history to this comment that stems back to an ongoing discussion we've been having about the lack of connection among people in general – particularly among gay men and women.

So I started thinking some more about connecting, which led me to thoughts about intimacy and why it's so difficult; and this newsletter is the outcome of where my mind went.

*that we tend to neglect. The other side requires that we allow ourselves to be real. To keep up our end of intimacy, we must reveal ourselves, our truest selves, without apology, and open ourselves to the acceptance of those we love. **Without both sides of intimacy—the knowing and the being known—intimacy can't exist.** Intimacy is reciprocal. Intimacy is mutual*

Gay men and women have a long history of censoring their self-disclosures, monitoring (and sometimes reshaping) behaviors to fit in, withholding feelings and thoughts out of a fear of being "inappropriate" or "socially unacceptable."

Intimacy

Intimacy requires risk. Big risks! Intimacy requires that we literally undress ourselves (emotionally, intellectually, socially, spiritually, and sometimes even physically) with another who is willing to do the same. And, once undressed, we must be willing to:

1. Be Seen
2. Be Accepted
3. Be Known
4. Be Loved

It's much easier to do the seeing, the accepting, the knowing, and the loving. In fact, I propose that gay men and women are probably above-average on this side of intimacy for all of the practice we have diverting attention from questions about us! It's the other side of intimacy

What heterosexuals take for granted, gay men and lesbians consider a risk or being brave. How many same-sex couples do you see kissing hello and goodbye at the airport? How about pictures of same-sex partners on the office desk? (Clarification, that is, the pictures on the desk, not the partners on the desk). Or how many stories do you hear about romantic get-aways from gay men or women in the break room at work. And for those who do share, how well are they received? How then, are we really supposed to learn to truly be intimate, to let down our guard and believe that who we are – just as we are – is actually loveable?

What's the opposite of intimacy? "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," says it all. We live

in a society that institutionalizes our silence, that prohibits our legal expression of love, and leaves us fearing for our safety if we hold our partner's hand in public. Hmm... Do you think any of this could have to do with why some of us struggle with intimacy?

The same walls that keep us feeling safe end up keeping intimacy out. We float through our life feeling disconnected because in many ways we are. We are a generation of gay men and women who are increasingly visible and marginally accepted though we are not yet embraced, because we are not yet embracing ourselves.

So how do we change this? We must get intimate with ourselves. (No, not that kind of intimate). I'm talking about learning to see ourselves, accept ourselves, know ourselves, and love ourselves. How can we be taken seriously otherwise? To achieve this, we must start to take risks. Remember, intimacy requires risk. What is a risk for you (coming out to someone you care about), may not be a risk for the next person (who is a gay rights' activist). There is no judgment about the type of risk you take – you'll know if it's a risk because your heart rate will increase, your stomach may flip-flop, and you may even break a sweat. When you feel like you can't do it because you



fear rejection, you fear ridicule, you fear loss, think about what you'd rather lose, your true self, or _____ (you fill in the blank). The key is to do it anyway.

See yourself for who you truly are. Accept yourself by acknowledging one thing about yourself every day that you are absolutely grateful for. Know your-

self by stepping into your opinions, feelings, and beliefs – don't hide them – they define you; and if you don't define yourself, others will define who you are for you! Lastly, love yourself. When you see yourself, know yourself, and accept yourself, you are loving yourself. q

What Are We Here For?

By Dave Ferguson, Director of Church Relations

We in Kinship seek to be followers of Jesus. This means as an organization we welcome everyone who is interested in joining us for the journey. Jesus had many different types of disciples (followers), including those of both genders. Some were very vocal. Some were very shy. Some had very strong political and religious opinions. Some were content to sit quietly and listen. They often didn't agree with each other, but Jesus still included them. One of them denied Him three times and another betrayed Him, but He still welcomed both to share the table with Him.

Like the early Adventist pioneers, Kinship does not proscribe a dogma of beliefs, but rather seeks to encourage fellowship, discussion, and prayer among a very diverse group. Some of us still find involvement with the

Adventist Church important. Others have been so hurt by the Church that they don't want to have anything to do with the Church as an organization, but they still appreciate the opportunity to be involved with those having a similar background. Still others have been so hurt that they are angry with both the Church and anyone who seeks to have any connection with it.

We see truth as progressive and seek to be open to understanding new ways to love and care for those who choose to join us. Like any human organization, we have faults and failures; but that's why we love having members who help us to consider new and better ways to meet the needs of our community. Thank you for enriching our organization with your thoughts. q

Journey (Part VIII)

By Jerry McKay



Awareness of My Orientation

My orientation continued to manifest on a daily basis, and there were times when it intruded noticeably. As in high school, it sometimes caused me to modify my behavior. Four examples have stayed with me all these years.

But before I continue, I feel it's important to reiterate that, even though I can now write about these situations with a high degree of awareness, at the time I still had not named my experience. I did not identify as homosexual or gay. I was, however, growing increasingly aware of how differently I experienced the world compared to my male friends.

My first example, although a simple one, involved my living arrangements and my roommate whom I will call Rick.

Although our apartment was spacious, we shared one small bedroom with two small beds. Throughout the year, I was as discreet and stealthy about dressing and undressing as I could be. It helped that I could use the washroom and shower in private. I think Rick was surprised at how quickly I could undress and get into bed. Often, by the time he came back from a trip to the bathroom, I was already curled up in bed and facing the wall!

Although I am a bit bashful, my motivation for being so speedy was not about ensuring my privacy but about decreasing my stress over seeing Rick in some state of undress. While that was not always possible, it worked well for me. Per-

haps too well because years later, after learning of my orientation, Rick commented on how overly discreet I had been around the apartment. Again, by overcompensating because of my orientation, I had drawn attention to myself.

Before moving to my second example, I want to mention an intuitive observation on the part of my roommate. I was surprised to learn, in a recent conversation with Rick, that he felt I had mood swings during the year. Mood swings! I had never heard anyone say that of me before. He told me that I seemed, "low for a long period during the winter and came out of it in spring."

That he picked up on this impressed me. My orientation always took me down a notch or two emotionally. I didn't set out to hide my mood changes, but doing so had become second nature. In truth, I was very much out of touch with my emotions. Low-level depression and sadness were always present.

My second example specifically involves bathing – this time with a Japanese twist

However discreet I was in our apartment, fate would not let me escape being naked with others in public. I still had to contend with the occasional visit to the *senjo* -- the communal bath house. If you haven't experienced a *senjo*, check one out on YouTube. Nothing boosts stress like scrubbing down surrounded by male colleagues and strangers while

being attracted to the male body.

At the *senjo*, everyone sits along the wall on little stools – naked, of course. Although you have your own faucet to work from, all bathing business is done in public. Once you've scrubbed and rinsed, you can join whomever you like in the various pools of water -- hot, warm, or cold. You have to leave your little washcloth on the rim of the pool before climbing in. As a result, naked men were continually climbing in and out of the pools in front of me. If you don't like walking about naked, you can use your washcloth to cover up. That was my preference. It was not everyone's practice, however.

On occasion, we were invited to join a student at the local bath house for this cultural experience. I didn't mind the cultural part of the experience, but it was still awkward for me. On other occasions, when on a school-sponsored ski trip, summer camp, or teacher's retreat, public bathing was often the only option. On those occasions, going to the *senjo* meant I would be surrounded by naked students, naked colleagues, occasionally a naked boss, and, of course, my naked roommate.

In general, I didn't have much difficulty with the over-sixty crowd. (I can say that, now that I've arrived there myself!) Those around my age, however, were more of a challenge. Whether they were stark naked or hiding things behind their towlettes, there was still too much

maleness around for me not to notice. You can avert your gaze only so often in a *sen*to before stumbling into someone or something.

As I have already said in various ways, I was attracted to the whole person not just what was behind a strategically placed washcloth. Many times, it would have been far less distracting if a bather had just put a bag over his head. I could become preoccupied with a man's eyes. A killer smile could make me weak in the knees faster than an exposed groin. Those who don't know homosexual men and women well might dismiss the power of a beautiful smile as it relates to orientation. It is no less significant for us than it is in heterosexual attraction.

As always, I didn't understand why. With every desire to look or be close came memories of Honolulu. I was afraid I might look at someone too often. It is difficult to explain how tiring it was to be attracted to people and constantly trying to look at them while looking through them.

During those moments of preoccupation with the male form, however, plotting how to secure sexual intimacies was far from my mind. All I wanted was to be closer to the one who had captured my attention. Of course, as a fair-haired foreigner, others were peeking at me, too.

Because of my hyper-awareness, I never enjoyed the *sen*to experience as I could have. Many times, as I did at school, I went to the *sen*to earlier or later than most. Doing so reduced the visual stimulation, but it also meant I was cheated out of the hottest water. Often, I wished I could have joined the women. I never became preoccupied with a woman's eyes or smile, and I never had the nagging desire to visually explore their bodies. Again, I could not have explained why.

My next example, while a bit odd, illustrates the kinds of things I told myself in response to events around me.

During a pep talk at a teacher's retreat, an associate with the language schools for the Far East made it a point to remind us that, while we were sur-

rounded by Toyotas, "the Cadillacs" were back home!

Except for the Amerocentric overtones in his comment, we got the message. He was asking us not to date. He didn't want the guys bringing Japanese girlfriends back to North America or the girls settling down with a Japanese man. My internal dialogue was revealing.

No sooner had his comment registered than I said to myself, "Don't worry. That's not going to be a problem for me." The response was so immediate and forceful that it startled me. I knew intuitively there wasn't the slightest possibility of my falling in love with a Japanese girl.

While this incident was not as jarring as when Perry made his subcutaneous-fat comment, it bothered me nonetheless. It reminded me again of what I did *not* feel and who I was *not* attracted to. Japanese women weren't going to be a problem because I was drawn to the men.

Although I tried to shrug off the implications of my response, I was haunted by them and they triggered all those why questions. All I could do was stress over them later in prayer.

Despite the angst that little event created, the pep talk had a hidden bonus. Knowing we were not expected to date for the year took the heat off that area of my life. Not surprisingly, I shone in the no-dating arena. Unlike the great Ulysses, however, some teachers did not have the option of being tied to the mast of their ship and therefore could not resist the song of a Toyota or two.

Later in the year, an up-close-and-personal incident captured another place in my memory.

As in many Asian cultures, the public expression of affection between men is not frowned upon as it is in North America. Boys and young men, like women, can be seen showing affection—holding hands, for example. Once friendships have developed, even foreigners might experience the same expression of affection.

As was often the case, one evening

after classes, students and teachers were hanging out in the school office. I was sitting on a small bench with a male student beside me. We were about the same age and had developed a good rapport. While joking and laughing with the others in the room, he matter-of-factly put his left leg over my right leg, entangled his arm around mine and rested his head on my shoulder. I froze like a deer caught in headlights.

No one else seemed to bat an eye, but I became hyper aware of my feelings—again. His expression of friendship was appreciated, but it sent that familiar rush of anxiety through my body. Because I was good at hiding my reactions, any discomfort on my part was obscured.

An event which would mean little to most people, and would have been received with an air of normality otherwise, distressed me. It touched that part of me I was trying so hard to ignore. That momentary event burned into my memory because I knew I liked his playful affection more than anyone in the room realized and that I secretly longed for more.

By more, I don't mean I wanted to manipulate him into my bed as *You and Your Health* suggested I would. At the same time, I was nineteen going on twenty and very much touched-deprived. When a male friend touched me, I became painfully aware of it. All I wanted was for my student-friend to hold my hand a little longer and feel the warmth of his body next to mine. Had a female student done the same, I would have responded with similar panic but for completely different reasons.

Although some of these examples may seem insignificant, each left me feeling abnormal and defective. Even though I had done nothing wrong, I couldn't help thinking of Paul's comments in Romans about *those* people with dishonorable passions and God's wrath. I couldn't help wondering if I might be one of those sinister people described in *You and Your Health*. As always, such thinking was demoralizing.



What about Donna & Dating

As I mentioned, to my relief there was to be no dating—not that year, at least. Even though I was not tempted by any Toyotas, there were plenty of opportunities. Female students, young and old, did show interest. When they did, I relied on my missionary commitments to politely ignore any advance. It always felt like I was breaking the third commandment – using the Lord’s name “in vain” – to avoid being honest with others and myself.

However, I wasn’t without female friendship; Donna was in Japan. The year was better with Donna there even though she was 450 km south of Tokyo. She had been sent to Himeji. With 500,000 people, Himeji was a village. Its claim to fame was Himeji castle, the largest and most beautiful castle in the country. In 1993, it was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. From Himeji, we stayed in touch by letter and phone.

Being able to share our experiences only deepened our friendship. Whenever possible we would visit each other in Himeji or Tokyo. During the teacher’s retreat, we were inseparable. When together, we constantly talked about God and faith. We did everything together – except share any intimacy.

To say we had decided to keep our friendship platonic would have been false. Despite the numerous opportunities available to us, there was never a hint of temptation on my part to even hold Donna’s hand. I’m quite sure I could have. It wasn’t for a lack of desire for intimacy that kept my intentions pure. It is

just that when there is not an ounce of sexual interest seeking expression, it is easy to spend inordinate amounts of time in very private settings and have nothing happen.

If our relationship was ambiguous, it wasn’t Donna’s fault. She did indicate interest in subtle ways, and I knew it. I just couldn’t reciprocate.

One of the ways Donna indicated interested was with a 125-page 4x6 book of poems and photographs she made for me. The first page simply says: “To Jerry: Who is my friend.” Several of the poems, she had written. All of the photographs were taken during that year. Not surprisingly, I made several appearances in the book.

My first appearance was a picture of me taking a picture. On the accompanying page, she had copied a two-sentence poem by Martin Benson called *Photo*. It read: *The young man sat while the camera gunned him down. Now he lies in the tomb of remembrance.*

The second photo was of a letter I had written earlier in the year. While the paper and ink revealed nothing significant, the poem *Friendship of the Mind* said more.

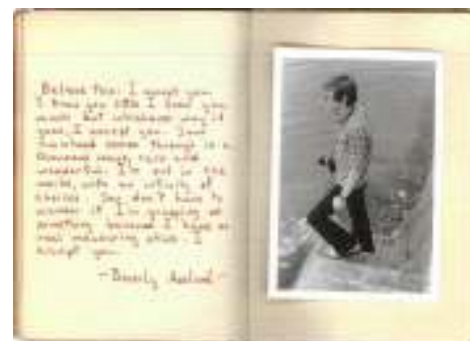
*For days and weeks, no words have passed.
For time gone on I have not seen you.
Though this absence the gift of friendship could have died.
But for me, I need not to always speak and see
Because for you, my friend, cannot friendship grow in the mind?*



The last entry in the book was a photo of me standing at the base of a set of concrete steps leading into Japan’s Inland Sea. While you can’t see the sea, I was pensively looking out across the water. On the opposite page was the poem by Beverly Axelrod –

Believe this: I accept you.

*I know you little, I know you much,
but whichever way it goes, I accept you.
Your manhood comes through in a
thousand ways,
rare and wonderful.
I'm out in the world, with an infinity of
choices.
You don't have to wonder if I'm
grasping at something
because I have no real measuring stick.
I accept you.*



When Donna gave me this gift, she knew nothing of my orientation. She could not have known how meaningful and prophetic her last entry would be.

Each photo and poem said something about Donna, me – us. Even though I acted as dumb as my uncle’s gate post, I knew there was a message behind this gift. My response was just a reworked version of my habit of looking at people

to look past or through them. This time, I looked past or through her gift because I did not want to see what was right in front of me. I can't imagine how exasperated she must have been at times. As a good Christian girl, however, she never initiated anything.

With respect to Donna, I have one anecdote involving her that sheds light on my mindset.

As a rule, Adventists don't, or didn't, play cards for the same reasons most conservative-leaning denominations frowned on the practice. Adventist young people did play Rook, or as it is often called, "Christian cards." It was a popular game in the men's dorm, but I seldom played. If, as I thought, "regular" card playing was a tool of the devil designed to waste my time and lead me into more serious vices, why wouldn't a substitute serve the same purpose? Even though I wasn't a stickler about playing, I would rather no one played the game.

So, when Donna and I were together over Christmas and the subject of Rook, or in our case "missionary poker," came up, we had a lengthy discussion about the practice. The outcome was that she decided to give up Rook. Fortunately, her roommate had also decided to do the same while back in the United States for Christmas.

I mention this last anecdote because it illustrates my conservative state of mind at the time. If I were so tightly wound that playing Rook troubled me, you can imagine what my dishonorable passions were doing to me psychologically and spiritually.

When my year was up—which felt more like a month—I understood Perry's enthusiasm for Japan. Despite all of my initial apprehensions and the shadow of my ever present orientation, I did not want to leave. I loved everything about the country and the people. And Tokyo—I thrived in that immense and intense labyrinth of a city.

I was exceedingly happy living in Japan. It was far beyond anything I could have imagined and I was thankful I had agreed to go. My initial reluctance compared to the final outcome taught me a valuable lesson about making judgments. Never again would I make a decision about a place or a person based on second-hand, uninformed or preconceived notions. There is just too little about "the other" that I do not know on which to form such judgments.

I did not leave Japan without one final incident that made me famous among school administrators. I was the first student missionary to miss a flight home.

When I arrived at the airport check-in counter, I opened my carry-on bag to get my passport. It wasn't there. I'd left it on a desk at the school. Although someone tried rushing it to the airport, they did not arrive soon enough. Instead of traveling with my hyper-excited fellow teachers back to North America, I watched them leave without me. Nine hours later, I was on a late night flight out of Tokyo.

The half-empty flight took off in heavy rain. It was June again and rainy season. In seconds, the lights of Tokyo vanished below the clouds. I had an entire row of seats to myself making the flight that much lonelier. It was like leaving summer camp again. I think I cried for most of the flight across the Pacific. I felt as though I was being torn from a very dear friend whom I would never see again. q

接続

(Connection)

さよならジャパン

(Soyanara Nippon / Farewell Japan)

connection

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