

Messages from
Abundant Hope

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**Rosie's
UNITY TAROT
and
SPIRITUAL REVOLUTION PROJECT #1**



THE UNITY TAROT

and THE SPIRITUAL REVOLUTION PROJECT

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http://www.rosie-jackson.de/seiten/buch_activitybook.html

THE SPIRITUAL REVOLUTION PROJECT: Global Peace Project and Personal Counseling for 1 to 100 people.

http://www.rosie-jackson.de/seiten/spiritual_revolution_01.html

http://web.me.com/irisha3/The_Spiritual_Revolution_Project/Willkommen.html

MUSIC: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5qaV0px4Ac

MEDITATION VISIONS: <http://abundanthope.net/pages/rosie-one/index.shtml>

MESSAGES FROM SERAPHIN through Rosie (In German/English/Chinese/Spanish/Portuguese/Korean)

http://web.me.com/irisha3/Seraphin/Briefe_2011B.html

http://web.me.com/irisha3/Seraphin/Messages_2011_B.html

<http://blog.sina.com.cn/idealcity2010> (Chinese)

<http://web.me.com/irisha3/Seraphin/mensajes.html>

<http://web.me.com/irisha3/Seraphin/mensagens.html>

<http://www.ageoflight.net/> (Korean)

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INTRODUCTION

THE UNITY TAROT And THE SPIRITUAL REVOLUTION PROJECT

“If the world was a village of 100 people ...”

Developing a global network of people who carry the vision of peace on earth in their hearts.

An education programme for the expansion of consciousness which will transform ourselves and thus our world, based on Rosie Jackson’s World Paintings and UNITY TAROT

Aim:

How can we become “one” with each other, with our earth and with our universe?

What qualities must we develop to ensure peace?

The Spiritual Revolution Project explores and maps 100 “positive” qualities. The more they serve as our point of orientation, the more we voluntarily and conscientiously adhere to them out of love for ourselves and our fellow humans, the faster we will move towards harmonious living. In the course of this project, we encounter everything which separates us (culture, customs, beliefs) and discover mutual ground, the world of feelings and emotions: how we conduct our relationships; how we deal with our fears and problems; how we express our sadness and joy. Simultaneously, we celebrate our miraculous diversity and potential. As troubadours of a new peaceful age, it is our intent to spread the wisdom, insights and loving attitude acquired during this process.

How did THE SPIRITUAL REVOLUTION PROJECT start?

In 2005, the artist Rosie Jackson made a mental note of the fact that different people were always sending her the same text which began “If the world was a village of 100 people ...”. Deciding that this was no coincidence, she used the global statistics in this text (concerning nationality, religion, poverty etc.) to invent 100 people and write their biographies. Then she depicted these “global villagers” in a 5 metre long painting entitled THE WORLD-REALITY, illustrating the whole range of human problems on earth. But having done this, she felt she could not just leave it at that, so she spent another 2 years considering how each of the global villagers could turn their life around if they pursued a certain “positive” quality (such as respect, gratitude or compassion). Then she painted the 100 figures anew, following their transformation, in another large painting entitled THE WORLD-VISION. The 100 positive qualities act as the catalyst for the SPIRITUAL REVOLUTION which can transform our world into paradise. The 100 biographies all have a “happy end” and include 10 pertinent questions, and this now forms the UNITY TAROT. Ideally, the paintings should be placed in a Peace Centre where visitors seeking transformation can choose a card from Tarot, and where seminars can be held.

Why has our earth not (YET) turned into paradise? Our failure to realise the following:

- that we are not victims but gods and goddesses who have created everything (yes,EVERYTHING) on this planet
- that we have insufficiently utilised our critical faculties and have let ourselves be influenced by the media
- that we still our guilty consciences in a variety of ways, for example a quick donation or signing a petition
- that our cowardice and inability to leave our comfort zone restricts us to functioning within corrupt systems instead of questioning the validity and purpose of the system itself.
- that fear dictates our reactions and catapults us into an illusionary scramble for survival

- that our egos make us susceptible to comparing ourselves to others and taking part in the competitive rat race
- that we allow ourselves to be influenced and divided by enemy stereotypes – battles between sexes, generations, nations and religions – instead of searching for the similarities
- that we do not take over responsibility for our own behaviour and leave decisions to others
- that we do not conceive of ourselves as wielders of divine energy, constantly and eternally connected to the universe and Source
- that we act irresponsibly towards each other and our earth
- that we always take and possess more than we need
- that our seemingly justifiable outbursts of anger are actually acute reactions to personal issues or „soft spots“ which still require healing, and which only we can heal
- that we are continually compromising. One compromise a day (e.g. one paper cup or cigarette butt thrown onto the street) results in huge wastes of rubbish (6.9 billion paper cups or cigarette butts if everyone does this)
- that every joyful thought, good deed, curse or crime returns to us personally in some form at a later date
- That we are all on the way to paradise, our ultimate destination. The only question which remains is: how deeply do we realise this, and **how many detours are we going to take on the way?**

How can the UNITY TAROT and the World Paintings be used?

SPIRITUAL REVOLUTION SEMINAR

A programme to develop and sharpen our intercultural awareness, a framework which opens up new visionary, cultural, global and spiritual perspectives and which dissolves the obstacles to our own personal visions and desires. This process is catapulted by examining the paintings THE WORLD-REALITY and THE WORLD-VISION. Participants experience a taste of paradise – love, intimacy, support, creativity, courage, clarity, oneness, trust, honesty, openness, spontaneity, exhilaration, peace and reconciliation with the past, balance, soul purpose and joy for life (Contact Rosie Jackson or Dr. Peter Erlenwein: www.institut-fuer-integrale-entwicklung.de.)

What the seminar can activate:

- Hidden potential and unsuppressed enthusiasm for life
- Deeper, wider perception and new perspectives
- Recognition of old stumbling blocks preventing vocation and vision
- Openness for encounters and confrontation with all that seems „foreign“
- Active participation in the role of divine messenger on the world stage
- Courage to critically question what happens behind the scenes
- Loving concern for ourselves, our fellow travellers, our earth
- Affinity with all people of all nations through emotions and feelings common to all
- Creativity as a method of expression, self-discovery and communication to others
- The concept of life as a self-determined adventure and journey

What methods are used in seminars?

Exploring the details in the painting THE WORLD-REALITY in order to sharpen perception, confront the darker sides of our natures and to work on personal obstacles. Exploring the details in the painting THE WORLD-VISION as inspiration for developing visions for oneself and for our world. Body work, dance, encounter, meditation, visualisation, regression work. Identification with one global villager from the Unity Tarot and confrontation with new cultures, opportunities, structures, ideas.

THE GLOBAL VILLAGER TREASURE HUNT

This is for exactly 100 participants. Each participant chooses one global villager and searches for this fictive person IN REALITY and experience the positive quality associated with that person TOGETHER, documenting this in any way they choose in order to inspire others with their story. This is a way to travel intuitively and build international partnerships on a very personal emotional level. The vision: when 100 people have gone through this process, they all meet to celebrate and exchange their experiences. Photos of the 100 villagers they have "found" are used as a basis for sculptures to be exhibited. The 100 participants and the 100 villagers meet for a great celebration.

Performances based on the UNITY TAROT material, and other ideas

1-100 actors, 1-100 dancers, 1-100 composers, 1-100 artists choose a Global Villager and experiment with interaction, developing a play or a musical or a film. For example, 10 actors choose a card and take on the role of the villager they choose, "meeting" the other 9 actors in the course of the play. Or 100 artists choose a card and illustrate the positive quality on the card, and an exhibition is held of the paintings or sculptures they make. Or 100 people in 100 countries wishing to act as peace troubadours choose a card and go through the seminar process, and then the 100 people who chose the Global Villager representing GRATITUDE, could then meet to express gratitude together on an international level or build a GRATITUDE TEMPLE.

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IF THE WORLD WAS A VILLAGE

The paintings THE WORLD – REALITY and THE WORLD-VISION depict 100 people which Rosie Jackson has invented according to the following statistics: Imagine a tiny village of 100 people, where the demographics of the village mirror the demographics of the world's global population.

This is what the village would look like:

51 Women

49 Men

60 Asians

12 Europeans

14 Americans (North and South)

13 Africans

1 Oceanian

70 Non-white

30 White

80 have insufficient housing

34 Christian

22 Muslims

15 Hindus

14 Non-religious

6 Buddhists

4 Chinese religions (those selected here: Confucianism, Daoism, Taoism and Animism)

5 believe in other religions (those selected here: Shamanism (Peru), Voodoo (Benin), Judaism (Israel), Greek Orthodox (Crete), Lamasism (Tibet))

50 are over 26 years old

50 are under 26 years old

89 Heterosexuals

11 Homosexuals

50 live below the poverty line (approx. 2,5 dollars a day)

25 live off 1 dollar a day

18 are overweight

3 have diabetes

1 has AIDS

50 are undernourished

3 children are deformed due to malnourishment

17 have unsafe drinking water

16 of the 51 women and girls have been sexually abused or beaten

20 smoke

10 are alcoholics

6 own 59 % of the world's entire wealth

1 is a refugee (here, in Tanzania)

21 are illiterate

1 has a university degree

1 woman is a teacher (here, in Switzerland)

1 will soon die (here, in Nepal)

2 will soon be born (Here, 2 pregnant women, 1 in Sri Lanka, 1 in Moscow)

14 speak Mandarin, 6 speak Hindi, 6 speak Spanish, 6 speak English, 3 speak Bengali, 3 speak Portuguese, 3 speak Russian, 2 speak Japanese, 2 speak German, 2 speak Arabic

* Original text by Donella Meadows „State of the Village Report“, Sustainability Institute, USA

GLOBAL VILLAGER 1 – CLARITY



Woman aged 24 from Chongqing, China. Non-religious, lives in poverty and is undernourished, literate, speaks Mandarin, sexually abused, lesbian

A thin woman is brushing her teeth in a women's labor camp. She shares the toothbrush she is using with twenty-three other women prisoners. As so often, her mind is crowded with harrowing memories which circle endlessly in a spiral of painful humiliation. A sense of dread grips her heart when she remembers the weekly political meeting of her work unit. She recalls her name being called out and officials denouncing her as a practitioner of a forbidden school of Buddhist thought. She is flooded with memories of utter desolation and helplessness in face of this accusation. Following deportation, she now finds herself with hundreds of other women in a rehabilitation camp which is ruled by leering armed guards. She has no religious beliefs and has been wrongly accused. Some of her fellow inmates are tortured on a regular basis. She herself has been raped and lives in fear of it happening again.

Astonishingly, the woman is suddenly released from one moment to the next. When she asks why, the prison warden states that her arrest was a mistake, a case of mistaken identity. The woman receives no apology. Now, back home, she is eternally grateful every time she is allowed to use her own toothbrush, although she has no running water or private basin. Instead, she spits into the gutters of Chongqing, her home and one of China's largest cities. She is not complaining, as she previously did, about the stench of the open sewers, the polluted air or the dim, damp room with the tiny barred window where she works for a pittance as a seamstress. Instead she feels gratitude for her freedom, for every mouthful of rice, for the fresh tangy taste of a lemon. She is thinking about the barred windows and doors which still incarcerate her new friends. Despite their imprisonment, they were always kind and radiated inner strength. At the end of the day, the seamstress closes her eyes in secret meditation and prayer, trying intuitively to see what steps to take next – steps which become clearer and clearer the more she connects with cosmic energy. As she progresses along this path, it becomes more and more obvious what is actually unimportant or peripheral. Slowly, she overcomes her fear of the obstacles in her path, recognizing them as agents of 'good', forcing her to reassess where she wants to go. Like her friends, she is able to create an oasis of calm for herself, irrespective of outward circumstances. She experiments regularly, going to places where chaos rules, in order to practice how to remain focused. Eventually she comes to the understanding that it is possible to exist anywhere if one knows how to build an oasis.

Questions:

Given that it is possible to view any situation from a different perspective, who have you 'wrongly' accused? Have you 'wrongly' accused yourself? What is not yet clear?

Have you understood that you must be clear about your starting point if you are to progress in any direction?

How are you torturing yourself? What obstacles have restricted your freedom to show you that you have freedom to act? What prevents you from defining your wishes more precisely?

How seriously do you view meditation as a means of clarification?

Do you take time daily to contemplate your purpose and how you can improve the next day?

What if you always followed your intuition?

Which small daily pleasures can you be thankful for? How often do you create an oasis of calm?

Supposing everyone in the world focused less on their physical surroundings and more on their relationships to their fellow human beings?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 2 – HELPFULNESS



Girl aged 13 from Hebei Province, China. Christian, literate, speaks Mandarin

A single candle burns in the grey light of early morning. It is five o'clock, and a young girl is already awake, studying English alone by candlelight at a simple wooden bench. She attends a middle school in the depths of the Chinese countryside, but she dreams of escape. Learning English – and later studying abroad – is the vision which drives her on, which helps her bear the overwhelming feeling of loneliness and exclusion which pervades her daily life. For her, this is the ticket to freedom, far away from her irritating family and spoilt brother, from the suffocating rules of her community and from her life of rural deprivation. There is no water except for a river nearby, and one set of filthy communal toilets. Most of the 600 pupils are boarders and sleep ten to a room, but she sleeps at home because her family lives and works within the school compound. An hour later, when the six o'clock reveille is played over the loudspeakers, she crams her books back into her shabby green army bag, content that she will be well ahead of her classmates in the next lesson.

When she returns home from school one afternoon, she notices that her small brother is hiding under the quilt on his bed. The girl is so used to being ignored by him that she assumes this is just another variation of running away. But she gradually realizes that he is actually crying – something which has never happened before. Suddenly, the girl's heart softens towards him and she asks him what is troubling him. Slowly, the boy calms down and opens up towards his sister. As a second child under the one child one family policy, he has no right to go to school and now he desperately wants to learn to read. The girl is astonished to hear that he is so unhappy and offers to teach him. Together they sit in the meadow by the river, sometimes learning new Chinese characters, sometimes just watching the fluorescent green insects and butterflies of brilliant blue and yellow. As time draws on, it is clear to the girl that she herself was the cause of her own loneliness. The feeling of separateness dissipates as she embraces her family and classmates. Now she no longer uses her knowledge to show her superiority, but shares it with others. The lessons she gives her brother by the river are followed by play. They throw stones into the water which ripples and glints in the sunlight, and she knows that she too is sending out ripples of positive energy into her surroundings. The girl treasures the clarity and fluidity of water, trying to emanate it in her behavior, watching it flow effortlessly and unhesitatingly into every hollow. In the midst of nature, she has no long-term plans or distractions: she can just 'be'. And at night she listens to the gentle frog chorus – a sound so familiar, but a sound to which she never paid much attention before. She recognizes its beauty and it lulls her into a long, peaceful sleep.

Questions

To what extent is your loneliness or feeling of 'separateness' self-imposed?

Is your focus on the future blinding you to issues of immediate concern?

Which misleading ticket to freedom are you pursuing?

If you achieve this freedom, can you be sure that you will be completely content?

Do the demands of your ego lead you to overlook the needs of your colleagues or family?

Could you go into the countryside more often to gain solace or inspiration?

What if you were as clear, fluid, flowing and unhesitating as water?

What sort of ripples do you intend to send out into the world?

What if everyone worldwide were prepared to release their ego, live in the present and honestly address their own needs and those of others?

What if everyone realized that it is in giving that we receive?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 3 – SELF EXPRESSION.



Boy aged 8 from Hebei Province, China. Christian, literate, speaks Mandarin

A small Chinese woman stands somewhat helplessly in front of her small son. His behavior is often confusing: he is excited and then subdued, hyperactive then listless, friendly and then suddenly aggressive. Now he refuses to answer any of her questions and she has no idea why he is angry. In the end, she offers him a piece of sugar cane and the boy runs off to a field near the river to eat it in peace. He often plays there by himself, churning up the sandy soil with a stick, and if anyone disturbs him they are lucky not to get hit. The boy knows that no one can understand how confused he feels. He is made to feel special because he is the son his parents always longed for, but as the second child under the one child one family policy, he is also 'illegal' and somehow wrong. Perhaps, if he tries to do enough good deeds during his lifetime, the yellow crane will fly him up to heaven, but he does not know how to start. Perhaps he should try and take a bus to the famous Yellow Crane Pagoda in Wuhan to ask for help? Perhaps the yellow crane will be angry if he does not stop being bad? The boy also wants to learn to read, but he cannot. He is not allowed to go to school like his elder sister. When she ignores him he feels upset and runs away whenever she comes home.

The next time the boy refuses to answer her questions, his mother suddenly explodes with rage and leaves him alone. The boy runs to his bed, hides under his quilt and starts to cry for the very first time. To his great surprise, his sister comes up to him and speaks to him softly, asking him the matter. Gradually, he finds words to express the confusion he feels, and confides his secret desire to read. When she offers to teach him, he can hardly believe it. Could she really be so very different from what he had always thought? When he worries about the yellow crane, he tells his mother. She cradles him in her arms and says that the yellow crane temple is not something to be afraid of. If a god exists, she thinks that he cannot be angry. Probably he or she is a caring and generous person who doesn't have any rules. The young boy realizes that the more he expresses his fears and desires, the more content he becomes. The sudden explosions of anger which shocked his playmates are on the decrease. When the boy is happy, his enthusiasm is infectious and he dances around with the other children in the compound. He realizes that he is special and that everyone else is special too.

Questions:

Are you aware of how special you are?

Do you regard other people as special?

Is there anyone you are ignoring or not fully acknowledging?

In what way could your behavior be judged as confusing?

Which feelings have you not fully expressed?

What fear lies behind the dreadful feeling you get if you ask for help?

Supposing you voice your emotions the moment you feel them?

What makes you feel 'wrong'? Are you? What if the 'divine' or 'god' never punishes?

What if 'punishment' is a result of negative individual and collective energy?

How often does your judgment of what is 'good' or 'bad' determine your behavior?

Suppose it is impossible to make mistakes?

What would you do next if everything was 'allowed'?

How would the world change if our decisions were not based on what we personally consider 'good' or 'bad', but on what 'works' for us and what 'works' for the world?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 4 – COMMUNICATION



Card 4 Communication

Girl aged 9 from Qinghai, China. Non-religious, lives in poverty and is undernourished, literate, speaks Mandarin

On the banks of a wide river in western China, a huge Buddha has been carved out of a cliff. Sitting on the Buddha's toe, a small girl crouches with her knees pulled up tightly to her chin. She lives with her parents in one dark room with a small window. In the afternoons, when her schoolwork is done, she is allowed to go out by herself for an hour. Rushing down the crumbling brick stairway she escapes from the old musty building into the light and on towards the river where the Buddha towers above the water. She watches boats bringing new tourists. Their clothes and language are strange to her. Their voices seem loud and coarse, and she resents the way they swarm over the Buddha's feet. When foreign tourists want to take a picture of her sitting on the Buddha's toe, she turns away, indicating that the sun is too strong for her eyes. Scowling, she covers her face with her hands and wishes they would stop interfering and leave her favorite place for ever.

One day the girl takes her usual afternoon walk to the Buddha to find her path blocked: as an important historical site, it requires some renovation. The child is devastated. It seems that her favourite place is not actually hers at all. For two long weeks she is not allowed in. When at last it is reopened, she skips over the Buddha's feet and sings with delight. Visiting Chinese tourists capture her joy on film, and she tells them why she is so happy. In return, they tell her interesting stories about their travels, describing wild birds on a big lake to the west, and a sprawling Lama monastery an hour away where beams are painted in brilliant colors and where the air is alive with the sound of smiths hammering metal. The girl listens attentively to these stories. She also attempts to greet foreign visitors with smatterings of English which she has picked up from an old text book. They laugh and sometimes take a picture of the Buddha's toe, holding a large leaf over her head for a sunshade. But instead of sitting on the big toe – a favorite place for taking photographs – she leaves it free for others, preferring to sit on the middle toe instead. When one lady asks for her address and promises to send her a postcard, the girl can hardly contain her excitement. Every morning she rushes to the postbox in feverish anticipation.
(Symbol: the galactic symbol for communication)

Questions

How do you react – or overreact – when others encroach on your privacy?

What fear lies behind your reaction?

What role does your ego play in conflict situations?

Does any place or any person belong entirely to you?

What prevents you from improving your communication skills?

Do you notice others? How do you approach them?

What if everyone you meet had a personal message for you?

What if you share more of your personal experiences?

How would the world change if there were no 'foreigners', only sisters and brothers?

How would the world change if all encounters could be perceived as inspiring and uplifting?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 5 – DEEP PERCEPTION



Woman aged 25 from Hunan, China. Non-religious, literate, speaks Mandarin, sexually abused, heterosexual

A pregnant woman is sitting at a simple wooden table opposite her husband. Her defiance of official rules has put her in a dreadful predicament. Her determination to have a child as soon as possible blinded her to the necessity of applying beforehand for official permission from the family planning bureau. Every day for the last month, work unit officials have burst into their cramped flat. They have torn the newspaper off the walls, glued on to keep out the damp. They have spat on the concrete floor, used up all the coal and eaten all provisions. Practically nothing is left. The officials insist that aborting the baby is for the communal good and that everyone must adhere to the one child one family policy if the country is to survive. The woman and her husband feel powerless to act and put on a brave face. Finally, the woman admits defeat and goes to the family planning bureau to say that she will undergo an abortion.

Following the operation, the woman gives into her pain. Expression of her torment at losing the child triggers off other memories of unexpressed grief which she has long since buried in the past. She admits to her husband that she was sexually abused in her youth, thus hindering true understanding and communication in their own relationship. In their subsequent long conversations they learn more deeply about each other's needs and fears. They are sad that their plans to have a child have been thwarted in a terrible and inhumane manner, but they also recognise that it may actually be better for their own personal development as a couple – and thus for any child they have in the future - to wait a bit longer before starting a family. Much later they come to the very difficult realization that the aborted child was an angel who chose them as parents in order to bring them this understanding. The woman becomes increasingly attuned to the needs and wishes of her soul. She enjoys a new deep intimacy with her husband, learns to assist others using her increased powers of perception. Later she is able to meet the challenges of raising a child with grace and maturity.

(Symbol: the Chinese character for Heart)

Questions

How often do you decide to go ahead with fixed plans or ideas without communicating them?

How much of your life is already planned?

What would happen if you looked deeper, beyond the story to the reason for the story?

Are your actions attuned to the true desires of your soul?

Given that everyone has 'time', do you use it for what you consider important?

How much time do you consciously set aside for relaxation, meditative rituals or 'nothing'?

How often do you put on a 'brave face'? How often do you show your pain?

What 'dreadful' events have you created to provide yourself with greater insight?

Are you powerless? What choices have you had the power to make?

Supposing we are all gods and goddesses with immense power?

Supposing everyone in the world was fully aware of the fact that every negative action and every negative thought has a negative impact on our environment?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 6 – INTEGRITY



Man aged 23 from Inner Mongolia, China. Non-religious, literate, smokes, speaks Mongolian, heterosexual

A pile of ropes and household utensils lie on the ground, spread out on a worn cloth. A man crouches stiffly beside it, hoping that he will sell enough to buy food for the day. His present daily grind is fairly monotonous, making a meager living from reselling an assortment of items sold to him by an acquaintance. Whereas he suspects that these may be stolen goods, he asks no questions. Every day is the same, squatting placidly at the edge of the street, without much hope for the future. Although he senses that he could make more of his life, he prefers to keep to familiar places and people.

One morning, the man bumps into his supplier who is carrying a large statue of a dragon. He insists that it will bring a lot of money at the market and, although the seller's first impulse is to refuse, something makes him take the dragon away with him. It triggers memories of a visit to Wudang Monastery as a child. The man relives the sudden sense of wonder he felt when confronted by a huge statue of a dragon in the monastery grounds. As a small boy, he imagined flames shooting out of the dragon's nostrils and turning into a large fire, just as big as the huge uncontrolled coal fires where his father worked in Ningxia Province. As a small boy he playfully put his head into the dragon's mouth and laughed. The man is filled with sorrow at his present lack of youthful energy and daring, and he decides to revisit Wudang to regain inspiration. When he finds the dragon again and puts his head into its mouth, he suddenly knows that he has got to change. He decides to confront his supplier about the stolen goods and discovers that his suspicions are well-founded. Although he feels strangely 'empty' because he has lost his source of income, he realises that everything which is empty is also full of potential and possibility. He starts to regard the world in a more critical way. Buddhism becomes increasingly attractive to him with its emphasis on learning and questioning rather than accepting assertions uncritically. The man is especially attracted to Tibetan Buddhism in which form is emptiness and emptiness is form. Neither is real or unreal. Both are existent and non-existent. Full of optimism and vitality, he turns a new page in his life and is led by the principle of integrity.
(Symbol: Chinese character for integrity; the celestial ladder)

Questions

Is it time to take a break or take concrete steps in a new direction?

Can you imagine that you are holding onto something which prevents you from experiencing abundance?

What if turning a new page in your life reveals an empty space full of potential?

What would happen next if you lost your fear and started to question critically?

What have you 'stolen'? Have you stolen something from yourself?

Who do you need to confront?

What extraordinary act would lift you out of passivity?

How much of your behavior is controlled?

How can you light your hidden inner fire and ignite your divine energy?

What if no-one simply accepted what they were told and started their own critical investigations instead?

What if the actions of every member of our planet were governed by integrity and honesty?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 7 – MINDFULNESS



Woman aged 25 from Xingiang, China. Muslim, lives in poverty and is undernourished, literate, speaks Kazak, heterosexual.

It is dawn on the snowline of the Tien Shan Mountains, and a woman dashes outside to fill her blackened kettle with snow. Her eyes dart fearfully beneath her green headscarf and her reddened cheeks are roughened by wind. She carries wood, churns milk, cooks, cleans, sews and breastfeeds, giving continuously without a second thought. She tends the children and the goats, but she hardly ever speaks, resenting her isolation on the mountain. Late that evening the men return on their horses after successfully selling some of their animals. As they sit cross-legged round the fire drinking, they decide to kill the last kid to celebrate the occasion. The woman feels a shudder of terror but covers her face to hide her feelings. She lies motionless under the furs next to her small sleeping son, but she knows that the goat's head is being roasted over the fire in the flickering semi-darkness of the yurt.

When the small boy awakes, he runs outside to greet his pet goat, but he cannot find it. When he asks his mother where it is, she breaks down and cries. This sudden, intense and genuine expression of feeling is the first step towards breaking through the overwhelming numbness and resignation which has governed her life so far. Although the woman's role as helper and provider changes very little, she is now more conscious of what she does and how she does it. She completes her chores in her own time, under no pressure, and she no longer emits an air of surly servility. Instead of rushing outside quickly to fetch snow for the kettle, she wraps herself up warmly and walks slowly, pausing to wonder at the crystallized grass and slender fingers of ice crunching beneath her feet, showing these natural wonders to the child whose hand she holds. Invigorated by the wind, she turns eagerly to search the sky for the first faint orange tinge of light on the mountain ridge which heralds the arrival of the morning sun. She remembers the bus-loads of sightseers, the grazing cattle, the snaking roads and the snarling traffic further down the valley, and she is grateful for this moment of early morning silence which starts her day.

Questions

What acute problem is it time to discuss now?

How much responsibility do you take on for the people surrounding you?

If you are continuously giving, what is it that you continuously expect?

How much responsibility do you take on for yourself?

What avenues are always open to you for recovering your vitality?

Do you consciously invite moments of silence or periods of rest into your life?

How could you welcome each day as if it offers infinite new opportunities?

Are you stubborn or unwilling because you think you have no choice? How can a change in your consciousness turn unpleasant or unchangeable situations into a new experience?

Are you mindful of every moment?

What if everyone in the world were continually aware of all the choices available to them?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 8 – LEADERSHIP



Card 8 Leadership

Woman aged 35 from Xingiang, China. Muslim, literate, speaks Uigur and Mandarin, heterosexual

Grasping her throbbing head in her hands, a cotton worker in western China is haunted by fear and by the unpleasant memories she has bottled up inside her. She is a member of the Uyghur Minority and works in a large factory. Lethargic, ragged and hungry because she has not been paid for five months, she has to rely on the benevolence of her neighbors who give her their scraps of left-over rice. She feels deserted, especially by the men in her life; by her father, who worked in southern China and only returned to his family once a year; by her first husband, who never showed his feelings and disappeared without explanation overnight; and by her present husband – a miner – who failed to comfort her when she lost a child. She envisages these three men with indistinguishable features floating impassively above her, out of reach. Even when she is in a relationship, she feels strangely distant and helpless, desperate for the sense of security she has never known.

When the woman learns that her second husband is dead, one of 80 miners killed in a fatal gas explosion due to negligent safety regulations, she is overwhelmed by a feeling of paralysis and grief. Why does the pattern keep repeating itself? In a bid to change this pattern, she examines her feelings more and more. When she digs deep enough, she finds the core of intense anger and frustration which she has bottled up for so long. She finds herself screaming. With time, she realizes that she is partly screaming at herself, as she recognizes that she is fifty percent responsible for her failed relationships. And with time, she understands that people deserting her merely mirrored her own self-desertion. After screaming sessions she feels a sort of prickling energy coursing through her veins, and for the first time in years she stops grumbling and finds the strength to take action. She talks to other workers at the factory and realizes that they have to make a stand instead of adhering to the role of the suffering victim. Together they draw up a manifesto of their demands and threaten to strike if they are not paid. The woman realizes that her past experiences – however painful – are all helpful stages of a process intended to propel her along the path to true autonomy, independence and leadership.

Questions

Could lethargy be the result of spending large amounts of energy on keeping emotions – especially anger – under control?

Have you deserted yourself?

If you wrote a manifesto for yourself, setting out your own needs, what would you or your body demand? Why are some people angry or hurt when they are deserted, and others not? What is your own 'sensitive spot' which is easily wounded?

How can you release the anger which is still bottled up inside you without hurting others?

In your relationships with other people, which patterns keep repeating themselves?

What message are unfortunate events trying to give you?

Given that we create our own lives, how much of your life do you chose to create?

What new horizons will open when you have successfully let go of the past?

How would the world change if everyone chose positive roles in the knowledge that they are role models for others? In what way can you become a 'leader'?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 9 – TRANSPARENCY



Man aged 48 from Tibet, China. Lamaist, literate, imprisoned, speaks Tibetan and Mandarin, heterosexual

The hand of this monk is clutching the bars of his prison window as the rest of his body shudders with cold. The window frames the blue-grey mountains of the Tibetan plateau. Though the slopes are barren, the monk recalls the green forests of his youth, now ruthlessly felled by the Chinese. Even now he can hear the indistinct roar of trucks in the far distance – the endless convoy of trucks transporting even more trees to China. He has heard rumors about the widespread planting of new, genetically manipulated trees and though they are not here on the slopes opposite his prison window, he thinks they cannot be far away. Why didn't he take action sooner to prevent the pillage of his country? He quenches a strong urge to shout out loud, protesting China's ruthless exploitation of Tibet's natural resources, aware that this would be deemed 'unpatriotic behaviour' and prolong his prison sentence. He curses the Chinese for their insensitivity, arrogance and nationalism.

During meditation the monk receives a vision from a deity, Black Tara, the only saint to whom he did not pay due reverence in his monastery because she was a woman. In the vision, Tara reminds him that the outer world is a mirror of his inner world, and she instructs him to contemplate his own insensitivity and arrogance. Humbled, the monk considers his elevated position in the monastery and the way he withheld his disapproval of the Chinese authorities to keep this position. He thinks about the vivid scarlet robes he used to wear and the playful discourses on philosophical subjects in which he boasted a certain prowess. He remembers showing tourists the precious artifacts and intricate gold painting on the red entrance gates, stating with pride that his monastery was the most beautiful and spiritually significant. With sadness he recognizes the barriers he has set up around himself, his estrangement from the other monks and his loneliness. Even if he were allowed visitors, nobody would come. He remembers the words of the Buddha, "It is your mind which creates this world", and so he uses his time to meditate on changing his attitude. Realizing that his physical limitations reflect his locked-up mind, he begins to see things more transparently. He recognizes that sending more anger and condemnation into the world means that there is more anger and condemnation in the world, so instead of attacking the Chinese, he seeks to negotiate. He regrets his pride and sees his imprisonment as a self-made mind prison, a painful stepping-stone to higher awareness.

(Symbol: Chinese characters for Tree and Earth)

Questions: Is there any way in which you have imprisoned or compromised yourself?
How comfortable are you with the thought that your outer surroundings are a reflection of your inner self? Given that your mind creates the world you see, which world do you choose to create and which principles determine your path now?
To what degree does your fear of repercussions prevent you from speaking your mind?
Which of your 'achievements' estrange you from others?
What unpleasant 'rumors' with catastrophic potential do you (individually, or as part of humanity as a collective) choose to ignore rather than investigate?
When was your last uncontrollable urge to speak out and did you follow that urge?
What if nobody bought any more newspapers and nobody cut any more trees?
What if everyone went 'within' in the face of outside chaos?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 10 – SINCERITY



Boy aged 14 from Shanghai, China. Christian, lives in poverty and is undernourished, illiterate, speaks Mandarin

Like hundreds of other Chinese Catholics on Sunday mornings in southwest Shanghai, this teenager is on his way to Xujiahui Cathedral. His unobtrusive demeanor and polite smile do not betray his inner turmoil, and his worn but clean clothes do not reveal his lack of financial means. In his mind's eye his arms are outstretched above him, carrying a huge box of sins to church along the path of penitence, leading to absolution and purity. He pretends to read the hymn book, for he is ashamed of his lack of education and it would be dreadful to admit that he cannot read. His dreams include unlimited access to books and libraries, and of being respected for his knowledge. His feelings of discomfort are somewhat reduced by being able to go to confession, but he still pales when he recalls the lies he has told, the food he has stolen and the insults he has made without thinking. When he comes out of the cathedral he feels a little more purified and, on the homeward journey, he tends to smile at people, rather than gaze at Shanghai's putrid backstreets or sparkling new towers.

One Sunday, the boy is pretending to read the hymn book as usual, when the man next to him whispers that he is holding it upside down. The boy is absolutely appalled that he has lost face, but the man just laughs gently. Flooded with immeasurable relief, the boy begins to pray. Now, in his mind's eye, he has set aside his box of sins. Instead, he carries a huge amethyst, a symbol of sincerity and heavenly understanding, which leads him to a higher spiritual plane. When he goes to confession, he values this as a method to become conscious of and thus release a fear, but his concept of 'sin' no longer exists. He has learnt that 'losing face' is an opportunity to learn. Instead of cowering with shame, he stretches his arms out to the universe. With time, the boy turns into a highly respected visionary – a pioneer in thought and action on spiritual and material planes. He can see beyond already existing educational or religious structures while appreciating the core truths of each. Instead of dreaming of a library of books for his personal use, he knows that divine knowledge already exists in every person and in every cell, and that it can be accessed by tapping into cosmic energy. He treats his followers with gentle humor and compassion, encouraging them to live their potential and demonstrate absolute sincerity in their behavior at all times.

Questions:

What role does politeness play in your life?

How often do you make excuses?

What self-imposed barriers have so far prevented you from living life fully?

Can you forgive yourself?

What will change when you release your ideas of right and wrong in favor of what works for you and for humanity as a collective?

What fear could you release through 'confession'?

Is it possible to insult someone who is totally centered, confident of their own worth and governed by love?

Which of your qualities has not been acquired through conventional education?

Assuming that your soul has no knowledge or experience of fear, how can you reconnect yourself to your soul and simultaneously shed your fears?

In view of the fact that we enter this life with nothing and leave with nothing except the insights we have acquired, what is your dream?

How would you act differently if you were convinced that you have access to divine knowledge?

How would the world change if everyone discovered their connection to the divine?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 11 – SENSITIVITY



Woman aged 19 from Jingtong, Yunnan, China. Hinayana Buddhist, literate, speaks Dai and Mandarin, heterosexual

An attractive young woman is being photographed as she peeps coyly into a mirror, regarding her long black pigtail with great satisfaction. At the same time she remembers the beauty of the dead butterflies an admirer once showed her at the nearby Botanical Institute. This makes her forget the more dreary part of her life - her poorly paid day job cleaning hostel rooms. During the day she usually feels as if a dense grey cloud is hanging continuously over her. She prefers to regard herself as a performer of traditional dance who takes part in late night shows for the Chinese soldiers passing through her small village near the Vietnamese border. During the dance she deliberately emphasises the sensual movements, provoking titters of laughter from the crowd. At the end, the spectators are so embarrassed that they fail to show their enthusiasm. The girl is offended, and so she is all the more susceptible to the attentions and compliments of a visiting photographer. She is impressed by his huge and hugely expensive camera and agrees to let him walk her home.

As she unlocks the door and turns to say goodnight, the photographer grabs hold of her and forces his way into her home. Her neighbor comes running when he hears her screams, but the photographer manages to escape. The disheveled young woman is greatly distressed after this experience and frees herself from all vanity. She realizes that she has been imprisoned by her own self-importance and thus insensitive to others. Now, when she looks in the mirror, she is no longer checking her appearance. Instead she looks into her own eyes asking "Who am I?" again and again, trying to understand the essence of who she really is. During the day, she goes about her cleaning in a meditative fashion. Occasionally she stops for a precious moment to watch the black dragon butterflies darting playfully around the giant geraniums. When she dances she no longer focuses on her sensuality to provoke or embarrass the soldiers. While the sensual element remains, it has become gentle. The hearts of her spectators are touched by the sensitive way she conveys her feelings and compassion, and they applaud her well. Suddenly she realizes the significance of the name of her home province of Yunnan, meaning 'south of the clouds'. For her, the clouds have parted and she feels her soul lift with light and love.

Questions

What do you see and feel when you look into a mirror?

What feelings come to the surface when you consider the effortless flight, the natural instincts, the delicate beauty and the brief lives of butterflies?

What would you have to change for your life to resemble that of a butterfly?

What small miracle in your immediate surroundings could fill you with inspiration?

What prevents you from seeing yourself and your actions as part of the Divine?

How often do you interpret lack of response from another person as a personal insult?

What role has personal insensitivity or lack of communication played in your life so far?

Which particular 'cloud' or negative issue is receiving too much of your attention?

What would the world be like if everyone danced through life?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 12 – JOY IN ABUNDANCE



Man aged 48 from Guelin, China. Chinese traditional beliefs (Taoist), lives in poverty and is undernourished, literate, speaks Cantonese, heterosexual

A farmer is up to his knees in water in a rice field in the mountains of Guelin. As he works, he hears the sound of firecrackers in the distance, part of a funeral ceremony. He already feels old, as if he has not got much more time to live. As he transplants the new shoots, his movements are mechanical and lethargic, as if he is drained by the heat, and his thoughts are clearly elsewhere. His mind is crowded with memories of last year's failing harvest and the way he attempted to supplement his income by selling bamboo trinkets he had made in his limited spare time. He feels that he needs more land, more time, more money, more love, more freedom – in fact, there doesn't seem to be 'enough' of anything. When he crosses the small bridge, the river is choked with weeds because there is not enough water. When he travels into town to sell his rice, there is not enough room for him on the bus, though he tries to push and pull at the shoulders of the men blocking his way, and so he is sometimes forced to ride hanging onto the door. He deeply resents anyone who appears to have a lot of money, convinced that they are immoral, selfish and unhappy.

One day on his way into town, the farmer is particularly dejected and frustrated from his battle to get into the crowded bus with two sacks of rice. As usual, the bus is overloaded, and it crawls its way through the mountains on a seemingly endless journey. As it approaches a railway crossing, the bus falters to a stop and the engine breaks down. The farmer sinks into the depths of despair, as if his life has also come to an end. At that moment he hears the slow, steady clanking of a passing train. A strong animal smell pervades the air, and when he looks up, he sees the eyes of hundreds of pigs peering out of the carriages through wooden slats. At this moment, the man is fully aware of all his senses and feels incredibly alive. His sympathy for these captive animals on their way to the slaughterhouse is so great that eating them seems like an act of unacceptable barbarism. A wave of intense gratitude floods over him, and he rejoices in his freedom. When he crosses the bridge on his return home, he does not see a choked river but recognizes that there has been 'enough' water to feed the verdant grass on the river bed. When he returns to his fields, he does not see them as a burden but blesses them as the source of his sustenance. No longer focusing entirely on his land, for fear it will not provide, he lifts his eyes to the mountains and thinks of the pilgrims climbing to the holy Taoist Temple. He decides to become a pilgrim too, and as he climbs he is intensely aware of every step he takes and of every twist in the path. It does not take him as long as he thought. His new outlook on life is reinforced by an inscription at the top. It refers to the Taoist attitude to time, to eternal recurrence every 23,000 years. From the summit he gazes over the spectacular mountains which stretch into a blue haze on the horizon. The glinting river winds its way between them like a silver snake. He is filled with a rush of joy at the beauty of this landscape and wonders why it has taken him so long to explore and appreciate something which is actually so near. (Symbol: Total Expansion)

Questions:

Which area of your life looks as if it is choked with weeds or has come to a dead end?
What fear leads you into situations which restrict you? Are you blocking your own path?
How long do you wait before choosing a different path?
Have you got enough? What if divine sources always provide?
Are you aware that condemning wealth is pushing it further away from yourself?
Which activities do you complete in a mechanical manner?
How much time do you spend watching, listening, exploring joyfully and giving thanks?
What if we grow old because we think that we have to grow old?
What if we grow older quicker because we ingest the information of death via meat?
How would your life change if you knew that death is simply crossing a border into a new realm, and if you knew that 'time' is timeless, that life is eternal? What would the world be like if everyone realized that it is possible to move towards new experiences instead of resigning themselves to 'fate'?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 13 – ENJOYMENT



Woman aged 50 from Shaanxi Province, China. Non-religious, lives in poverty and is undernourished, literate, speaks Mandarin, heterosexual

The Yellow River twists and turns like a metallic snake towards a hazy horizon of distant hills. When it changes course, the water churns round the bends, turning brown with silt, and continues relentlessly. Along its banks, a woman also moves forward continuously, though she cannot compete with the pace of the flow of water. She shuffles along in baggy trousers and her tattered apron flaps in the wind. Four thick bamboo poles are tied together, the front ends resting on her shoulders and the back ends on the ground four or five meters behind her. With her arms stretched out on either side, she bends under a huge crucifix. Straining and sweating under the weight, she focuses on her feet, oblivious of the bicycles passing her, piled high with gas bottles and sacks of salt. She is resigned to carrying her load and resolves to hold out to the bitter end. She has to transport the poles to the building site downstream. There is no alternative way of making ends meet.

As midday approaches, a group of barefooted men running along with wheelbarrows of coal shout at her to get out of the way. She does not hear them. Her feeble last minute attempt to swerve makes her fall on her side. The sun beats down intensely, the poles cut into her bleeding shoulders, and she is on the verge of complete collapse. One of the fishermen whose nets are suspended between the willow trees notices her stumble and rushes to her aid. Although her inner pride immediately rebels, she allows herself to be helped and bandaged. A group of ragged, barefoot children gather round her and gape. Usually, she would have pushed them away brusquely, but her ankle is twisted and she cannot move. Instead of dealing out verbal abuse, she speaks softly to them, explaining what has happened. She speaks comforting words to a reticent toddler with tear-stained cheeks who is frightened by the sight of blood. She is invited to stay while she recuperates, and the children delight in showing her the insects and flowers they have found. The fisherman is only too happy to tie the bamboo poles together behind his boat so that they float effortlessly downstream to the building site. He is going that way anyway. The woman learns to listen attentively, accept help graciously and to enjoy precious joyful moments with her new adopted family. In the course of time, she feels more invigorated than ever before, realizing that her own blinkered vision is the sole source of any obstacles she encounters on life's path. (Symbol: joy of life/Lebensfreude)

Questions: What cross have you resigned yourself to carrying?

In what way are you about to stumble?

What if 'stumbling' is not a sign of weakness but an opportunity to assess why you have chosen this difficult path and whether it is appropriate for you to continue?

To what extent does personal pride dictate your behavior? Do you associate pain with failure?

How often do you accept offers of help?

What do you continue to do although you know intuitively that it is detrimental to your health?

Can you cry with the ease and immediacy of a small child?

Can you view a flower or an insect as a miracle? What can you be thankful for?

Supposing that obstacles are simply areas of non-time (as proven in experiments involving obstacles and lasers) which help us to travel faster towards our goal? Can you see problems in the same light?

What if everyone worldwide discarded their fear of 'losing face' and welcomed 'failure' as an opportunity to learn, instead of developing strategies of self-protection and defense?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 14 – HONESTY



Card 14 Honesty

Man aged 45 from Shenzhen, China. Non-religious, rich, literate, overweight, smokes, drinks, speaks Cantonese, heterosexual

A sturdy man poses happily in front of his new car against a background of skyscrapers as a colleague takes a photograph. As a businessman in Shenzhen, China's booming enclave near Hong Kong, he can still afford the best of city life, although he is secretly uneasy about the future of his firm. As he smiles for the photo, he is actually thinking of where to lunch. Probably he will go to the White Swan Hotel with its landscaped water gardens – a pristine paradise compared to the crumbling colonial mansions nearby which provide a cramped, warren-like abode for scores of families. But this does not concern the business man: he can already visualize the plump fish he will select from the tank and how delicious it will taste when it arrives freshly fried on his plate. Whether or not the fish will cause his usual indigestion is something he would rather not think about now. After all, he has a variety of pills which will deal with it if it arises, just as he has a variety of strategies to deal with his employees if they act out of line, start to make demands or become too much of a threat.

When the businessman receives the photo of himself posing in front of his car, he is well satisfied. The car looks sleek and shiny, and he himself looks confident and well-heeled. He is just about to release it for promotion purposes when he notices that there is an elongated dark patch under the car. When he blows the photograph up to see exactly what this is, he is appalled to see that an emaciated beggar was sleeping under his car. Suddenly, he feels as if his life is a worthless lie, as if he is a performer on an imaginary stage which has nothing to do with reality. He is deceiving the world and he asks himself how the world is deceiving him. How many other things are going on, of which he is unaware? Immediately, he summons his employees and calls a meeting, admitting that the financial side of the business is starting to flounder. Instead of the usual denial, cutting off their questions with glib misleading statements, he acknowledges their fears and answers them openly and directly. With an increasing focus upon integrity and absolute honesty, he realizes that he still has outstanding debts to pay and apologies to make to partners in previous joint business ventures. Following a period of adjustment, the firm starts to prosper again. The more he 'digests' feelings, sensations and situations fully, instead of denying them, the more efficiently his digestive system works, and his outward reality starts to reflect this increasing flow of energy. He develops a positive mission statement for his firm, based on absolute honesty and transparency, for the benefit of all.

Questions: What do you deliberately overlook?

How afraid are you of competition? How does this fear make your behavior less authentic?

What would change if you addressed the roots of a problem instead of its symptoms?

How comfortable are you with the thought that you are responsible for your own physical discomfort?

What strategies have you developed which prevent intimacy?

Which issues in your life still need 'closure' so that they no longer block your vision for the future?

What if we all understood that the help we give and the aggressive competitiveness we send out into the universe returns to us like a boomerang?

What sort of energy would you send out into the world if you believed that the energy and integrity you send out into the world returns to you personally?

What if everyone worldwide realized that "closure" inevitably brings about a new beginning?

What if everyone worldwide were honest all the time?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 15 – OPENNESS



Woman aged 66 from Wuhan, Henan, China. Muslim, lives in poverty and is undernourished, literate, beaten, speaks Mandarin, heterosexual

An elderly woman wearing thick-rimmed glasses sits grumpily on a small bamboo stool, constantly muttering complaints and squinting at the shoe insoles she is stitching to sell at the market. She belongs to the Muslim Hui Minority and shows fierce loyalty to her tribe, especially now that the antagonism between Catholics and Hui Muslims has recently exploded into open conflict. She turns her back on her Catholic neighbors and criticizes all Muslims who are less devout than herself, especially the younger generation. This is exemplified by her selfish, worldly son who is intent on pursuing his own interests and who rejects his mother's concern. Jealous of the attention poured upon her 'spoilt' granddaughter, and outraged by her son's apparent insensitivity to her needs and values, the woman turns to her religion for solace. She dreams about being saved from poverty and depression by a prophet or savior instead of being dependent on her son who finds occasional work as a driver.

One morning she hears shouts and her son arrives in a state of extreme agitation. He has run over a Catholic girl who is severely injured, sparking off violent riots across the city. The woman is devastated, remembering the loss of her own daughter in a road accident. Now, her son has caused similar grief. He does not yet know how, but he tells his mother that from this time onwards, he will dedicate himself to reconciliation between the two sides. When the woman sees his great remorse and capacity to empathize, she realizes that she has been focusing purely on a few of what she saw as his "insensitive" moments, thus failing to register the wealth of positive aspects in his behavior. She also sees that she reacted strongly to this particular trait because it was familiar to her. Thus she comes to reflect upon her own insensitivity and selfishness towards others and towards herself. She is open to everything and everyone. Her greatest joy now is caring for her exuberant granddaughter – a small chubby toddler resembling a ball of purple wool in the jumper she has knitted for her. Her renewed energy and regained independence of spirit enable her to help her neighbors and the family of the injured girl and, with time, her world expands as she never thought possible. Instead of hoping for a savior, she turns into a savior herself.

Questions

What unfortunate event is trying to open you up to reconciliation?

Can you let go of your need to be right?

What prevents your loyalties extending to the whole of humanity?

Which part of yourself have you injured or killed?

Is the selfishness you see in others also to be found in yourself?

How difficult is it for you to accept that the negative qualities in another person are a mirror of yourself?

If your focus changes, is it possible that everything you think is true is only a partial truth?

What if we all learned to love better by starting with friends that we hate?

Is it clear to you that personal or private conflicts are the seeds of global wars?

Given that we are all saviors, what new behavior will you adopt?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 16 – TRUST



Man aged 24 from Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China. Has Chinese traditional beliefs (animism), lives in poverty and is undernourished, illiterate, has unsafe drinking water, speaks Yao and Cantonese, heterosexual

Hundreds of people are lying asleep on the floor of Guangzhou railway station. Like 150 million other migrant workers in China, one of them, a thin mechanic in old overalls, has left his work unit in search of casual labor in the city because he cannot adequately support his family. As he sleeps he has nightmares about the sufferings of his bedridden wife and small son, about sudden attacks by Guangzhou biker gangs, and about losing his sight. Leaving the countryside was one of a limited number alternatives open to him, including selling blood or an eye for money to a hospital specializing in organ transplants. In the end though, he decided to leave for Guangzhou where he survives on one scant meal a day. The rest of the money he saves. He feels intensely insecure, always hopping from one job to another, always worrying that it will be the last. Usually he ends up working on building sites under dangerous conditions. He views everyone he meets with instant suspicion, and each encounter is fraught with the fear of manipulation and fear of extra responsibilities which he feels unable to shoulder.

One day his fears come true. Work is nowhere to be found and he sits dejectedly on the curb watching the traffic pass. Suddenly he feels a strange pressure on his shoulder, as if someone has placed a comforting hand there, but he can see no one. The feeling descends down his arm and goes into his hand. It is as if someone is trying to pull him up into a standing position. The man's first reaction is fear and a determination to resist, but in this – his moment of greatest despair – he moves towards trust and lets himself be led. And so he finds himself walking dreamlike along the streets of Guangzhou, guided by an invisible force which he imagines to be to a huge purple angel. Suddenly, the bikers he usually fears drive past on a flotilla of loud motorbikes and stop right in front of him. They seem to be enjoying themselves. The invisible being releases the man's hand, and he starts to wave and cheer enthusiastically. It seems that one biker is having trouble with his motorbike, and the mechanic immediately offers to help. Through chance encounters of this nature, in which the man's spontaneous nature and kindness are immediately apparent, he is continually entrusted with small jobs which bring him financial gain and ever-increasing confidence that he will be provided for in the future. Whenever the opportunity arises, he tries to convey the existence of other worlds and dimensions, and tells the story of the purple angel.

Questions:

If you are in a difficult situation, are you always aware of all the possibilities open to you?
How does your fear of extra responsibility or of manipulation affect your encounters with others?
Do you manipulate situations or other people?
What if fear always attracts the thing we are afraid of?
What if despair is simply looking deeply into self-created darkness?
What would happen if you lost all fear and gained an indestructible belief in divine guidance?
What miracle or unexpected event in your life could you ascribe to an angel or divine being?
How would your life change if you knew that you are the sole creator of your 'chances' and 'chance' happenings?
What if you made your life richer through daily acts of kindness?
What if everyone throughout the world conducted their lives trustingly and in full knowledge of the fact that everyone else can be trusted?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 17 – MANIFESTING VISIONS



Card 17 Manifesting Visions

Girl aged 12 from Beijing, China. Has Chinese traditional beliefs (Confucian), literate, speaks Mandarin

An old postcard is lying face down on the street and a girl reaches down to pick it up. When she turns it over she sees a photograph of a ship floating on a lake in the garden of Beijing's Summer Palace. The postcard gives the impression that floating is easy, but for the girl, this word has different connotations. She is a 'floating' child with no proper residence permit and no access to official schools, so she feels like a foreigner and is secretly angry with her parents for moving. Torn between two worlds, living in a sort of limbo, she cannot find her own feet or live her dreams. The old world is the world of her poverty-stricken childhood, spent in a small village on the southwestern edge of the Gobi Desert, next to a remnant of the Great Wall of China. She remembers the wall stretching for miles into the hazy distance. As a small child she spent hours wondering where it went to and what was on the other side. Once curiosity led her to climb the wall, but she slipped on the ice. Her fear of high walls and failed voyages of discovery remain with her to this day. Her mind is clogged by a huge bundle of negative thoughts which have little to do with her present reality in her new world, Beijing. The girl and her parents have moved to China's capital city in search of a better life.

The postcard becomes one of the child's few personal possessions which she keeps in an old tin box. Ever so often she takes it out and looks at it, wondering whether she might ever be able to enter that beautiful garden. She loses interest in everything else and becomes so inactive and quiet that her parents worry about her health and sanity. When they ask her what the matter is, she replies that she must visit the Summer Palace. Her persistence is so great that her mother saves every penny to make this possible. Clutching the postcard, the girl walks slowly towards the ship on the lake. To her great astonishment, she realizes that it is made of marble and not floating at all. How can something which looks so light actually be so heavy? She breaks into laughter and starts to run along the lakeside, throwing her old fears to the wind, searching every corner of the park for new delights. Full of new hope, reaching for nothing less than the stars, the girl goes on to follow her dreams and manifest her visions in a world where everything is possible.

Questions

What are you secretly angry about?

Are you free to act? How are you torn between two worlds?

Given that everything is possible, what 'impossible' dream will you realise?

How earnestly are you committed to achieving change?

How determined are you and what risks are you prepared to take to realise your goal?

How can you enjoy life's voyage of discovery better?

Which wall would you like to see behind?

Do you understand the symbolism of the objects and situations you experience?

How do old thought structures affect your view of what you are looking at now?

How could you regard your roots as a positive force?

How far are you prepared to focus on new opportunities instead of thinking: giving up a part of myself means destroying a part of myself?

To what extent do you feel 'illegal', and to what extent is this your own interpretation?

Do you need official approval to feel valued?

What if everyone worldwide reached for the stars and implemented their visions?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 18 – FORGIVENESS



Man aged 56 from Wuhan, Henan, China. Christian, literate, speaks Mandarin, homosexual

A man sitting next to a coal-fired stove cradles his head in his hands. On a small wooden table nearby lies an English/Chinese Bible with a worn black cover. He remembers the underground church meeting where he prayed for a Christian Chinese constitution and he remembers the years he spent in a labor camp atoning for this, his 'mind problem'. When he thinks about those lost years, he seethes with internal anger, but it never erupts, boiling incessantly below the surface. Suddenly someone hammers on the door which he has locked deliberately, and he hears his sister sobbing at the other side. She tells him that her daughter has been run over and injured by a Hui Muslim driver. The man immediately jumps up to let her in and, as he listens, his anger burns stronger and stronger until it finally explodes. He runs through the streets in the Muslim quarter, screaming and inciting revenge. Others join him and a wave of religious and ethnic riots escalate in the huge sprawling grey city of Wuhan.

As the man wanders back home half deranged through the back alleys of Wuhan, he sees an elderly woman standing in a doorway. She is crying so bitterly that he stops, confused. His Christian heart tells him that he should feel compassion, but she is obviously a Muslim woman. Finally, after a moment which seems like eternity, his heart prevails and he decides to ask if he can help. She is grateful for his concerned enquiry and tells him about her son who has injured a Catholic girl. She implores him to help her find the girl's parents so that she can explain that it was not a deliberate act of racism, but an accident. The man is astonished and takes the woman into his arms to comfort her. He knows exactly where to take her – to his sister – and in a sudden flash of deep understanding, he recognizes that nothing in his life has ever happened by chance. This incredible incident leads him to a completely new understanding of everything he has ever experienced. His exclusion of others had led to his own exclusion in prison. The religious riots presently surrounding him are a reflection of his own religious intolerance. Through this new contact with several Muslim families, he comes to see that his hatred was an illusion based on ignorance. He sees his niece's serious injury as the last and most painful 'wake-up call' in a long series of 'wake-up calls' which he has failed to take seriously. Now he greets everyone with a forgiving and loving heart, especially those who hurt him most, as he recognizes that they were the pivotal force behind his joyful transformation.

(Symbol: the galactic symbol for forgiveness)

Questions: Which part of yourself have you imprisoned, extinguished or kept 'underground'?

What if there is no 'right' or 'wrong'? When did you last express your anger?

Given that hatred is based on ignorance, what prevents you from forgiving?

Which painful loss are you focusing on, thus attracting more negativity?

What are your 'lost years'? Supposing you view them as a necessary preamble to a transformation which is on your soul agenda?

Which conviction is so strong and inflexible that it requires a major accident or calamity to wake you up and put you on a different course?

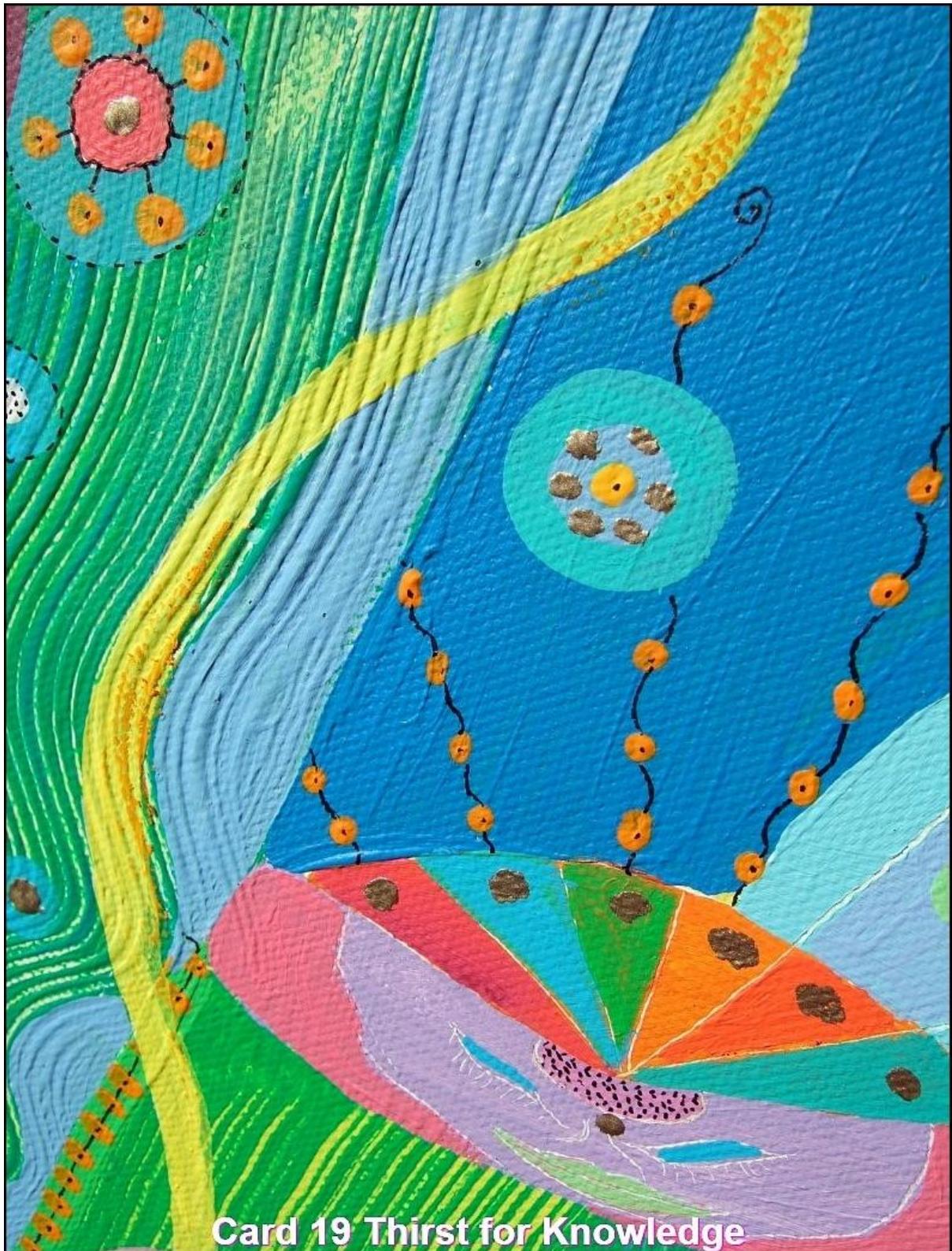
What was your last 'wake-up call', and did you take it seriously?

Are you aware that pain is a precursor of potential joyful transformation in yourself?

What would change in the world if all religions were regarded as valid?

Supposing everyone realized that in pardoning, we are pardoned, and that in pardoning ourselves, we can enter a new period of vitality?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 19 THIRST FOR KNOWLEDGE



Boy aged 8 from Yunnan Province, China. Non-religious, illiterate, lives in poverty and is undernourished, speaks Dai

The thud of heavy footsteps startles the young Chinese boy who is hiding in the family's vegetable plot. His father is approaching on the mountain path which leads down to Tiger Leaping Gorge. As usual, his father is sullen and angry. He screams at the boy that it is dangerous to go too close to the edge of the gorge, although the boy is nowhere near. The boy feels that something is dreadfully wrong but does not know what. Everyone in the village seems distracted or sad, as if living under an indefinable threat. Many are on the move, packing their meager belongings and setting off to some unknown destination. Others turn away in fear when soldiers march through the village putting up official notices. Convinced that his questions would burden the villagers and his family even more, the boy pretends that nothing is wrong and runs to find his mother who works in a small restaurant. Here he sits on top of a pile of cabbages, lulled into security by the familiar sound of clanking metal bowls and hissing woks.

The next time that soldiers appear unannounced in the village, they stick up a poster showing the soles of a pair of shoes, and this causes great consternation. The boy's confusion grows until he can bear it no more, and so he asks the soldiers whose shoes they are. The answer is that they belong to Chen Li Li. The next time his father discovers him hiding in the family plot, he dares to ask why Chen Li Li's shoes are so important. Although he half expects his father to be upset and give some curt, gruff reply, he does quite the opposite. He sits down and tells him what is happening. It is much worse than the young boy could have ever imagined. Everyone has to leave Tiger Leaping Gorge because a hydroelectric dam is to be built and the village is to be flooded. The farmers are angry because they have no new fields to go to. The villagers are very frightened because they think Chen Li Li was pushed into the gorge deliberately for protesting against the flooding. They do not believe he slipped by accident because his boots had no profile, as the police would like them to believe. While all this is disturbing news, the boy is relieved to know that there is a concrete reason for the dreadful feeling inside him and that it is not just a figment of his imagination. As he grows older, he develops the ability to remain centered in the midst of chaos and to rely on his intuition to see clearly. His investigative mind enables him to become increasingly conscious of the fact that there is often something completely different going on beneath the surface.

Questions

What are you hiding from?

Do other people have a distorted view of you because you do not show much of yourself?

Which question are you afraid to ask? Which mystery needs solving?

What have you decided not to talk about? Do you pretend that nothing is wrong?

Have you held something back, seemingly to protect others, but actually to protect yourself?

How could you react differently to unpleasant situations?

Which issue would lose its poignancy if viewed from a different perspective?

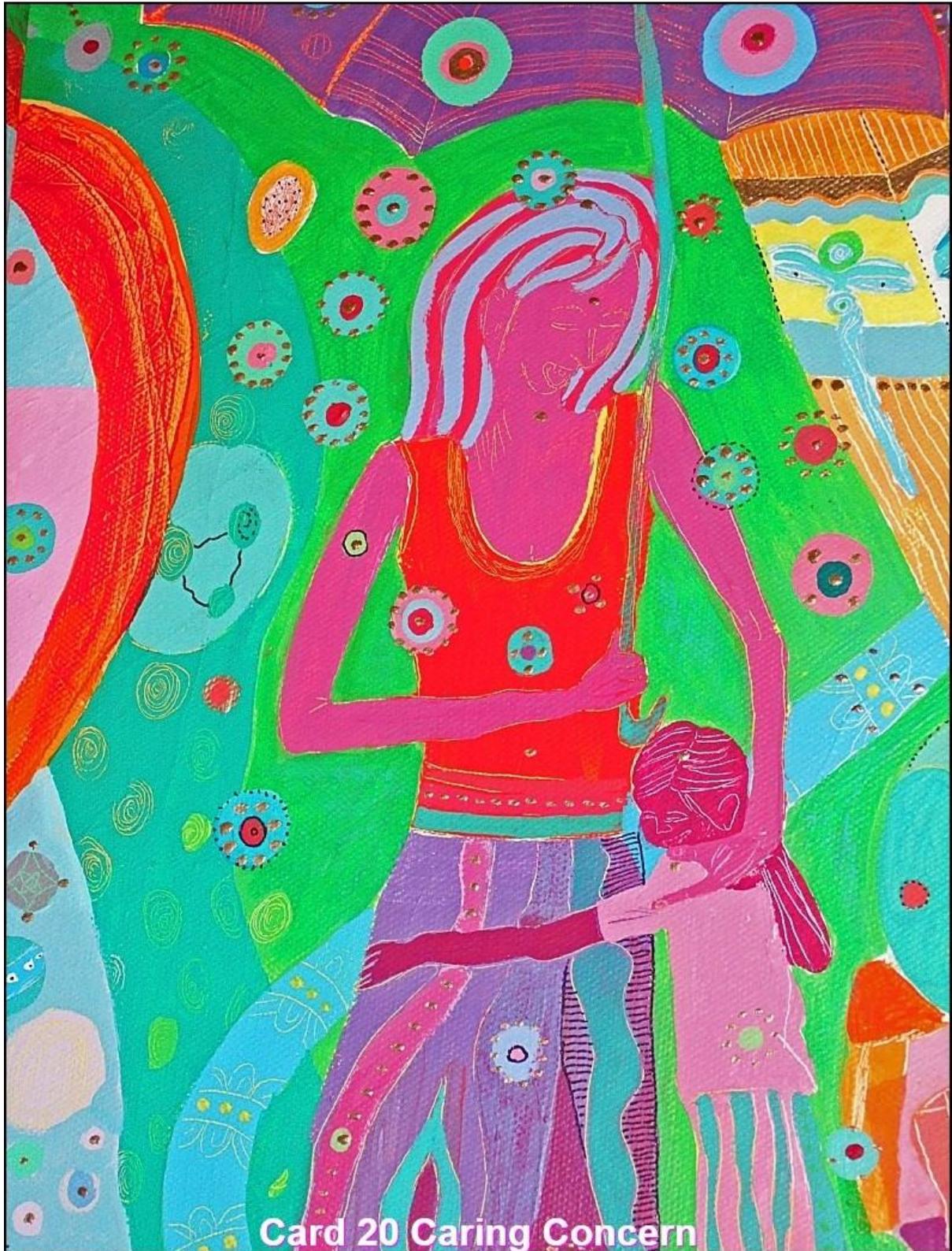
What if your greatest challenge is how to deal with problems and wonder how it can assist you on your path?

Given that your soul has its own divine agenda, how can anything that happens to you be an accident?

Could your fears be dissipated by finding out more information and concentrating on the present?

What if everyone worldwide questioned suspicious or dubious circumstances the moment they arise?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 20 – CARING CONCERN



Woman aged 20 from Taipei, Taiwan. Has Chinese traditional beliefs (Daoist), literate, speaks Mandarin, sexually abused, heterosexual

As she wanders through a busy shopping street in Taipei on a sweltering afternoon, a young woman holds an umbrella in the hope that this will prevent the intense Asian sun from deepening her complexion. The dark rings under her eyes are the result of long working hours followed by long nights out. As usual, she stops outside the window of her favorite shop which sells the culmination of her dreams – a white wedding dress with a golden handbag. In fact, she stops very briefly at most shop windows, not to survey their goods but to check her appearance which is generally her main focus of attention. Her major aim is to earn enough money for some spectacular new clothes to wear on National Day, a major celebration in Taipei. She also wants to buy the best and most expensive cream available on the booming skin-whitening cosmetics market which produces over 50 new products a year. She is familiar with most of them. Rumors that such creams may cause rash or contain dangerous ingredients are something she ignores, preferring to rejoice in the fact that they make her look healthier and more educated. This fashionable young woman would love to talk about all this to her colleagues at the store she works in, but they seem very unfriendly. However, she is confident that her attractive appearance will always win new friends.

When a new skin product arrives at the store, the young woman is so excited that she runs off to find her colleagues. She finds them all, without exception, in the staff room singing Happy Birthday round a huge cake, and she retreats, knowing that she has not been invited to take part. Seeing her dejected, an elderly colleague talks to her gently, explaining that it is often difficult to get through to her: she doesn't listen properly to what they tell her, she says she will do something and then she forgets, she agrees to do something and then she backs out. This results in a lot of frustration. The others think she is unreliable and uncaring. The young girl, so convinced of her sunny disposition and attractive personality, receives a serious shock and is forced to the sad realization that she actually feels very lonely. After her talk to the elderly colleague, who advises her lovingly, she understands the connection between her loneliness and her lack of caring concern for others. The more she looks, the more opportunities she sees to assist others, whether at work with her colleagues, or in the streets. She rushes to fetch a chair for someone who feels ill, or to put her umbrella over a child who is caught in the rain. The more keenly she listens, the more she hears. She closes her eyes at periodic intervals during the day to develop her awareness. With time her sensitivity becomes so acute that she feels she has entered a new realm of consciousness and compassion which benefits herself and all around her.

Questions

Are you burning the candle at both ends?

To what degree do you judge others according to outward appearances or education?

Are you listening enough? Do you have a quick turnover of friends, partners or jobs?

How often do you rely on things, people or products to bring about changes in your life?

What would you do next if personal inner changes brought more positive and effective change?

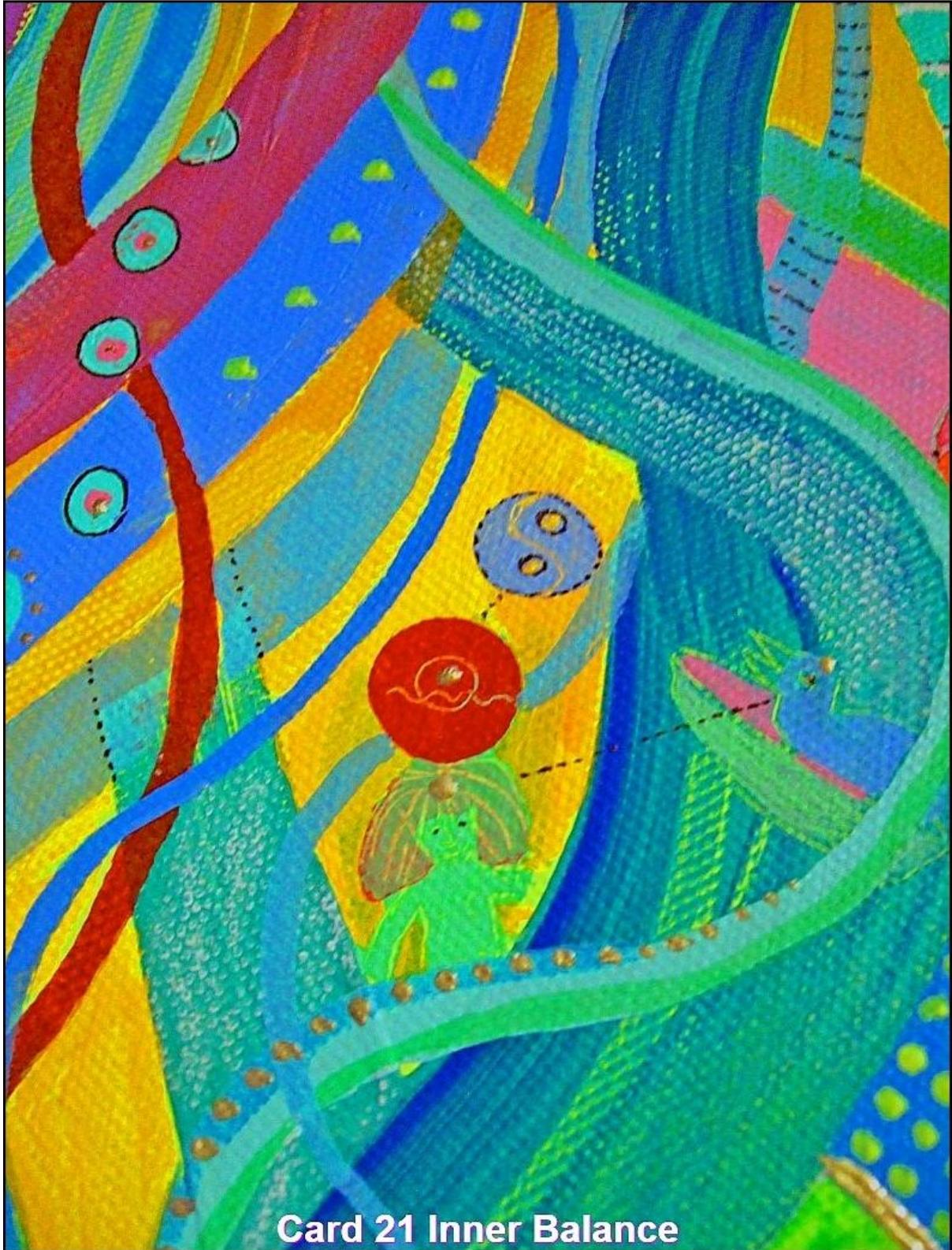
What is stopping your integral divine ability to shine and to attract love?

What activity do you continue to indulge in although you know that it is detrimental to your health?

How much discrepancy is there between what you say and what you do?

What if everyone in the world showed caring concern for their fellow humans at every opportunity?

Global Villager 21 – INNER BALANCE



Boy aged 10 from Tamil Nadu, India. Hindu, illiterate, lives in poverty and is undernourished, has unsafe drinking water, speaks Tamil

Clouds of dust fly into the air as a small thin boy plays with a discarded rubber tire. Behind him is a huge tree where the villagers like to gather and talk before they go to the temple. Sometimes his mother earns a meager amount of money selling fish, but for the most part the boy lives on the edge of society, eating very little. Despite this he looks surprisingly healthy – a handsome cocky face surrounded by a tangle of greasy dreadlocks set atop a wiry, agile body. When he plays near the tree, the villagers pay him scant attention. Stealing up to them quietly, he suddenly screams and turns fast cartwheels. In the end, an old wizened man asks him kindly to stop disturbing the peace. Secretly, the boy wishes he could listen to their discussions and go to the temple too. Perhaps he can pray to the deities anyway and strike a bargain with them so that he gets what he wants. But he knows this is impossible because of his dirty clothes and bare feet. Turning away in shame, he scuffles through the streets, convinced of his own insignificance.

The next time the boy approaches the tree, he decides on a different strategy. Instead of causing a disturbance, he sneaks up quietly, sits down and says nothing. The wizened old man notices him out of the corner of his eye, but continues talking to his group of the assembled followers, modulating his language so that the boy can understand easily. The old man continues his story about Gandhi, the man who came from very humble origins but who radiated peace and never committed a violent act. He invites all his listeners to join him on an outing to the Gandhi Memorial Temple further along the coast. The boy's eyes are shining. Was it really possible to achieve fame and respect despite being poor? Were there other worlds to discover? Suddenly he decides that his ragged clothes do not matter, and he enters the temple anyway. His senses are intensely aware of the sounds and smells of his surroundings, and a feeling of peace spreads through his restless body. People in white approach him and take his hand, surrounding him in a circle of light. When the boy leaves the temple he feels as if he is floating. He sits under the village tree and looks upwards, seeing the majestic branches and the birds for the first time, and he is filled with trust as he contemplates the thousands of new leaves which are born again each spring. He rejoices in the endless energy of the sea, and collects shells which he brings to his mother. She, in turn, initiates a cooperative with other women selling sea products to tourists, and they have a secure income at last. Like the Taoists, the boy grows up with the aim of developing inner balance. As he turns into a man, his greatest wish is to assist others on their path to inner peace and thus to outer peace.

(Symbol: galactic sign for Inner Balance, yin and yang')

Questions

Do you feel under pressure? How much of it is self-made?

What strategies do you use or what bargains do you strike in an attempt to gain what you want?

Could you decide on a different approach?

What would you like to do although you do not fit the social requirements?

When do you curb your own vitality?

How resigned are you? How often do you judge from outward appearances?

How will cooperation with others improve your situation?

How convinced are you that nature will provide?

What will change if everyone were continually inspired by nature's cycle of renewal, and if everyone put their full trust in the Divine?

How will the world benefit if everyone displayed inner balance?

Global Villager 22 – GENTLENESS



Boy aged 7 from West Bengal, India. Hindu, illiterate, lives in poverty and is undernourished, speaks Bengali

The dark fearful eyes of a small boy search the horizon for signs of movement. He lives in an isolated village which is rarely visited by outsiders. For the most part, the boy plays with sticks, stones and mud while his mother is out in the fields. His father is in a distant city – no-one quite knows where. Every day the boy looks out longingly for the return of his mother and for the return of the neighbor's donkey staggering under its daily load. Three local boys unload it. Then two of them sit on the donkey's back while a third whips it with a stick until it bursts into a trot. The small boy would like to ride too, but he just watches on in silence, his heart pounding with longing. He wishes he were older and stronger.

One day, he summons up all his courage and asks if he can ride on the donkey too. The boys are rough with him and laugh, but a villager intervenes and the child is allowed to ride. With a feeling of great happiness, the small boy climbs onto the donkey's back, but a moment later he is crying. The donkey is so thin that its ribs stick out, and patches of skin show where the fur has been rubbed away. After only a few steps the boy jumps off again and begins to talk softly to the donkey, stroking it gently, thanking it for the ride, saying he is sorry he hasn't got anything for it to eat. At first the older boys laugh, but in the end they are touched by the boy's innocence. Shamed by his gentleness towards the donkey, they begin to treat it less harshly. The small boy's eyes are no longer fearful, but always shining. Love is a quality that he learns to express more and more clearly. When his mother returns from the fields, he runs up to her immediately and tells her how much he has missed her. He also asks incessantly where his father is, instead of pretending he doesn't want to know. As he grows up, the boy's dedication to animals attracts others who think alike. Together they eventually find a place where the donkey – and other mistreated animals – can enjoy their lives to the full. As a man, his zeal leads him to learn to read and to write passionate letters to people in positions of power, drawing their attention to the need for humanitarian treatment of animals.

Questions

What burden are you carrying? Whose burden are you carrying?

How much longer do you intend to carry it?

How deeply can you identify with the sufferings of living beings, whether animals or humans?

How long do you wait until you speak?

What feelings are you not communicating?

Who do you let intimidate you?

What strategies have you developed to deal with feeling estranged?

Which burning question would you actually like to ask?

Are you aware of the power of your gentleness?

In view of the law of attraction, what sort of energy do you wish to send out and what sort of energy do you wish to attract?

What if everyone worldwide approached all living creatures with gentleness?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 23 – IMMEDIATE ACTION



Man aged 25 from Gujarat, India. Hindu, literate, lives in poverty and is undernourished, has unsafe drinking water, heterosexual, speaks Gujarati

The sudden sound of shots nearby makes a man stop rigidly in his tracks. This is the last thing he expects to hear in a holy place. The Hindu temple in Gandhinagar, where he was intending to pray, is surrounded by military controls, warning locals to go no further. To his horror, the man realizes that the temple is under siege. Inwardly he recoils when confronted with this eruption of religious violence, especially when he realises that the soldiers are firing indiscriminately through the gates, but he also feels strangely apart. A wounded Muslim struggles towards him and clearly needs help, but the man merely watches. As usual, he is immune to his surroundings and his hands hang limply by his side, inactive and useless. The expression on his face is numb. He has nearly always felt isolated from his fellow humans, especially as a member of the lower caste. As he stands there, two other men jump forward to help the injured man. Paralysed despite the bloodshed happening right before his very eyes, the man vaguely wonders why his desire to assist is not stronger. The whole incident leaves him with a faint feeling of helplessness, but he puts it behind him – as he puts so many unpleasant episodes behind him – as if he has been watching a rather unpleasant film.

A day later the man walks past a tea stall where someone has left a newspaper on a table. He sees an article which covers the conflict at the temple and he is astonished to see a photograph of himself with a vacant expression on his face, while a man bleeds on the ground in front of him. It seems to the man that his barbarity has been officially recorded and put on public display. Feelings of shame and sadness rise from deep within him and he screams out his despair with an immediacy and intensity that he has never before experienced. Several people rush up to him offering help, making him feel even worse. He resolves to undergo a radical change in his behaviour. Instead of covering up his feelings, he tries to get them out into the open. Instead of looking for help from elsewhere, he now offers it instead, irrespective of the religion, sex or social status of the person concerned. The more he crosses these barriers, the less isolated he feels. The man learns to interpret happenings on a symbolic level and understands that outer conflicts are a mirror of inner turmoil. In an effort to go into action and see justice done, he talks to many of his caste in Gujarat's coastal areas which were hit by a huge tidal wave, collecting information, documenting their losses and fighting for their compensation. Relief, it seems, has been unfairly distributed. It is a joy to feel active and appreciated, and he is no longer destitute because he is offered shelter and food in return for his help. Leaving passivity behind him, he reacts immediately in every emergency. As he increasingly learns to trust his 'gut reaction', he notices that he 'knows' what is going to happen in advance. With time, this ability of clear gnosis is so developed that he is highly sought after by people in need.

Questions

What is your unresolved inner conflict or unhealed wound?

Which sad or unpleasant event do you still have to address?

Which areas of your life require more determined action?

How quickly do you go into action in an emergency?

What if you interpreted your surroundings symbolically?

What aspect of your behavior isolates you from others?

Given that we are all saviors, which of your qualities can help and inspire others?

In what sense is the global population immune to the cries of an injured planet?

What if we are intimately connected with all things and if the declining immune system of a damaged planet is mirrored by our own failing immune systems in the form of AIDS and other resistant diseases?

What would change if everyone reacted immediately in situations of emergency?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 24 – CONNECTEDNESS



Boy aged 8 from Nalgonda, Andhra Pradesh, India, Hindu, lives in poverty and is undernourished, illiterate, has unsafe drinking water, speaks Telegu

With skill and patience, a small boy carries a heavy water pitcher on his head. He brings it to his mother who mixes it with another liquid and pours it on the rice fields. As an 8 year old, he does not really understand that this is pesticide – he is just warned that it is dangerous to drink. But it is not clear to him why it could be good for the rice, or for the people who eat the rice. The confusing thing is that everyone complains that the drinking water is polluted, but they drink it anyway. The boy has an enquiring mind, but it is not encouraged. The boy would like to go to school, but his mother is pregnant and too ill to earn extra money. The boy himself has bad teeth and a crooked foot, like many others in the village, and everyone knows that these incurable debilitations are caused by the high fluoride content of the drinking water. Sometimes reporters or government officials appear suddenly in the dust-filled village. They ask questions, assure that they will do their best to change this appalling situation and set a date for piping uncontaminated water to the village. But when the day comes, nothing happens. The affected villagers feel helpless, and the unaffected villages are largely impervious to the plight of their neighbors and do not feel the need to contribute to other communities outside their own.

When his mother gives birth to a small baby with a deformed body, the boy is shocked and upset. The next time a government official passes through the village, the boy pulls him into the family hut to see the child. The official is so moved at the boy's concern and so distraught by the sight of the baby that he tells everyone in the neighboring villages and tries to push ahead with the building of the water pipeline. Meanwhile, the boy understands that his spontaneous action has had a widespread effect. The tired, defeated villagers are astonished that a boy so young should speak so clearly and have such definite ideas. He no longer compromises if he thinks something could be harmful. As he grows up, he asks precise questions and expects answers. If he loses friends along the way, this does not make him change course. He takes on responsibility for himself and his family. Later this extends to larger communities – his village and his country. In view of widespread contamination and pollution, it is no longer possible for individuals or nations to ignore each other or to harm the environment in any way. Sharing inspirational ideas and resources is commonplace, and there is no delay between feeling or seeing distress and taking action to address and eradicate the root cause. Providing immediate assistance goes unquestioned, as helping others is seen in a broader sense as helping oneself. The boy turns into an inspirational speaker who spreads the message that no one is 'separate' or unconnected. We are all called upon to act as responsible members of the Global Family and treat our home, our planet, with the utmost respect.

Questions

Are you in some way 'poisoning' something in your life or environment?
What drastic measures are you implementing to control a situation?
If irresponsible behavior angers you, how is this a mirror of irresponsible behavior in yourself?
What if your focus shifted from a personal to a global perspective?
Do your goals have priority over who is going to accompany you on your journey?
Given that we are all connected, how do you intend to respond to the plight of others?
How clearly do you express your opinions?
How long does it take for you to translate your emotions into action?
How is it possible to bring your deeply felt concerns into the open?
Which 'root causes' could you address, rather than treating the symptoms?
How would the world change if everyone saw themselves as intrinsically linked to one another?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 25 – RECONCILIATION



Man aged 69 from Bombay, India. Hindu, literate, has diabetes, smokes, speaks Hindi, heterosexual

There is hardly anyone sitting in the dark lounge of rather exclusive club dating from British colonial days. Only one guest, an elderly Indian gentleman, twitches with impatience as he waits for his food to be served. The staff here, he concludes, are just as sullen, inefficient and uncaring as his servants and womenfolk at home. In his mind's eye he recalls his wedding photo in which he stands proud and young, at the age of seventeen. Next to him is his 15-year-old bride who was to bear him six children. Now, as a highly successful businessman who provides for his family's every need, he cannot understand why he is refused the respect he feels he deserves. It is no wonder that he lingers in the glamorous film world where he has played a major and extremely ruthless business role. As for women, he often seeks his pleasure elsewhere, even if it has resulted in contracting diseases which he then transfers to his wife. When his daughters reproach him he shouts until they leave. He performs his *puja* religiously every day, convinced that his devotion reduces any 'bad' karma.

A year later he is lying in bed, so crippled by disease that he can barely move. At first he vents his anger, as usual, on his servants. His daughters, assuming that he is now receiving just punishment for his vices, decided to keep well away. In this state of semi-isolation, the man has much time to ponder, to regret his radical actions and sharp tongue. He realizes that even in this state of utter helplessness, he still has a choice. While he may not be able to choose his actions on a physical plane, he can choose his words, and so he speaks to the servants in a less aggressive tone. He can no longer enjoy the riches he has accumulated, but he can bestow them on others. Instructing his servants to write a long letter of explanation and apology to his daughters, he tells them about his years of frustration and loneliness. In turn, they are moved by this unexpected expression of his feelings. The picture they have entertained for decades of their father as a selfish philanderer slowly crumbles. They realize that judgments have no validity and they understand that all the seemingly negative aspects of their father's life may have been necessary for this one supreme moment of reconciliation when they approach his bedside after years of mutual animosity.

Questions

Suppose there are more choices available to you in difficult situations than you think?

Have activities leading to financial gain impaired your sensitivity to others?

Which relationships in your life need healing?

Suppose 'healing' is just a matter of becoming more aware or communicating more?

How do you choose to react to long-term criticism from close relatives?

To what degree is your picture of yourself determined by the opinion of others?

How quick are you to judge? How would you regard people with extreme views differently, if you realized their soul's agenda is to use all possible means to elicit a response, shocking an unconscious, passive, life-unfriendly world into the realization that love is the only answer?

What if everyone in the world who has experienced pain were able to move towards reconciliation?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 26 – OMNIPRESENCE



Man aged 25 from Delhi, India. Buddhist, lives in poverty and is undernourished, literate, speaks Hindi, heterosexual

A dark red wall hides all but the tip of a very large white building resembling a flower stretching into the sky. Unaware of the presence of this building, a sour-faced young man crouches in front of the wall. As he stares into the distance, he seems far removed from the bustle of Delhi's streets, the honking taxis and the strains of Bollywood music blaring out from hundreds of cassette recorders. However, it is here that he squats and waits, on the cobbled pavement, waiting for his next customer's shoes to appear before him to be polished. He rarely looks at their faces, but often sneaks a furtive look at their erotic-looking women. When he is not working, his eyes are free to rove. When he sees women shopping in their flamboyantly colored saris and bare midriffs, he tries to hide the dull hot flush which spreads through him. Occasionally, in the evenings, he suddenly becomes aware of an acute emptiness which he is desperate to fill, and it is all he can do to prevent himself assaulting some young woman down a back street. When he arrives home he furtively looks at photos of nude women which he hides under his mattress. On days where he has earned a little more money than usual, he chews on a beetle nut to ease his pain and his unfulfilled sexual longings.

One morning as he squats on the pavement, he suddenly senses that the wall behind him has some sort of oppressive power, caging his freedom, separating him from something important. Seized by a feeling of intense curiosity the man wonders why he has never climbed the wall before. On the other side he sees a huge white temple built like a giant lotus flower. As he walks slowly towards it, he feels increasingly aware of every tiny physical sensation around him. Inside the Lotus Baha'i Temple, he finds members of all religions meditating together and all holy scripts are laid out in their original languages without translations or interpretations. When he enters the bright sunlight, it is as if his emptiness has been replaced by a fire of energy which burns within him and stretches to touch every living creature within sight. For a moment, he can physically feel the footsteps of the pilgrims at the gateway as if they are walking on his skin. And at that same moment, he understands that he is inseparable from the earth's crust and present in all things. He thanks the lotus goddess, Lakshimi, for the discovery of his cosmic self. Customers start to come to him on a regular basis because they sense his interest, sensitivity and compassion. The man's ability to connect with the needs of his own body as well as the needs of other people increases dramatically. No longer ashamed of his sexual impulses, he attracts a woman well versed in the tantric tradition, with whom he can connect on all levels – emotional, sexual and spiritual. As his inner awareness grows, he develops a sharp eye for his fellow beings and dedicates himself to humanity as a whole.

Questions

Which emotions are you hiding? What do you not want to see? What lies beyond the wall?

What are you secretly longing to do and how long are you going to wait?

Are you aware of any unexpressed, pent-up aggression which might lead you – in a sudden eruption of feeling – to endanger yourself or another person?

When you reach a state of pure energy, what will you do first?

What can you do to express your sexuality more fully?

Supposing we are all one, capable of communicating on every level and with everything?

What would change if everyone were allowed to worship in any sacred place they liked however they wanted?

Which place is not sacred? Who does not belong to the cosmic self?

What if everyone worldwide knew that genuine happiness is a side effect of dedicating yourself to a cause larger than yourself?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 27 – IMMORTALITY



Woman aged 70 from Varanasi, India. Hindu, lives in poverty and is undernourished, illiterate, speaks Hindi, heterosexual

A woman sits motionless on the pavement with her beggar's bowl, focusing on the rubbish-filled road. Behind her is the hovel she sleeps in. Above her are the cobwebs of power cables delivering electricity to unknown destinations. Her thin green shawl covers her emaciated body as much as possible. She is resigned to her surroundings and does not want to move. She does not contemplate going to the Holy Ganges to wash, although it is not far to go, because she fears the pain in her limbs whenever she starts to walk. Her nearness to death is also a source of fear. She envies the children with their energy and quick painless movement, and she grumbles at all the travelers who do not seem to see her begging bowl. Turning her attention to those who are even worse off than herself, she comforts herself with the thought that they are going to die first.

During an unusually heavy onslaught of rain, the woman crouches in her hovel, looking up for the first time in several years, anxious that the power cables might fall upon her. Beyond the cables she sees a light and suddenly recognizes that it comes from the Observation Tower which she climbed as a girl – a place to look at and interpret the stars. Here she is in Varanasi, the City of Light, where she grew up as a child. Here, her journey has turned a full circle. The woman's anger at the passing travelers now dissipates as she realizes that most of them are on a spiritual quest, seeking out the City of Light to connect to the heavens. As dawn breaks, she begins to perform traditional rites of worship and, though she is aware of pain as she slowly descends to bathe in the holy waters, it is not foremost in her consciousness. As she washes herself in the river, she simultaneously cleanse herself and her mind of all fear. Suddenly she is fully convinced of the immortality of her soul. Instead of lamenting, she looks forward in anticipation of the life which she will create next. The woman remembers her mother telling her about the Hindu belief that time occurs in cosmic cycles of 12,000 divine years and she feels that she is an intrinsic part of these cycles. Her relaxed face and smiling eyes ensure that passersby drop money into her bowl from time to time. This she shares with those less fortunate than herself. She is blessed by their gratitude and companionship until it is time for her to move on into the next dimension.

Questions: What are you begging for?

If you get what you want are you sure you will be completely content?

Is your focus primarily on those who have more or less than yourself?

How many of your actions are dictated by fear?

In what way could your greatest fear be an indicator of where to go next?

What if you did not compare your own experience to others?

How would you live life differently if you knew for certain that we are creating every second of it with each thought you think and each decision you make?

What will change if you believed that your every generous action returns to you in some form?

What if death (and the death of every new experience) were the beginning of a breathtakingly wonderful new experience? What if your soul were immortal?

What if everyone throughout the world conducted their lives in full knowledge of the fact that everything always comes to an end which is followed by a new beginning, and that our souls are eternal?

What if everyone worldwide viewed their life on this planet as a temporary stage in their continuing evolution and as part of an eternal divine cycle?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 28 – SELF DISCIPLINE



Man aged 46 from near Hyderabad, India. Muslim, lives in poverty and is undernourished, literate, speaks Dakhini (Urdu dialect), heterosexual

It is early morning in the Char Minar district of Hyderabad and a man is still asleep on his threadbare mat. As on every morning during Ramadan, he is woken by drums which signal the possibility to have a pre-dawn meal. The wealthy Muslim families donate food at this time of year. This is why the man has walked to Hyderabad from his rural village. He does not feel part of the city itself with its bustle, traffic snarls and opulent fruit markets, from which he is sorely tempted to steal. But he reprimands himself for this thought. Generally, he continues to struggle along the structured and well-worn paths of conditioned behavior and stunted aspiration, hoping that somehow he will be able to pull himself together and actively combat his poverty. On this particular morning, during a period of semi-consciousness, he dreams of a god who resembles a man and a lion simultaneously. When the drums sound, he wakes to a curious feeling of displacement, but he is also strangely energized. During his wanderings through the city he finds an old wizened man who has been meditating under the same tree for 60 years so that the tree has grown around him. In another street he sees an Agorha yogi meditating on top of a rubbish heap. The man is shocked, convinced that they must be mad. He is sure he can never achieve peace of mind through such practices and he certainly hasn't got the necessary self-discipline.

As the man walks around Hyderabad, he passes the bus station where several excursions are on offer for pilgrims and tourists. He is astonished to see a poster depicting the lion-man of his dream and he feels strangely compelled to find out more. This is Narasimha, an incarnation of Vishnu, the life preserver. When he hears about the sacred Narasimha temple not far away, with its ability to enlighten the 'darkened' mind, the man feels instinctively impelled to make a pilgrimage to this Hindu shrine, despite his Muslim beliefs. On his way to the cave he is impressed by the discipline of the poorer pilgrims who fold their clothes with extreme care before donning white robes. Like generations of sages before him, intending to access their own inherent power, the man touches the rock archway of the cave and feels a blast of energy blowing away his old conditioning. From this new perspective, the 'madmen' meditating under trees or on rubbish tips are no longer insane, but saints following their own chosen path to self-realization. He realizes that everyone can choose their own path towards self-improvement and spirituality. Consciously and methodically, he starts out on his own journey towards enlightenment, realizing that in his particular case, self-discipline is a major key.

Questions

Which well-worn path do you find difficult to leave although you recognize the necessity?

How seriously do you take your dreams?

Can you identify new sources of energy for yourself?

What rituals can you embrace to access your own power?

What if enlightenment is not only a 60-year journey but also a decision you can make today?

Which areas of your life would benefit from more discipline?

Are you aware that all dreams are in your grasp if you move towards them step by step?

What appears to be shocking but is actually the result of your own conditioning?

How does comparing yourself to others decrease or increase your momentum to change?

What if we all recognized the truths at the core of every religion?

What if everyone worldwide respected everyone else's chosen path?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 29 – UNIQUENESS



Woman aged 25 from Uttar Pradesh, India. Muslim, lives in poverty and is undernourished, literate, speaks Hindi, heterosexual

A woman sits inside her home and cries in one of the rare moments which she has to herself. Her mind is completely blocked. She no longer knows who she is. On the surface, it still looks as if she is the wife of a rickshaw puller and the mother of four children, living in a dusty, pot-holed, Muslim dominated town which has suffered decades of neglect. But underneath she feels she is no one, with no mouth to protest and no hands to act. Although she suffers greatly, she does not dare to tell anyone that she has been raped by her father-in-law. When he feels it is time, the man, as head of the family, makes it public. He insists he has absolute authority and has told her she must move in with him. The village council confirms that – under the Shariat and by Islamic law – she must become the wife of her rapist and treat her husband as her son. Despite her overwhelming inner pain and turmoil, she agrees because she does not want to be accused of betraying her faith.

When the woman's heels start to throb with unbearable pain, she knows intuitively that she must run and make a complete break for the sake of her four confused daughters as well as herself. This is a pivotal moment in her life. She wrenches herself from everything she has ever known, packs her bags and escapes with her family. Her previous life disintegrates. She is on the brink of new structures, in defiance of expectations and ancient memory patterns which dictate female submission. Soon she is living with relations in a completely different part of the country where no one can find her. Here, religious laws carry little momentum compared with humanitarian principles, and the woman feels as if she has entered paradise. Her mental landscape undergoes great changes as she emerges from being a submissive, all-obedient underdog into a confident, independent woman who is often in the public eye. She manages to regard the horrific circumstances of yesterday with detachment and see them as a painful but necessary part of her awakening. With time, she even feels grateful for the experience which forced her combat her own feeling of insignificance and led her to the conviction that she, like all other human beings, is absolutely unique.

Questions

Are you a victim? How good are you at setting limits?

Are you neglecting yourself for others?

In what sense are you 'headless'? Do you know who you are?

Is it time to run? Can you let go? Where do you want to go to?

Do you recognize the importance of determining your destination before deciding who to travel with?

Do you recognize the danger of choosing your travelling companions first?

How much personal responsibility do you abdicate to authority, religious or otherwise?

Which part of yourself are you allowing to be completely disregarded or 'raped'?

What dreadful event is showing you that it is in the interest of your higher self to change direction?

To what extent do you see life as movement – and as movement through ever higher stages of awareness?

What would change in your life if you were convinced of your own uniqueness?

What if we all focused on the inspirational core truths of our religions rather than adhering to their rules?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 30 – SELF ASSURANCE



Woman aged 43 from Bombay, India. Hindu, lives in poverty and is undernourished, beaten, has unsafe drinking water, illiterate, speaks Maharati, heterosexual

A tired-looking woman rests for a moment, leaning against a stack of rough bricks. Dust is caught in the folds of her faded sari and in the wrinkles around her eyes. She bends down to heave the bricks she has made into a wooden cart. A torn cloth covers her head, protecting her from the fierce sun and framing her lined face which is usually turned to face the ground. As one of India's 160 million 'Untouchables' – people designated too impure to rank as a human being – she is universally despised. As she works, she pushes away memories of her life in a village outside Bombay – her small house and chickens – which she was forced to leave. The other villagers criticized her for doing business – an occupation unsuited to her lowly station. They killed her poultry, stripped her of her clothes and accompanied her jeering to the edge of the village. Now, in the city, she sporadically finds menial labor, but sometimes she is forced to beg, squatting at the roadside and holding out her metal bowl. While she hates the upper classes for their vile treatment of her, she is nevertheless resigned to the fact that this is her karma and that she is serving punishment for misdeeds in her previous life.

When she arrives very early at the quarry one morning, she sees an unfamiliar figure in the distance, moving around energetically from one worker to the next. She also sees an unfamiliar object – a tall black stand with something on top of it. As the man comes closer and closer, the woman becomes increasingly tense, pulling her scarf in front of her face, turning away in fear to engross herself in her work. Finally he is standing right next to her. Although she does not acknowledge him, he explains who he is. He makes documentary films: he would like her permission to film the workers at the quarry and to document the lives of 'untouchables' because they haven't got a voice of their own. When she hears these kind words from the mouth of a complete stranger who seems to be so concerned about the fate of her own kind, she bursts into tears, remembering the terrible scenes as she was forced to leave her village. Everyone else deserted her. The man is appalled that he has upset her and asks what he can do to help. Despite the urge to hide her shame, the woman breaks new ground and tells the man everything. The film crew accompanies her back to the village, and her story becomes part of the documentary. The villagers know this and express their deep regret. To make amends, they reinstate her into the village and society in general. The village itself becomes extremely popular because it is known as a place where the caste system does not operate. Everyone has equal opportunities. The woman herself is conscious of her own great power and no longer implicitly accepts limitations set by others who consider themselves on a higher level. She realizes that God, or Spirit, or the Divine Energy, is not a force with specific requirements which issues punishment if these requirements are not met. Now, with each footstep, she carefully carves her own way forward, aware that she is the sole creator of every moment.

(Symbols: galactic sign for self-empowerment, Blue Foot Statue symbolizing the tracks we make)

Questions:

How often are you resigned to 'fate'?

Are you what people say you are? Who would listen to your story?

What is your first instinct when you are presented with something new?

How deep is your awareness of the fact that you are the sole creator of every moment?

How have you deserted yourself? How are you punishing yourself?

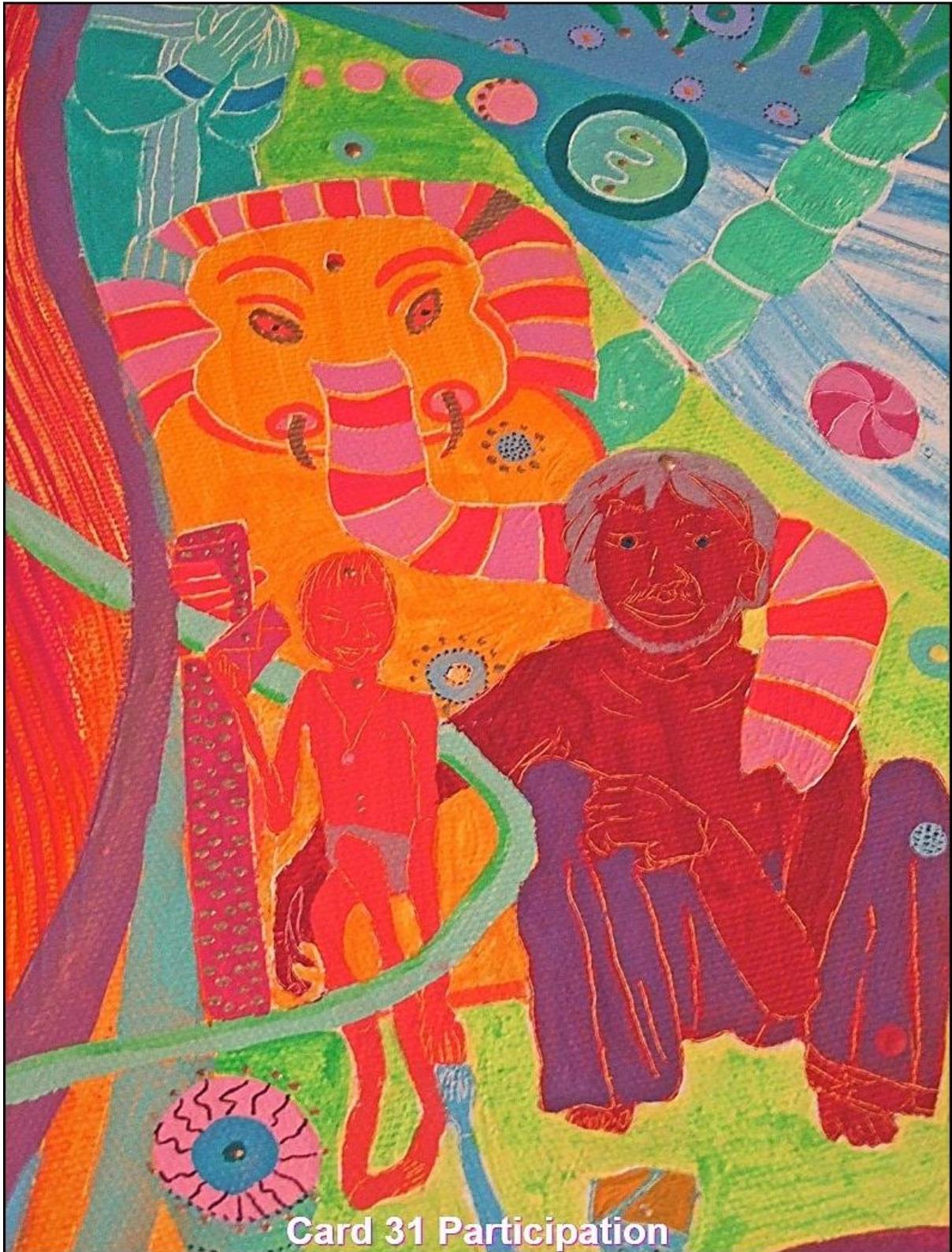
What if you are always completely forgiven?

What if you accept that whatever trait you despise in another is exactly the trait you despise in yourself?

What if everyone worldwide trained their ability to love?

What if everyone worldwide respected and asserted themselves?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 31 – PARTICIPATION



Boy aged 5 from Jharkhand, India. Hindu, lives in poverty and is undernourished, illiterate, stunted growth, has unsafe drinking water, speaks Bengali

A small, twisted figure is sleeping in a grey cardboard box. The boy was born into a tiny village hemmed in by hills, near a large uranium mine, and he is so stunted that it is hard to believe that he is five years old. Born with only one eye and bent legs, he cannot stand. A large part of his day is spent sitting on a mat inside, playing with a stick or ball of earth. His mother keeps him well away from the other villagers, despite her son's protests. She is worried that the other children will make fun of him and she feels great shame at his deformities. Although she imagines that this is somehow part of her karma, something deep inside her rebels against this explanation. Together with all the other women she walks towards the local pond which serves as drinking and washing water. Like the others she pretends not to see the putrid, stinking debris at its edges, and like the others she worries about her husband in the mine, working without any protection and inhaling poisonous uranium dust.

One morning as the boy's mother approaches the river with her washing, she finds all the other women running in the opposite direction, their faces torn with fear. There has been a serious accident in the mine. The mother discovers that a member of her extended family has been killed. Overcome with grief, she decides that the only way to pull her life together is to seek advice from a spiritual healer in the distant city of Patna. Reluctantly she puts her deformed son under the protection of a neighboring farmer. Suddenly the boy is exposed to the light and surrounded by other children. At this point he understands the meaning of loneliness and attempts to ease this by offering friendship to other 'lost' boys on the edge of the village community. Slowly, he integrates himself into daily village life. His active participation as well as his appearance has a profound effect on his onlookers. His continued presence in the public eye forces others to reassess their attitudes and go into action. Later in life, he decides to exhibit his deformity as proof of uranium pollution in the region. This leads to great changes and healthier living conditions in the village. His mother has long since accepted that there is a level of experience where every condition and circumstance is perfect for any one person at any one time.

Questions:

How much do you worry about appearances? What is "normal"?

Is there anything you are hiding which you are ashamed of?

Is there anyone who you are trying to protect?

What if your protection means stunting their development?

Which area of your life is in stagnation?

Which of your emotions would you describe as 'stunted' or 'under-developed'?

What gut feeling or what 'poison' are you ignoring?

How desperate does a situation have to be before you go into action?

What if you believed that there is a valid reason for all unpleasant occurrences?

What if every person – however deformed or obnoxious or unpleasant, and however coincidental the meeting - has a specific and perfect message for you which fits in with your soul's agenda?

What if everyone looked beyond unpleasant circumstances to see that everything is always perfect for their spiritual advance?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 32 – ALERTNESS



Woman aged 24 from Punjab, India. Hindu, lives in poverty and is undernourished, has unsafe drinking water, literate, speaks Hindi, heterosexual

The huge concrete square in the city of Chandigarh is dotted with groups of people talking, selling, or going about their daily business. A woman walks slowly across it, carrying a load of wood on her head. She concentrates on balancing the weight, and her eyes focus on the other end of the square which is lined with imposing buildings. These were designed in the fifties by the French architect Le Corbusier. Though she is very familiar with these buildings, she has disliked them ever since her childhood, resenting the way a foreigner has forced his presence upon Chandigarh in such an insensitive way. Now the buildings look even worse because the humid climate has taken its toll: the metalwork has rusted and there are visible cracks in the concrete. Le Corbusier's huge sculpture of a right hand stretches randomly into a metallic sky. When she arrives at her makeshift home, a tent made of scrap material, she tries to make a fire but the wood is damp. She feels that everything is rotting, including herself. Succumbing to overwhelming tiredness, she cries herself to sleep, convinced that if she disappeared from the face of the earth at that very moment, nobody would notice.

During the night, the woman dreams that she is wearing tight, uncomfortable clothes and biting her lips. She is walking endlessly along a narrow path towards a beautiful tall tower, but when she arrives, it is actually a crumbling ruin. Confused, she looks around to see where she has come from. The narrow path stretches far away into the distance. To her horror, she can also see what she has missed – turnings to the right and left leading to idyllic fields and rivers. The woman awakes the next morning in a state of shock. She is sure that the dream is trying to tell her something. In a state of extreme alertness, she conducts her daily chores, and as a result, nothing is the same. Again she walks across the square with her firewood. Aware of an oncoming headache, she decides to carry the wood on her back instead, leaving her head free to move in all directions and to see everything which she usually overlooks – the resilient weeds pushing through minute cracks, the tiny darting lizards between her feet and the birds in the sky. Instead of directing her thoughts towards the crumbling architecture at its edges, she now actively participates in the lively bustle of activity in the middle of the square, greeting acquaintances energetically, responding positively to their invitations and suggestions. She realizes that she is now allowing her rigid behavioral structures and inflexibility to crumble, and she is full of enthusiasm for her new life in exactly the same place, Chandigarh. For this empowered woman, there is suddenly great significance in the fact that the city is named after Chandi, the goddess of power. Instead of rejecting Chandigarh's foreign architecture, the woman rejoices every time she passes, viewing it as the fulfillment of one man's vision. Le Corbusier's sculpture, the huge right hand, reminds her to be alert to opportunity and 'handle' her own future.

Questions

In what way do you feel you are surrounded by things which are 'foreign', 'different', 'incomprehensible' or 'wrong'? Could this be nothing more than your viewpoint?

Given that we are all one, who would be a foreigner?

How deeply do you believe that we are all wholly responsible for what we choose to look at and how we choose to look at it? What is so obvious that it is being overlooked?

How aware are you of your surroundings?

How actively do you participate in life around you?

Are you aware that you control your own future?

Given that we are all gods and goddesses with divine power, what vision will you turn into reality?

What if everyone worldwide paid close attention to their dreams understood their message?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 33 – DIVINITY



Girl aged 2 from Calcutta, India. Hindu, lives in poverty and is undernourished, stunted growth, speaks Hindi

On the banks of the Hoogly River in Calcutta, a small child is being wrapped lovingly by her mother in the only clothes she has. When she was a starving newborn baby and her bones were still soft, her arms were twisted by her mother so that, later, she would be able to earn more money as a beggar. The sight of her deformed limbs impels passers-by to be more generous, and so her deformity keeps both of them alive. The child is not so aware of its deformity. It is generally happy in the secure knowledge that it is greatly loved and will be sung to sleep every night. It also knows, on a completely different level, that its purpose on earth is to initiate the first stage in her mother's soul agenda – to experience giving love and comfort – but that it must leave to enable her Mother to go on to the second stage – spreading compassion on a much larger scale.

Although the child dies of diphtheria, the child's soul can still speak to her mother in her hour of deepest despair. She instructs her to take her old clothes to 'Mother's House' in Calcutta, and she tells her to never stop singing. Despite her great grief, the woman hears and heeds the inner voice which speaks to her and wanders the streets in search of a hostel which looks after deprived mothers, but she is unsuccessful. Then she remembers to sing, and intuition takes her to her destination, 'Mother's House'. But this is not a refuge for destitute mothers, but a house run by a mother. The woman is overwhelmed to discover that the mother is Mother Theresa. She walks through the gates singing, joining all the other people who simply turn up to help the ill and dying. Noone is turned away. The sound of her beautiful voice is a joy and comfort to all the patients in her care. She has a roof over her head and enough to eat. Her gratitude is great, and she needs no more, fulfilled by touching the lives of so many. She is eternally grateful to her daughter who first inspired her to love and to sing, and she knows that her daughter is an angel with a divine purpose.

Questions

Do you value the gentle innocence, enthusiasm and unconditional love demonstrated by small children?

How could you become more like them?

What if it were impossible for your life to be meaningless?

How can you assist others to develop their potential? Can you accept that you are a certain 'stage' in everyone else's life (and that they are a stage in yours) for a specific purpose?

Are you aware that you are an angel and that your appearance on this earth, as well as your death, occurs at the perfect moment and has a particular meaning for all concerned?

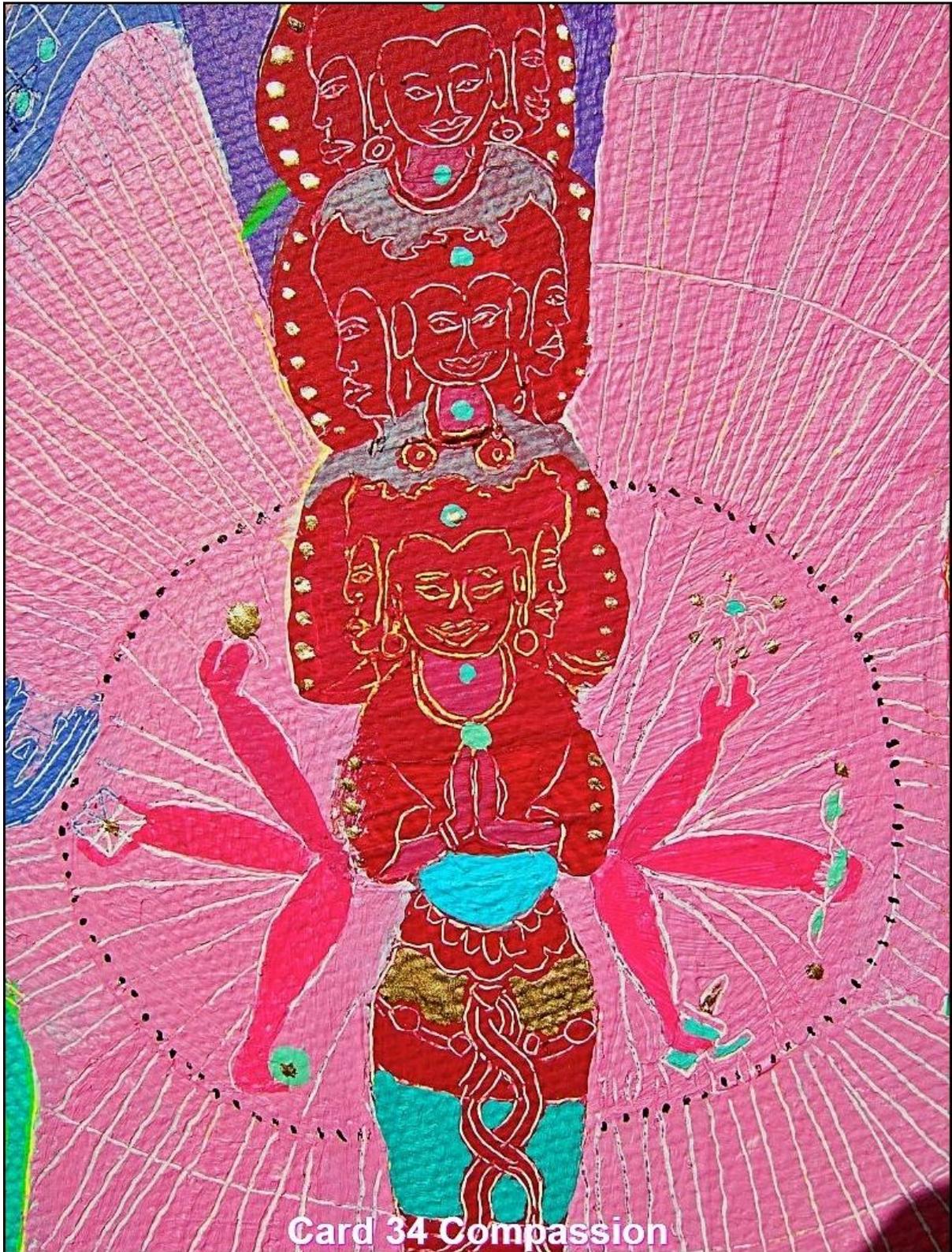
Are you aware that we are all angels in this respect?

What if death is not death but the beginning of a new life and purpose which you can decide?

Can you contemplate the possibility that before you entered this life, you agreed to endure certain sufferings on this earth so that you and your fellow beings could experience something which is of crucial importance to you all?

What if everyone worldwide were aware of their own divinity and purpose?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 34 – COMPASSION



Woman aged 25 from Calcutta, India. Hindu, lives in poverty and is undernourished, illiterate, speaks Hindi, heterosexual

Surrounded by piles of pungent rubbish, a mother dresses her child in the only clothes it has. They are long enough to cover its deliberately deformed limbs. Soon the woman will sing her daughter to sleep and they will spend the night together, as they spend every night, on a patch of hard concrete near the Hoogly river in Calcutta. Every morning the woman smears her face and stringy hair with dirt, hides her daughter's clothes and takes her to the city with her begging bowl. There she sits on the pavement, displaying the child naked to invoke the sympathy of passers by. Often she deeply regrets the permanent damage which she has inflicted upon her daughter, but sometimes she is simply glad that this has saved both of them from definite starvation.

When the child dies of diphtheria, her mother wants to die too. For a while, she continues to sing to the clothes her daughter used to wear. Then she walks like a ghost through the streets of Calcutta. In the course of her wanderings she overhears two old women talking, saying that they want to go "Mother House". At exactly the same moment, the distraught mother hears an inner voice, urging her to take her dead daughter's clothes there, and insisting that she should not stop singing. The woman stops sobbing and starts to look for a hostel which takes in deprived mothers, but she is unsuccessful. Then she remembers that the voice told her to sing, and so she continues her search singing. At last she finds "Mother's House", where she is immediately welcomed. But this is not a refuge for mothers, but a house run by Mother Teresa. When she discovers this, the woman is overwhelmed and joins all the other people who simply turn up to help the ill and dying. No-one is turned away. The sound of her beautiful voice is a joy and comfort to all the patients in her care. She has a roof over her head and enough to eat. Her compassion is great, and she needs no more, fulfilled by touching the lives of so many. She teaches the Mandala of Great Compassion to all those who suffer. Like Avalokiteshvara, holding 1,000 eyes in 1,000 hands, she witnesses the sufferings of others. During meditation she envisages herself at the core of a huge mandala, sending energy to every suffering being worldwide with every breath.

Questions

Which part of yourself have you disfigured or distorted?

What method do you use to invoke sympathy?

How often are your decisions motivated by love?

How often are your decisions motivated by fear?

What if you are always forgiven?

Is there someone you can forgive, including yourself?

What has 'died' but which also opens up new perspectives for you?

Could you be looking for the wrong thing in the wrong place?

Have you contemplated expressing yourself more through music?

What if your need to be comforted is healed by comforting others?

What if everyone treated everyone as members of the same family, showing compassion at every opportunity?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 35 – ABILITY TO LISTEN



Woman aged 19 from Moscow, Russia. Hindu, literate, speaks Russian, lesbian

A young woman runs her fingers slowly across her lips. They feel strangely numb, as if her mouth has been sewn up for a very long time. As a child she was intimidated and rigidly controlled by her parents, and her chosen reaction to this was stubborn silence. Now, as a young woman, she is fascinated by the Hare Krishna movement, of which she has become a fanatical member. She rebels against her disapproving family, hurting others with her fanaticism, rejecting anyone who fails to show similar enthusiasm. She points her finger accusingly at those in positions of power and is proud to belong to a movement which is different. At work, in her badly paid job serving in a café, she is sullen and outspoken. She is in danger of losing her job because she sometimes alienates the guests.

One day a tourist enters the café on a hot sweltering day. For some reason, she is the only guest at that time. The woman tourist sits down and immediately takes out a postcard of a white church standing in flooded meadows – the Russian Church of the Intercession on the River Nerl. The moment the waitress sees the postcard of the church, she is strangely struck by its beautiful simplicity and pure structure. Suddenly she realizes that this too can be a spiritual home and inspiration for others, even if it is not her own. Instead of gruffly asking for her order, the waitress greets the tourist with spontaneous warmth, her face shining, her heart open. Their mutual enthusiasm for the church on the postcard is the start of a friendship. The girl realizes that every newcomer to the café presents her with a new opportunity to listen, to encounter a plethora of different wishes, views, habits and beliefs. Her ears are finely attuned to everything and everyone around her. Her tolerance grows, learning that there are many valid paths towards positive change. Insisting that others follow her own rigid ideals was often tantamount to condemnation, or an attempt to control. The young woman ceases to blame her superiors or people in positions of power for her own situation, taking on responsibility instead.

Questions

Is speaking your mind an action or a reaction? Is it an attempt to control others?

What if your behavior is less reaction and more self-chosen?

Have there been long periods when you have kept your silence?

What need fuels your urge to be different?

How has fanaticism made you less tolerant?

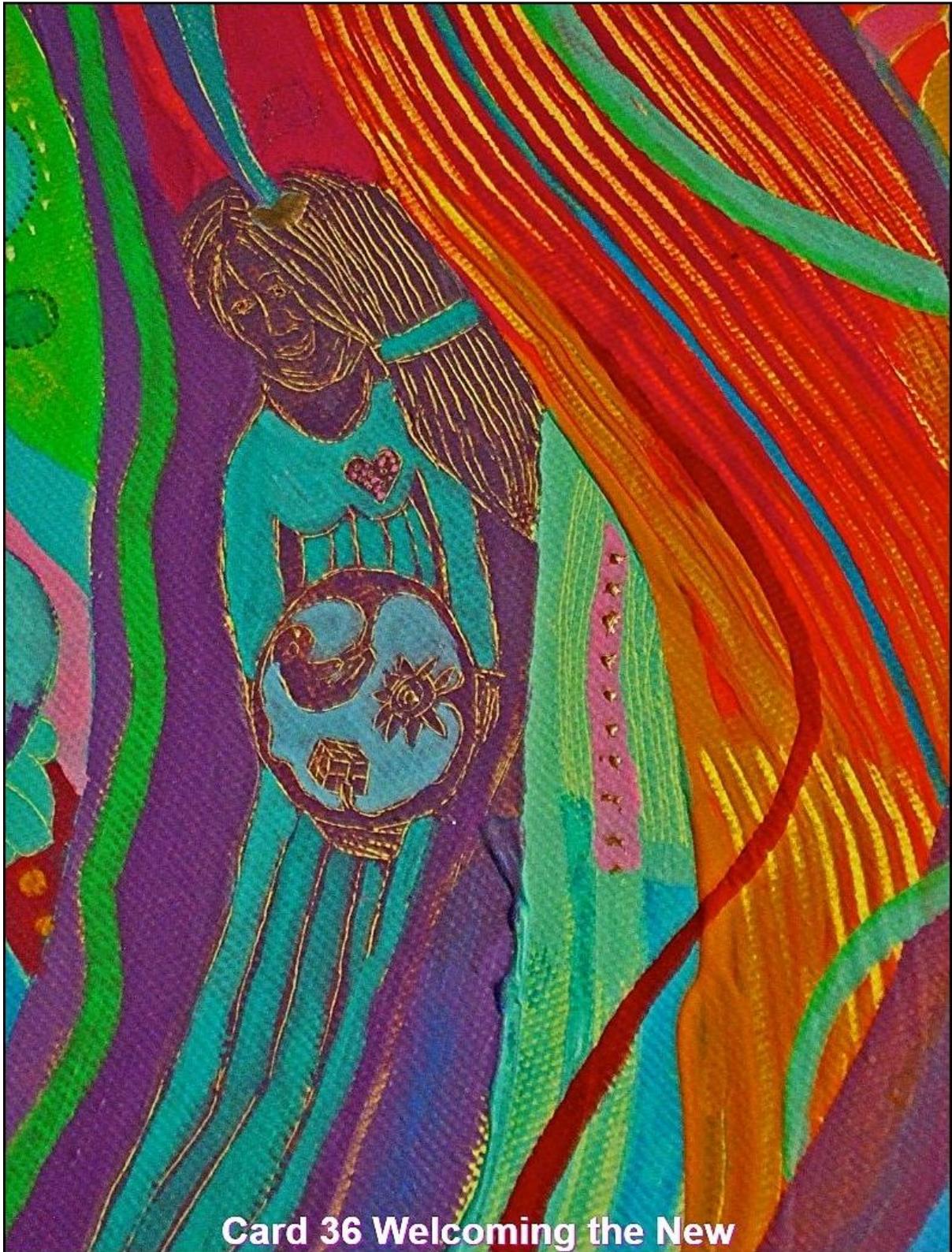
Suppose you spent one day without criticizing or complaining?

How much responsibility for yourself do you abdicate to a group or to those in positions of power?

What if everyone – regardless of their religion – treated everyone else with careful consideration and tolerance in complete awareness of the fact that all paths lead to heaven?

What if everyone worldwide exercised religious tolerance?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 36 – WELCOMING THE NEW



Woman aged 35 from Moscow, Russia. Christian, literate, pregnant, sexually abused, speaks Russian, heterosexual

An attractive Russian woman in her mid-thirties is sitting on her bed, wondering what to do next. She has discovered, yet again, that she is pregnant and is contemplating whether to have another abortion. It would be her ninth. Contraceptives are expensive and difficult to get hold of, and she does not want to refuse the attention of her lover. She feels very guilty, due to her Christian upbringing. How wonderful it would be to play again like to a small child with no responsibilities or difficult choices, running around with her friends on Moscow's huge Red Square, just a short walk from her home. She hates the decision-making process and feels very much alone. She is sure that her lover has no interest in raising a family and will leave her if she says she wants to keep the baby.

Still uncertain of what to do, she spontaneously decides to visit her old childhood neighborhood in the hope of gaining some clarity of thought. As she crosses Red Square, she hears American tourists exclaiming with great surprise to learn that 'Red' Square has nothing to do with Communism, but with the red wall around the Kremlin. Red, in fact, means beautiful. The woman is struck by the fact that something can suddenly be seen in a completely different way and that there are always new paths to pursue. Wondering how this might apply to her own life, she re-examines her own behavior and eventually realizes that having abortions is not a bid for personal freedom but a method of shunning responsibility. She also realizes that her previous abortions have left emotional scars which she has ignored. Fear of the future has prevented her from welcoming new experiences into her life, including children. Taking all her courage in her hands, she decides that this time, she will keep the baby and turn her life in a new direction, taking only those things with her which she is really passionate about. She does not let financial considerations – or her fear of survival – influence her decision to keep this child. When she tells her lover, he is surprised but reacts with joy. Could she really have misjudged him so completely? Resolving to talk much more about her hopes and fears in future, a rush of energy, like sap rising in a young plant, moves up through her body. Inwardly, she caresses the new life which is growing in her womb.

Questions:

What new experience are you not allowing into your life?

How often are your choices determined by existential/survival/financial fears?

What role does the feeling of responsibility play in your life?

Suppose guilt is sometimes the result of overstepping limits set by others?

What qualities do small children demonstrate so easily and which ones would you like to acquire again?

Are you surrounded by things and people you are passionate about?

If not, why not?

Are you aware that you learn the most when you enter a new, unknown zone?

Could you communicate your hopes and fears more?

Do you rejoice in the ultimate possibilities that each day provides anew?

What will happen when everyone finds the courage to break out of old structures and welcome new opportunities and experiences into their lives?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 37 – COMMITMENT



Man aged 50 from Ekatarinburg, Russia, non-religious, literate, overweight, smokes, drinks, speaks Russian, heterosexual

A rather shaky hand is delving into a fat wallet to find some money. It belongs to a plump Russian with a worried look on his face. Quickly, he gives the money to his small nephew, saying he is sorry to have forgotten his birthday. The Russian tends to feel 'weak' when confronted with angry children, or indeed with any strong emotions, preferring to solve problems of this nature with money rather than considering his role in creating them. For him, money is a useful way of expressing affection – a viable alternative to personal commitment. His greatest wish is to feel secure and his fear is that the money he owns could actually become worthless. Firmly cemented in the physical and material world, he is very cynical about anything which suggests that there are other non-physical or spiritual realms. As far as he is concerned, death is the end of life and something he tries not to think about. But despite his outward nonchalance, death secretly haunts him. His shaking hand betrays his fear of spending and his life lacks all sense of enjoyment.

Scouring the newspaper for financial news and trends, the man reads about a Siberian farmer who is filing the state for damages and who is in fear of his life. The farmer was nearly hit several times by rocket debris returning to earth from space. This seriously impairs the man's feelings of security. Despite any measures he may take to protect himself on earth, financial or otherwise, he cannot control debris from space. This thought impels him to look up at the sky anxiously whenever he is out walking and he is overcome with a sense of helplessness. Simultaneously, a crash in the financial markets forces him to reconsider what is of real lasting value to himself. He realizes that paradise is not a place of security or a full bank account, but a state of mind. He gains an understanding of why he is on this earth, and realizes that the material world is a temporary aspect of his present experience, which is a short sojourn in an eternal spiritual quest. He now knows that new life begins with the destruction of old forms and that this is a continual process of building on strengths and reviewing weaknesses. He commits to every new person who enters his life in the knowledge that they will provide him with an opportunity to grow. His greatest joy is spending time with his small nieces and nephews who infect him with their spontaneity and enthusiasm, and his greatest gift to them is the interest which he shows in their lives.

Questions

What role does money play in your life?

Do you tend to use money more for things or experiences?

What prevents you from entering true intimacy?

What is of real genuine, lasting value?

To what extent are you cynical?

What if there are always new realms and experiences open to us, providing we open our eyes and believe that they are possible?

Is it time to discover your very specific purpose in life?

Do you build on your strengths and review your weaknesses?

What if everyone worldwide realised that new beginnings ensue from the destruction of old forms?

How would the world change if everyone maintained a high level of authenticity in all relationships?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 38 – INTENSITY



Girl aged 16 from Bangladesh. Muslim, illiterate, speaks Bengali, heterosexual

A young woman is dreaming of having a child: she visualizes herself as a beautiful bride, and then as a glowing mother-to-be with a baby growing inside her. In her mind's eye, she sees red and purple cells magically dividing and redividing. However, her dreams are in vain as she has no chance of experiencing this. Her face is half covered by a veil to hide her discolored, scarred skin. An acid attack was her punishment for refusing to accept an admirer's proposal of marriage. Her appearance is something she cannot change and she has resigned herself to the childless, uneventful life of a social outcast. Although she stands by her decision, she is also overcome by remorse. If she goes out in public, people will stare at her and her family will be in disgrace. Perhaps she would even endanger the marriage opportunities of her younger sisters. This is why she prefers to hide herself from the public eye, closeted in the stuffy, cramped family home. She dreams of running about outside, the wind on her face.

When she overhears her father discussing future husbands for her younger sisters without their knowledge, the girl is wrought with despair, wondering if they will agree or have to endure the same fate as herself. Summoning all her courage, she leaves the house in secret and searches for help. When she discovers a centre for the rehabilitation of acid victims, she is able to follow her own path without compromising her family. With time, the girl's focus is no longer on her outward appearance. Her soul's agenda is to go within and to discover other qualities and skills. She experiments increasingly and launches into such an intense period of creativity and learning that her scars are forgotten and her face is radiant with energy and joy. Realizing that this experience and the full, exciting life she now leads would not have been possible if she had become a well-behaved and dutiful bride at the age of sixteen, she is thankful for the incident – however dreadful – which cut off that option, thus opening up completely new avenues. She is now aware of her basic rights as a woman and as a human being, and she immediately helps anyone who is denied their rights. While assisting the Adibashi community to voice their complaints against land loss, she develops a sense of family belonging with other activists, including her future husband. Whenever opportunity arises, she meditates alone, standing in the wind, her arms pointing towards the heavens, filled with an intense exuberance and the knowledge that everything is possible.

(Symbol: galactic symbol for strength and vitality)

Questions

What would you like to give birth to?

Will you take action to change your situation or are you going to wait until some unpleasant incident forces you into a new direction?

What is on your soul's agenda?

Are you aware of the miracle that growth and creativity are always possible in every area of life and death?

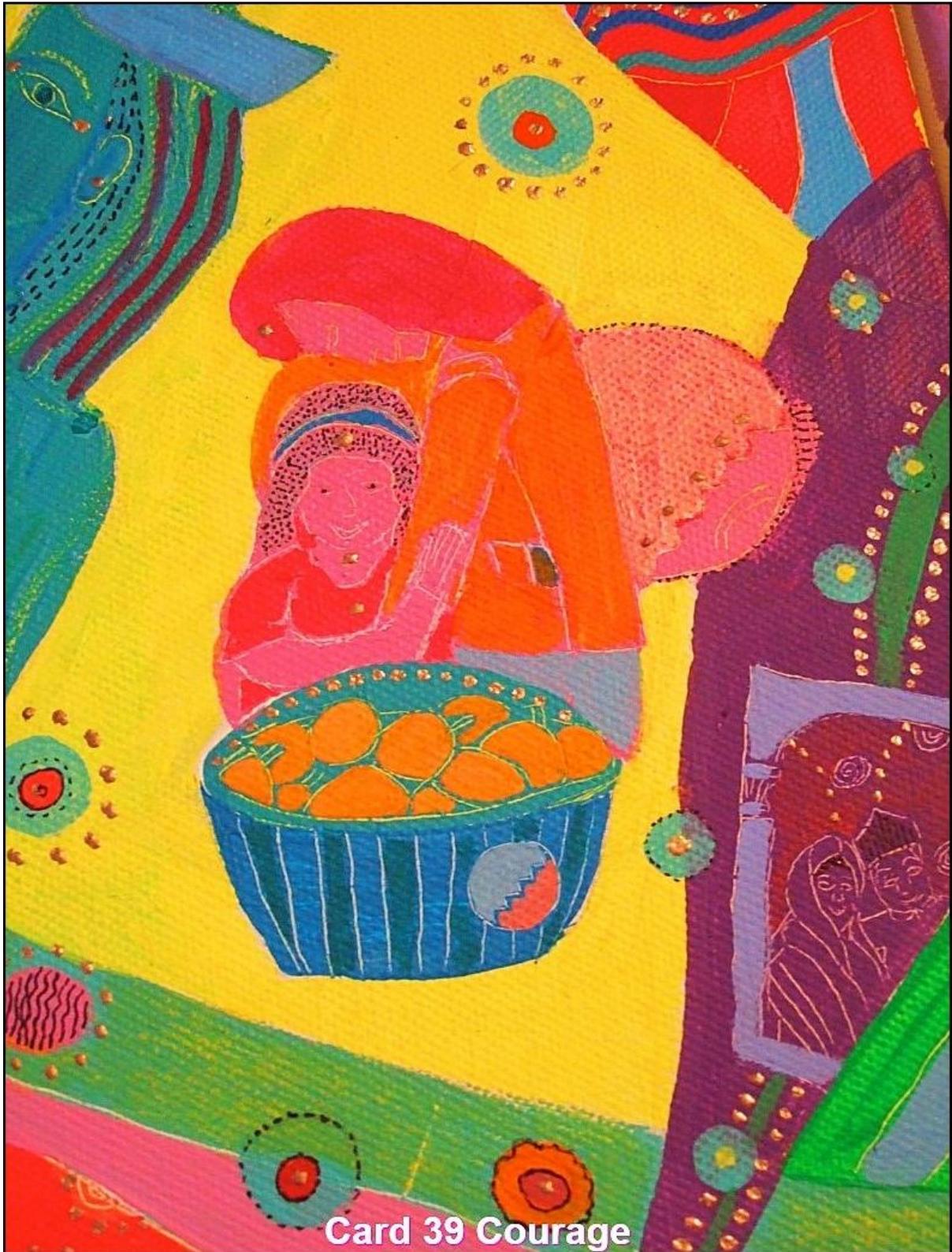
How strong is your feeling of responsibility to others, thus abdicating responsibility for yourself?

What if people who carry out violence are – on another completely different level – carrying out some divine plan to make us reassess ourselves and move into another dimension of consciousness?

How would the world change if everyone were capable of leaving bitter disappointment behind them?

How would the world change if everyone focused on entering into a new intensive stage of life leading to fulfillment on all levels?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 39 – COURAGE



Card 39 Courage

Girl aged 11 from Manila, the Philippines. Christian, lives in poverty and is undernourished, literate, works full time, speaks Filipino

The pile of clean wet clothes increases rapidly as a small girl deftly washes the laundry in a plastic bowl. She works full time as a domestic help for a large family in Manila. Her employers deny her the right to education, but her dearest wish is to go to secondary school in the countryside where she comes from. Any pay she receives immediately goes to her poverty-stricken mother who lives in the slums of Manila. Work starts at 5 o'clock every morning and sometimes she is called out in the middle of the night. She is overburdened with duties and beaten if she does not complete them. On several occasions she has been severely whipped. Now – which is even worse – her employer has threatened to sever her contact to her mother. Exhausted and abused, she feels like she is in hell, an invisible being living in a shed with no light. The washing seems to be more important than herself, as it requires more water than she is allowed to use to wash herself. The pigs she looks after also eat better than she does. Most of the time, she has the strange feeling she is invisible, feeling more like an old woman than a young girl. On the other hand, she knows that running away and begging a living on the streets is a dangerous practice, as patrols regularly 'rescue' street children and throw them into prison.

After a particularly busy week, the girl cries constantly due to exhaustion and – in her desperation – she screams at her employers that she needs sleep, food and water just like they do. Her employers are surprised by this sudden, uncharacteristic outburst which has the ring of truth about it, and so they give her a day off to recover. But the ill-treatment continues. Gradually, the girl realizes that feeling invisible is the result of acting as if she really were invisible, always towing the line. Now she dares to confide in her mother about being abused. Her mother, in turn, informs social workers who tell her about laws preventing child exploitation. The girl is brought to a safe haven, a community providing shelter, food and counseling. Instead of hovering in the background, the girl regains self-confidence and learns to shine, spreading her light everywhere she goes. She realizes that her transformation was only made possible by her experience of darkness. She moves forward through the various stages of her life with unflinching courage, serving as a luminous example to others in distress.

Questions

Which duty do you continue to carry out, despite it being detrimental to your health?

What would change if you were your first priority?

In what areas of your life do you feel invisible and to what extent is this just your view?

What if the experience of 'darkness' is one of the greatest paths to illumination and transformation?

Which secret still needs to be confided?

What fear prevents you from exploring new avenues of help?

How do we contribute to our own feeling that we are in 'hell'?

What if we were all meant to shine and inspire and if we all believed that we had the ability to do so, filling the world with peace and light?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 40 – SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE



Girl aged 7 from the banks of the Mekong, Laos. Christian, lives in poverty and is undernourished, illiterate, speaks Lahu

A child walks listlessly along the sandy banks of the Mekong River clutching a banana. Unlike the other children who pick up pebbles from the banks to throw into the water, she walks past with the glazed look of disinterest, avoiding their eyes. Even when the other children suddenly scream with excitement, rushing towards a woman in a boat who distributes small parcels, she turns away. In fact, she considers herself 'uninteresting' and thinks that no one will talk to her anyway. The water is mildly warm and crystal clear, but she does not touch it, watching her mother wash clothes in a large aluminum pan. When hunger overwhelms her, she hangs onto her mother's skirt, whining for food, and then she is given her ration for that day – a banana and small portion of sticky rice. When she begs for an orange, her mother says nothing and turns back to her work with downcast eyes.

One afternoon as she sits alone on the river bank, a shadow falls across the ground in front of the girl, and she suddenly feels a hand resting lightly on her shoulder. Struck with fear, she immediately curls herself up into a small ragged bundle, hiding her face. When she is sure that the stranger has gone away, she turns around cautiously. One of the small parcels she has seen in other children's hands now lies on the sand directly next to her. Carefully, she tears away the thin brown paper to find a simple picture book with words that she cannot understand. The next time the boat arrives with the woman who hands out parcels, she is waiting for it, her little book locked in her arms. The woman's smile seems kind and assuring and the girl asks why she comes. The woman laughs and tells her that this is a floating library. The girl does not know what a library is, so she starts to ask questions, which lead to more questions. In the end her curiosity has been so stimulated that she refuses to go home. Gently, the woman leads her back to her mother. From that time onwards, the girl looks around continuously, investigating everything that she has missed so far. She throws stones into the water, fascinated by the way the smooth silken ripples spread towards the shore. She is intensely aware of the warmth of the sun on her face, the rustling of leaves, the texture of the ground under her feet. She rejoices in the sweetness of the fragrant banana which softens in her mouth. She starts to wonder where the river goes to and asks everyone she sees, especially travelers and trades people who disembark from the daily boat. When the girl sees a foreign woman for the first time, she is shocked by the color of her blond hair and white skin. Until then, the girl thought her own hair was light compared to others. As she grows up, her love of books increases. They widen her perspectives and teach her that there is always another world to discover. The Mekong is not just the piece of water on her doorstep but a huge river snaking down from the mountains of China through three countries to the sea. When she is older, she travels down the Mekong to find her first real library. When she visits the huge reclining Buddha in Vientiane, her perspectives change again. The Buddha is so monumental and overwhelming, and life seems so expansive and full of possibilities that she runs forward to embrace this never-ending adventure.

Questions:

Which of your convictions could be seen in a different light?

Which belief about yourself would you like to change?

Is help available from a source you do not want to see?

Have you lost your sense of curiosity?

Are you constantly aware of your immediate physical surroundings and sensations?

What if there were a new joy to discover and experience every moment?

As a traveler on life's river, which new destination will you choose?

What if everyone worldwide knew that their beliefs about themselves can be changed at a moment's notice?

What if everyone lived a life of adventure and followed their own personal quest?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 41 – VITALITY



Woman aged 38 from Port Louis, Mauritius. Hindu, lives in poverty and is undernourished, illiterate, has unsafe drinking water, sexually abused, speaks Hindi, heterosexual

Years of child-bearing and intense caring for her impoverished family has drained this woman of all enthusiasm for life. Chronic tiredness overcomes her at increasingly frequent intervals and she enforces strict control to keep everything going. Often, a severe sore throat forces her to remain absolutely silent. She has to explain to other people that she is ill. At such moments she feels strangled, as if a snake had wrapped itself around her neck and refused to relax its grip. Moving through the day and performing simple household duties turns into slow torture, burdened by lethargy, surrounded by complaining children and an aggressive, frustrated husband. If he threatens to hit her, she moves faster for a while, but as soon as he is out of sight, she slows down again and sinks into despair.

One evening when her husband returns, he punches his wife in the mouth. The woman washes the blood away, comforts the children and resolves to leave. They are taken in by elderly relatives who have enough room but who need assistance. They appreciate the woman's help. Seeing that she is in dire need of recuperation, however, they insist that she takes a short break while neighbors look after the children. In an attempt to reactivate the spiritual side of her life, the woman travels alone to the Hindu festival at the holy lake of Grand Bassin. As the woman looks up at the huge statue of Shiva towering above the forest, she is struck by the power of his gaze. This is Shiva in his capacity as Destroyer and Transformer. When she sees the snake around his neck, she initially senses the old familiar feeling of constriction around her own neck. At that moment she knows instinctively that her sore throats are not simply an illness which afflicts herself, the victim. They are also a sign of limited self-expression. Looking at the statue in quiet contemplation, far removed from her daily routine and responsibilities, she sees it change in mood and color as the light changes and dusk approaches. As night sets in, the woman becomes anxious, but she is so tired that she falls asleep. At daybreak she awakes to see the statue in the brilliant morning light. She leaves the fearful shadows of night behind her and feels inwardly uplifted. The snake is no longer a threat but a god of transformation. From then on, the woman learns to express her feelings more and more. Every morning, before continuing with her usual routine, she makes a quick mental plan of how she plans to maintain her own energy level. When she talks to her family and friends, she is aware of every word she uses and tries to convey every fluctuation of feeling. The negative power of words such as 'I am ill' is very clear to her. Instead she offers thanks on a daily basis for her ever-increasing vitality.

Questions

What fear lies behind your feeling of helplessness?

Who would you help next, if helping others were a way of helping yourself?

How are you strangling yourself?

How are you strangling others?

How can you increase your self-expression?

What important issue needs to be addressed?

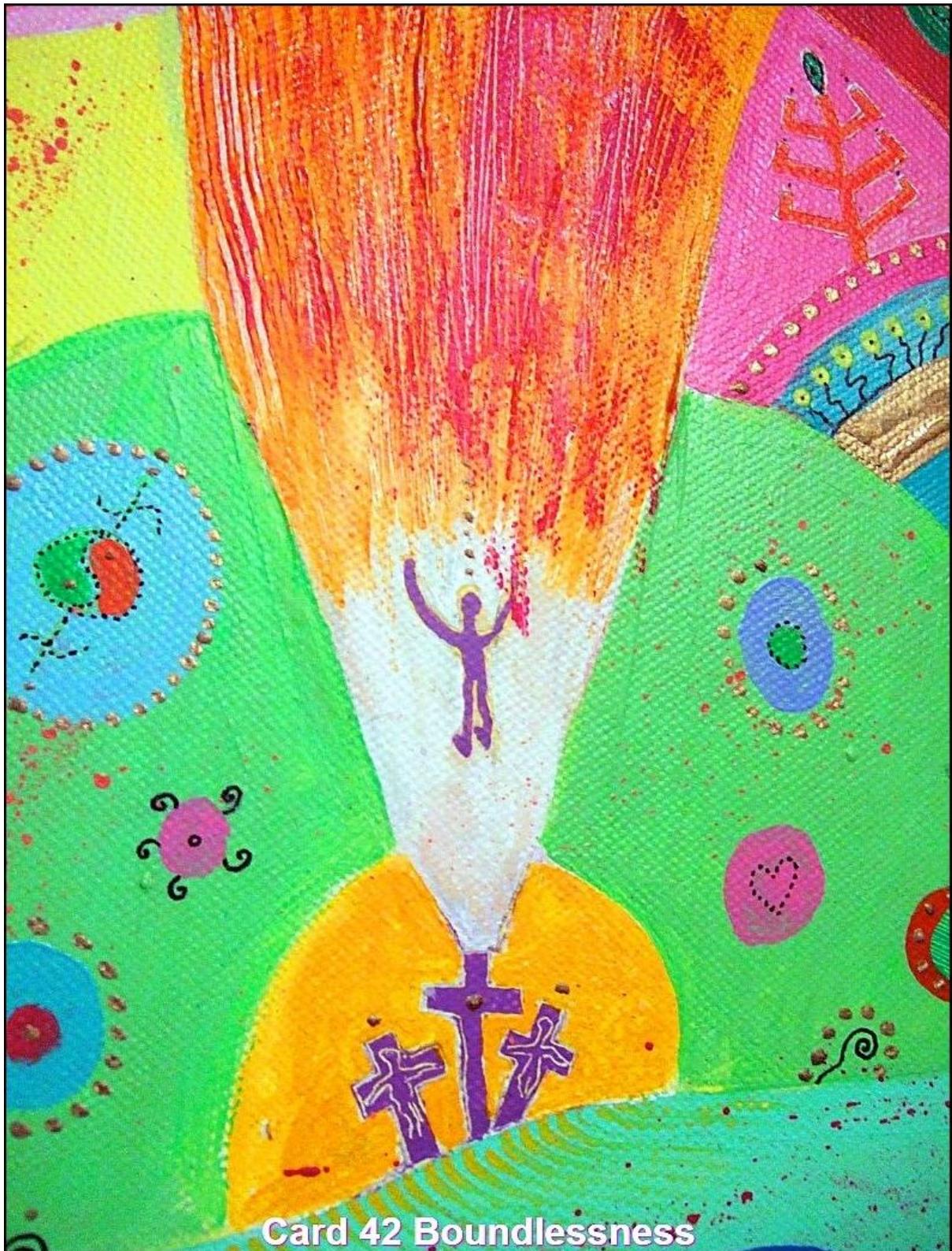
What morning ritual could provide you with energy and inspiration on a daily basis?

Are you aware of your intrinsic power to create your reality through every thought, word and deed?

What would you like to be able to say about yourself on the day you die?

What if everyone worldwide addressed small problems before they turned into serious problems?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 42 – BOUNDLESSNESS



Woman aged 25 from Hong Kong, China. Non-religious, lives in poverty and is undernourished, has unsafe drinking water, literate, speaks Cantonese, lesbian

The market in the back streets of Hong Kong is crammed with people and the food stalls have been busy since sunrise. A small woman is squatting on the ground with a knife about to kill the snake wriggling in front of her. It is destined to become part of the next dish. She is extremely tired, drained by long working, but no one seems to be interested in her complaints, or seems to see the dark rings under her eyes. Her only wish is to fall asleep and sometimes she fantasies about not having to get up any more. When she wakes in the mornings, her memory of the previous long day and the many deadlines she unflinchingly fulfilled weighs so heavily on her mind that she can hardly pull herself out of bed. In the end she forces herself to do so at the very last minute and runs out to the market without even having thrown water on her face. She often wonders why everyone is so unfriendly.

One morning the woman wakes with a start, feeling that something is different. Instead of feeling tired, she is refreshed. To her horror, she realizes that she has overslept. When she arrives at the food stall two hours later than usual her boss wants to speak with her and she fears the worst. But instead of losing her job as she feared, she is startled to hear that he is very concerned about her. He says that she doesn't need to work such long hours and he shows her how time can be saved here and there by being less particular and more flexible. The woman is more and more astonished and realizes that she has great difficulty releasing patterns of behavior and habits that she has adopted to gain attention or impress others, but which are not essentially necessary and which even create antagonism. The more she examines her own behavior, the more she learns to interact with other people in a clear, cheerful and authentic manner. She no longer needs to earn pity and admiration by working long hours. With time she is so well-versed in methods of reassessing her behavior and needs, as well as the needs of her workplace, that she is capable of reinventing herself on a daily basis, adjusting immediately and responsibly to all changes in her surroundings. Her major realization is that she herself has been the most restrictive agent in her life to date, creating her own deadlines. Now she knows that her potential has no bounds, and that she is treading a path which widens into an ever-increasing spiral.

(Symbol galactic symbol for energy preservation, transformation snake)

Questions: Are you leading the sort of life you want to lead?

How many of your 'deadlines' are self-imposed?

How often do you reflect upon your own behavior? Is it possible to change it?

Is your 'character' a fixed entity or simply a collection of strategies developed to fill a certain need or to reach a certain goal?

Do you reinvent yourself on a daily basis?

Suppose you said the following affirmation daily: "I have no limitations, only ever-increasing potential"?

What if 'tiredness' is something which dominates the lives of people without dreams?

How are you creating your own problems by acting on the need to impress or gain attention?

How does the memory of negative experiences affect your behavior today?

What if everyone re-examined their behavior regularly in view of their own needs and also in view of spreading peace and unity worldwide and protecting the resources of our planet?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 43 – GRATITUDE



Card 43 Gratitude

Woman aged 40 from Musan, North Korea. Non-religious, literate, lives in poverty and is undernourished, speaks Korean, heterosexual

In a small village in the mountains of North Korea near the Chinese border, a woman awakes to find that the water she collected the previous day is covered with ice. Again, winter is on its way and the woman wonders how she will survive it in her small tumbledown cottage together with her three ailing relatives. She stoops when she walks, as if bending under a heavy burden. It is as if she is carrying the three old people continuously on her back. They are all ill to varying degrees and all undernourished. Sometimes her son brings them food after finding work at the iron mines in Musan, but at other times they are so hungry that the woman has no other alternative than to collect grass to make into a soup. One day her son brings a newspaper to the village and it is passed from hand to hand with varying degrees of interest. The woman cannot read, but she is astounded by one photograph showing thousands of children in sportswear performing coordinated gymnastics in a large arena. She feels that everything is stagnation so far away from city life, and she deeply resents caring for her relatives. When Chinese businessmen arrive in the village and offer well-paid work in China to the younger prettier woman who are not yet tied down by family duties, she becomes extremely unhappy and curses her fate.

A few weeks later, on her son's next visit, he finds his mother in a state of deep depression, hardly capable of getting through the day. As usual, he gives her all the news. This time, he has something dreadful to relate. The pretty young women who left the village with the Chinese businessmen were not actually offered jobs after all: they were sold as brides to Chinese farmers on the other side of the border. According to rumor, they live like slaves in fear of physical violence and have no means of escape or defending themselves. Although the woman is extremely distraught to hear what has become of her neighbors, she is greatly relieved that she was left behind. But for her elderly relatives, she would have gone too. Gratitude floods through her veins and she experiences a kind of resurrection, regaining her strength and determination. She continues to care lovingly for her elderly relatives who are nearing the end of their lives. The woman finds that she is capable of providing them not only with physical care but also peace of mind. Despite its hardships, life in the mountains so close to nature is now something she would not want to change. She becomes more of a friend to herself, resting when she needs it and enjoying the company of her neighbors. Often, she practices her own, simple form of meditation, concentrating on the emotion of gratitude and focusing on her heart. The energy flows from her heart into the rest of her body and into her surroundings, causing a spontaneous feeling of content and wellbeing.

Questions

What burden can be seen as a blessing?

How often do you express gratitude?

What if you started to write notes in a 'Book of Gratitude' on a daily basis?

In what way is your crisis self-made?

How could this recognition change your perception of life and your central role?

When friends disappear, could this be a wake-up call to start being a friend to yourself?

Could short but regular periods of quiet contemplation help to clarify your mind?

What is about to end before you have seen its true value?

What if everyone in the world realized that our crises are our own and that others are not to blame?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 44 – DISCRETION



Girl aged 16 from Zahedan, Iran. Muslim, lives in poverty and is undernourished, literate, has unsafe drinking water, speaks Baluchi, heterosexual

With shaking hands, a girl picks up the newspaper which her angry father has thrown on the dusty earthen floor. She is being held by local authorities and is under investigation. The photograph on the front page is of herself, together with the announcement of her crime: extremists are demanding that she should be hanged from a crane for immodest conduct; watching football and having sex. The girl herself, known as an energetic and impetuous friend and daughter in a world where women are forced to learn restraint and patience, has always been defiant. Her monotonous, constricted life in the slums of Zahedan is so unbearable that she slips away at every opportunity for glimpses into another world. In the depths of her soul, she knew that in the end, her behavior could have dire consequences. Now she has the proof of it in her hands as she looks at the photograph. Her father is torn between condemning her for being a disgrace to the family and trying to save his beloved daughter.

Finally, the man decides to take action and approaches foreign tourists coming out of a hotel in one of the better areas of Zahedan. He cannot make himself understood, but he gives them the newspaper. From the desperation in his voice, they sense his great fear and promise to find out what the newspaper says. The travelers, in turn, are shocked to hear about the girl's proposed punishment and they contact international human rights groups which exert pressure on the authorities, demanding her release. When she is allowed to return home, her father tells her how it came about and she sees him in a completely different light. He is a caring individual rather than an implacable, authoritarian figure. Her knowledge of coming close to execution impels her to investigate near death experiences. She learns that life is eternal and death merely a transformation – a re-entry into light and communion with the universe. She knows that the timing of her arrest was perfect timing for her soul's agenda and that it was also a catalyst for something new. From then on, she also tries to emulate her father's discretion when dealing with personal matters among family and friends, recognizing that her behavior has often been insensitive in the past. Her increasing self-respect makes defiance unnecessary and instead, she approaches others with love. She learns to wait and think before she blurts out some derogatory comment. She dreams about swimming with dolphins, approaching them slowly and carefully. As the girl becomes more sensitive to the needs and feelings of others, the world around her also becomes more sensitized. As the world moves ever onwards into a higher spiritual dimension, the death penalty is abolished in all countries. The absurdity of killing someone to show that it is wrong to kill someone else has been recognized, and this has become part of public awareness on a global scale. Just like the high frequencies which abound in the communication and lovemaking of dolphins, sexuality is seen as a normal, healthy exchange of energy and love – a way of heightening the intensity of compassion and joy on our planet.

Questions:

What do you continue doing though you are aware of extreme consequences?

What has 'died' to help you to gain new perspectives and new experiences?

Does something soon have to end in a radical way so that you come to a certain realisation?

How much of your behaviour is not a chosen path but a reaction to convention?

Do you feel betrayed by your sex? Could your view of the opposite sex be stereotyped?

Do you burst out with bitter comments which are the result of unhealed internal wounds?

How can you intensify your experience of compassion and joy?

What needs to heal before you can approach others with love and sensitivity rather than with defiance?

What if everyone knew that death is simply a transition, a re-entry into light?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 45 – HUMILITY



Woman aged 32 from Galle, Sri Lanka. Buddhist, lives in poverty and is undernourished, literate, has unsafe drinking water, is pregnant, speaks Sinhalese, heterosexual

A dejected woman stands in a long queue in front of a makeshift soup kitchen. She is one of a million displaced people following devastation caused by a large Tsunami along Sri Lanka's coastline. She feels completely lethargic, traumatized by the death of her mother and the wreckage of the home she so proudly built from her savings. It also demolished the hotel where she worked as a batik artist. Her husband's taxi lies like a corpse on the beach and his driving license is floating somewhere in the sea. When she sees the waves, still coughing human bones onto the shore, she averts her terrified gaze and walks towards the food kitchen with her plate to stand in line with the of others. She recognizes some of them – neighbors she used to look down on for lounging around and being out of work. She cannot bear being reduced to their level and being robbed of all her possessions. All her family's belongings are now contained in one small box which she is holding in her hand. Her husband is helping destitute elderly relatives in another part of the country. She is pregnant, and she wonders how she will be able to manage on her own when her baby is born.

After initial failure to get through, donations from abroad start to trickle into the area and are distributed by dedicated local doctors and helpers. When the woman is offered a roof over her head, a mattress and new cooking utensils, her cheeks burn with shame. For one second, pride engulfs her like a tornado, but in the next it dissipates, leaving her with the strange feeling of being completely hollow. The woman humbly accepts the assistance offered and expresses her unending gratitude. No longer provided for by the camp, she is forced to rely on her own initiative. She shares what little she has with her neighbors who support her in return, especially when the baby comes. Her behavior as a mother becomes purely instinctive. Her instant response to her crying child shows that she has learnt to act from the heart before she thinks and her demonstration of love and humility is an inspiration to those who find difficulty reassessing their values when confronted by material loss.

(Symbol: galactic symbol of Great Change)

Questions

What trauma has occurred, enabling you to give birth to something new?

How much weight do you give material possessions in your life?

Who deserves more of your respect?

Which situation is inviting you to show the quality of humility?

Is it possible that losing something is a way of finding your lost self?

In what way have you cut yourself off from your instincts?

How quickly do 'second thoughts' interrupt your flow of intuitive action and encourage 'separateness' from others?

What if everyone believed the more we give, the more we receive?

If everyone were as special as everyone else, how would we treat each other and what would stop us from starting a golden age of peace on earth?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 46 – RESPONSIBILITY



Woman aged 23 from Bangkok, Thailand. Non-religious, literate, sexually abused, is HIV positive, smokes, speaks Thai, heterosexual

A petite naked woman sits on the lap of a huge red-skinned European who has just selected her from a line-up of thirty available prostitutes. They have just arrived on the island of Ko Samat, stepping down from the boat into shallow turquoise waves, to rent a hut on the idyllic beaches. Whenever she has sex with him, she feels guilty, but she doesn't say why. She suspects that she has AIDS, but she turns a blind eye and doesn't get herself tested. This fear lurks in her subconscious and shakes her inner serenity. Every step seems more uncertain with every man she accompanies through the wet sand to the beaches. And back in Bangkok after every excursion, her sense of security is weakened by the sight of locals protesting in the streets against power and corruption. When an incurable sore appears on her thigh, she sticks a plaster over it rather than asking herself the cause.

When the next customer prefers to stay with her in Bangkok to see the sights instead of lying on the beach, her insecurity grows even more. While visiting Bangkok's golden palace, she is extremely disturbed by the Wat Phra Kaew guard figures with their grim facial expressions and the way they support the walls. At the sight of a statue which is half woman and half lion, she bursts into uncontrollable sobs. The customer comforts her and she finds herself telling him about her fears, her inner conflict, her poverty-stricken family whom she is trying to support and her inability to follow her own intuition. The man, who is basically good-natured, is appalled and tries to help her. Instead of seeing her as a pleasant passing companion he understands that she is a woman of great depth and potential. He treasures her honesty and is fascinated by her increasing willingness to open up. At first she feels exposed and vulnerable when she shows her feelings, but she sees that honesty increases intimacy and trust. She even confides her mother's darkest secret which has instilled her with a fear of death for as long as she can remember: her mother worked for the postal service, regularly labeling and sending small parcels to the USA. Years later, she discovered that these were the remains of American soldiers who died in Vietnam. The woman now faces her fear of death and decides that she will test herself for AIDS, taking on full responsibility for herself. She never forgets the statue which precipitated her great change. Now, her active male nature and her intuitive female nature are in harmonious balance. (Symbols: numerous symbols of Eternal Life from various ancient traditions, including Celtic and Egyptian)

Questions:

What are you turning a 'blind eye' to and how could this endanger others?

How does your consideration for others prevent you from looking after yourself?

How are you inwardly shaken and how long will you wait before you speak openly?

In what way are you consciously 'selling' or disempowering yourself?

What choice has always been there, but which you have failed to see?

Are the two sides of yourself – the fluid, intuitive 'female' side and the active, energetic 'lion' or 'male' side – in harmony with each other or out of balance?

Does 'security' exist? Could 'insecurity' simply be a lack of understanding that life is a series of ever changing-cycles which we ourselves instigate to fulfill our potential?

What if everyone showed their feelings all the time with the purpose of building a network of honesty, trust and intimacy around the world?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 47 – REVERENCE



Woman aged 64 from Hiroshima, Japan. Buddhist, literate, overweight, has diabetes, sexually abused, speaks Japanese, heterosexual

A woman stands absent-mindedly in a garden, regretting her decision to move away from the city. She is wearing the traditional dress which is expected of her on certain occasions. Although she has never actually told anyone, she dislikes wearing it. Sometimes she wonders if her female friends feel the same, but she is not on particularly close terms with them, and wouldn't dream of asking. The woman also dislikes looking after her large property which she inherited unexpectedly from a distant aunt she had never known. Pruning bushes, weeding the flower beds and mowing the lawn turned into a never-ending, pointless exercise. However, she forces herself to do what is expected of her and keeps the garden under the sort of control which she exerts over all other aspects of her life.

Following a long visit to her family in the city, and following an extensive period of rain, the woman returns to find the garden in an exuberant state of rampant growth. She is filled with a feeling of utter despair in the knowledge that weeds will always grow. Wondering why her aunt wanted to live in such a huge, isolated house with its extensive grounds, she sorts through some old letters. These reveal an old family secret: her aunt was badly mutilated by the Hiroshima atom bomb and forced to live well away from the public eye. The garden was her greatest solace. The woman's attitude changes rapidly. Weeds are no longer weeds but miracles of survival, especially in an area affected by the atom bomb. Nature teaches her certain divine rules – that we reap what we sow, and that a seed will die if it stops growing. She greets the stones, sun and water as living beings, recognizing their divinity. If she intends to prune a bush, she gives prior warning so that tree has time to pull away its energy, thus avoiding pain. In the name of every human being, she thanks the earth every morning for her presence and generosity, without which humankind could not continue living. Showered with love, respect and perfect conditions, the plants grow prolifically and produce spectacular and unusual flowers. The woman no longer wears her traditional Kimono. Instead her dresses are flowing and her hair entwined with leaves and flowers. She merges with nature as part of the eternal cycle.

Questions

Do you cut off new opportunities or avenues rather than waiting to see how things grow and develop?

How conscious are you of the miracle of growth?

What do you curb or kill in order to retain control and fend off fear?

What has hurt you so much that you are afraid of losing control?

What would you do next if traditional roles and conventional attitudes disappeared overnight?

Which part of yourself are you hiding from the 'public eye'?

What if everyone were encouraged to grow naturally in the direction of what fascinated them most?

To what extent do you do what is expected of you?

Could you be on better terms with your 'sisters' or 'brothers'?

Do you focus more on the weeds in life's garden, or more on abundance or colour?

Are you aware that your experiences are the result of seeds you have sown?

Is it possible for you to withdraw energy from 'branches' which no longer serve you or others?

What if everyone saw the divine in every living cell, considered themselves part of every living cell and respected the life in every living cell?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 48 – CREATIVITY



Man aged 22 from Tokyo, Japan. Non-religious, literate, smokes, drinks, speaks Japanese, homosexual

A thin young man is sitting at a table covered in debris. Stale smelling cigarette ash and left-over noodles from two days ago have not been cleared away. His shoulders are hunched, and his face is pale and anxious when he sees that his packet of cigarettes is nearly empty. Holding the last one in his slender fingers, he runs his other hand through his dyed brown hair. Plagued by headaches and worried about cancer and AIDS, he wonders why his partner has started coming home late, but so far he has not had the courage to ask. Slumping onto the sofa, he crushes some sheets of paper on which he has jotted a few notes, his sensitive observations on the feelings of people and animals around him. He could probably be a short story writer if he wasn't so numbed by self-doubt and fear. As a homosexual, who do not officially exist in his country, he often harbors a strange conviction that he might actually be invisible. All men are married, irrespective of their sexual tendencies. As he picks up the newspaper, his heart contracts when he sees a photograph of oil-covered birds in Hokkaido. Like them, he feels incapacitated and forlorn. He regards his fear as a sane reaction to a confusing, inhospitable world.

When his partner fails to return home, the young man's fear runs so deep that he decides the time has come for action. In the midst of his pain, it occurs to him that his fear may actually be the cause and not the outcome of his situation. He decides to put this to the test, giving his fear full reign. He visualizes his partner in the neighborhood bar, talking intimately to someone else. Then he goes to the bar and opens the door very slowly. As he looks fearfully into the room he sees exactly the situation he has visualized. At first he is shocked by this discovery but then he realizes that the opposite must also be true; if he is absolutely confident that something positive will happen, then it will. He is overwhelmed with joy, gratitude, and the knowledge that he can create his own destiny. He follows his heart and writes articles and letters in support of the Hokkaido birds, committing to himself and to others in need. Writing turns into his way of communicating to others the creative process of life.

(Symbols: galactic symbol for creativity, symbol for thought-creation)

Questions

How open are you about your sexual leanings?

What if headaches were not simply a result of stress or drinking or insufficient sleep but a message in your subconscious which is trying to get out and be heard?

Is there any situation in which you feel invisible?

What fear, if you dig deeply enough, is responsible for your negative experiences?

What if enthusiasm, joy and self-confidence are responsible for your positive experiences?

Are you aware that visualization is the first step towards manifestation?

How can you increase your creativity?

What if everybody worldwide realized that their thoughts and feelings were precursors of the future events in their lives?

What if everyone realized that the quality of their thoughts determined the quality of their experience?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 49 – REVALUATION



Girl aged 19 from Ulan Bator, Mongolia. Non-religious, literate, speaks Mongolian, heterosexual

Folding her arms, a young woman listens to a group of girls comforting a friend who has got pregnant by mistake. The young woman smiles disdainfully. She is sure that she would never be so foolish as to get herself into the same position. She stands on a paved square in Ulan Bator, in the shadow of a huge statue of a soldier parading a socialist flag. As a student she is very critical of all things old and sensitive to the criticism of elderly people. Similarly, she is spontaneous and enthusiastic about all things new, and every time she passes the statue on the square, the sight of the young fearless soldier floods her with a surge of energy. She is happy to be living in Ulan Bator – the only place in Mongolia where anything happens – despite the monotone concrete blocks and smog. On the contrary, she is impressed by the number, size and grandeur of these buildings compared with the one-roomed yurt she grew up in on the deserted Mongolian plains. She is happiest being seen in enormous discos, or translating for foreigners who disembark the train in Ulan Bator during the summer months. She is unhappiest when she finds herself alone or arguing with her companions, and she does not understand why this happens so often.

When she walks home after the disco one evening, she steps into the road without looking, causing a man on a bicycle to swerve. He shouts at her, and she flares up immediately, shouting insults. The man goes up to her, grabs her roughly by the shoulders and threatens to rape her. The girl suddenly remembers the scene on the square where she scornfully watched the pregnant girl. In that instant, she understands that she has to change her lack of respect, and she apologizes to the injured man. He apologizes too, saying that he has had a terrible day and is sorry for suddenly taking it out on her. The whole incident shakes her to her very foundations and she suddenly feels a strong desire to revisit her home on the deserted Mongolian plains. As she used to do in her childhood, she walks round a shrine of branches hung with blue material. After three ceremonial circumlocutions she makes an offering of a blue scarf to encourage good grazing grounds for her family's livestock. Slowly, her view of her home changes. Instead of seeing 'nothing' in this wide expanse of land, she sees huge unfenced vistas and wide open skies which fill her with a sense of eternity and release. When she sees kids and lambs inside the family yurt, memories of her delight as a child are reawakened and she relives her own innocent joy. As she readjusts to the slower pace of nomadic life, she learns to wait and reflect more before verbalizing criticism or jumping to defend her ego. She reassesses her view of her nomad past, appreciating her roots as a necessary base from which she has been able to develop exactly those qualities and experiences which lie on her soul's agenda.

Questions:

What new, fast avenue are you pursuing, blinding you to forgotten resources from the past?

What if you learned to wait more?

How often do you jump to defend yourself immediately?

How much does your ego control your behavior?

Are you over-critical? Have you the right to judge other people?

What if your view of others is largely colored by your own experience?

Suppose that another person's anger has very little to do with yourself?

Suppose that your own anger has nothing to do with anyone else?

What have you sacrificed in pursuit of excitement and action?

Which fences have you built for yourself which separate you from others?

What if there were no fences or borders worldwide?

GLOBAL VILLAGER 50 – TENACITY



Card 50 Tenacity

Baby boy aged 7 months from Kashmir, Pakistan. Muslim, lives in poverty and is undernourished

Sitting on his mother's knee, the small baby instinctively reaches for his mother's breast. She has been carrying him on her back for most of the day, desperate to get as far away as possible from the earthquake zone where she has lost everything. On the one hand, the baby is reassured by the close physical proximity to his mother, but he also senses the continuous tension in her body which is born of fear. When she walks, he is unsettled by her jerky movements, by the limp resulting from her leg injury, and his weak, forlorn cries go largely unnoticed. When they stop to breastfeed, there is very little milk and he is plagued by hunger, but he decides it is not worth screaming for something which is not there.

After three days of life on the road, the baby has reached its limit. Instead of resigning himself to the lack of milk, the baby starts to scream endlessly. Despite his mother's attempts to soothe him, the baby does not give up. He screams so loudly that his mother stops walking. It is only now that she realises that her foot is actually injured and she collapses in pain. When the next person passes, she implores him to tell her where she can find medical help. He takes pity on her and brings her to the nearest medical centre for treatment. The baby is given extra food and is glad to be off the road and in caring hands. As time passes, his mother improves in health and can give him the milk he has fought for. He has learnt not to give up. Soon he can run after the butterflies which so fascinate him. The knowledge that perseverance leads to success continues to motivate him in all spheres of life – not only as a toddler learning to walk, but as a child learning to write, and as a man following his own path. He is rarely afflicted by feelings of resignation as an adult. Whenever such feelings do arise, he acknowledges them as vestiges of his childhood experiences during the earthquake and is able to move forward with confidence and vigor, drawing a definite line between the past and the present.

Questions

Have you stopped asking for something because you think it is not there?

How often do you say "There's nothing I can do" or "That's the way life is"?

What role does resignation play in your life?

What tumultuous event in early childhood still affects your behavior today?

How many decisions affecting your life are made by other people?

Supposing you make all decisions, including the decision not to make one?

When did you last scream?

What will you say if you find your own 'voice' again and make it heard?

Which pattern of behavior was appropriate as a child but is no longer appropriate in your life as an adult?

What if everyone worldwide took their own needs seriously?