

Finding the Light

Deep Process Therapy 2001

Susan Peabody

Introduction

Since I got sober in Alcoholics Anonymous in 1982, I have kept a journal of philosophical and psychological ideas—because I cherish ideas. Once I looked up the word “intellectual” in the dictionary and it said: “An intellectual is someone who loves wisdom.” So I guess I am an intellectual.

In June of 2001, I returned to therapy because of some stress in my life. Since then I have been keeping a more personal journal that I decided in 2020 I would make available to those trying to make therapy work for them.

Please be advised that I am very honest about my feelings in this journal and less concerned about what others might think about what I have said.

My deep process work has begun. (This is an expression coined by Anne Schaef. It means getting into the deeper issues in therapy.) Therapists call this psycho dynamics. So it all begins. God be with me.



July 5, 2001

I began seeing Doctor Alan Swope during the summer of 2001. He is very insightful. He sees right through my denial. He is compassionate. He speaks the truth.

I think he was nervous (based on body language) about the fact that I told him I got crushes on my therapists. Within a few weeks he relaxed.

I am trying to keep the transference (feelings for him — erotic fondness) under control, but his kindness is very seductive.

July 18, 2020

Well, that did not take long. The transference has started. I am now in love with Dr. Swope which means he is a stand-in for my father who I wanted to have sex with.

I was ashamed to tell Dr. Swope about my sexual fantasies about him. When I finally confessed to him on the phone during an anxiety attack I was convinced he would not see me any more. All of my life the men I have loved were embarrassed by my affection.

Using transference to get into the deeper issues did not work out the first time I tried. When I told my therapist I loved him he seduced me. He paid me to give him blow jobs in his office and once we had sex in my home.

I am so shame-based about sex. I do not want my children to know that I even think about sex.

Dr. Swope said he would see me through the deep process work. I took this to mean he would not abandon me. He laid down some ground rules. I could not raise my voice too loudly when I cried because there were others sessions

going on in the building. He also said I needed to keep my eyes open. (I had taken my glasses off, looked away and closed my eyes.) And he said that I had to be honest. “Honesty,” he said, “was imperative.”

July 20, 2001

I have always known that I was attracted to men who reminded me of my father. I have always known that I was afraid of intimacy and got anxious when the opportunity arose. I have always wondered if I chose “unavailable” men to avoid intimacy. But what if I avoided intimacy because loving men brought up the incest taboo? That there was a unconscious link in my mind between attraction, love and incest? And what if I accepted incest as okay just a sub-conscious tool to embrace intimacy when and if I find someone is available?

July 25, 2001

I watched *The Power of Myth* today on public television. Wonderful!!!

“If you are on the
right path, invisible

hands will reach out
to help you.”
(Joseph Campbell)

Yes! I will write about this someday. The miracles in my life. Some are already in my journal.

Be careful in casting out your demons that you do not lose what is best in you. (Paraphrase from Nietzsche)

An example:

I have been a compulsive talker all my life. People (friends, teachers, etc.) have been telling me for a long time that I “talk too much.” So this was a demon I tried to extricate. Then I discovered teaching. Students loved it when I talked all day. I had important things to say that helped them. Suddenly, I was not talking to much. So the demon needed to be tamed not killed. If the demon (character defect or shortcoming) is out of control like a wild animal you just befriend him and tame him so he works with you not against you.

People don't stay away from you because of the "tiger" that is out of control. They don't abandon you. Also, the things in my head that came out as gushing talk (without the ability to listen as well) helped me become a good writer. Once channeled into writing, the non-stop talking in my head became a self-help book. So in dealing with the demon of compulsive talking I do not stop talking altogether and become the perfect listener (which people love) I now find the middle ground and talk/listen—dialogue rather than monologue—engage in conversation not *compulsive* talking. And I am grateful for the origin of the compulsive talking—the stream of consciousness that became my book and the class I took.

Another example:

I am codependent. This is my demon. But in dealing with this demon I don't want to lose what is best in me—my compassion, kindness, empathy, generosity, loyalty etc. So taming the codependency does not kill it completely.

August 14, 2001

Dream:

I was at a conference that I go to every year with Richard, my best friend from high school. We are to ride home together as we do every year. This year there is a woman in the car with us. She is a black woman. We stop at a small town so that I can use the bathroom. Richard drives off and leaves me there. He abandons me. I go to the police. I try to call Richard's mother so she can tell him to come back and get me. Then suddenly a co-worker (Jackie Blossom-Garcia) appears and offers to take me home.

Analysis:

Karl and I are trying to find ourselves outside of the relationship we have. Some people may call it cutting the apron strings. I think Richard in the dream was Karl. He was moving on to find his wife and leaving me behind. Jackie represented my future or how my work/career is going to fill the void of Karl's absence. The choice of Jackie to represent my future is interesting. We used to be adversaries. Now we get along. So she also represents the progress I have made in getting along with people and how this is going to make life worthwhile.

August 16, 2001

Dream:

Karl runs out of money and decides to sell drugs for a living. He goes to a drug dealer and has a hole carved into his teeth to hid the drugs while in transmit. It is very bloody. I feel as if he is mutilating himself. I wait out in the car. I am scared, impatient. I am late for school in the Berkeley hills. Another child is with me.

There are always babies and children in my dream. Sometimes I understand this and other times they are not. Dr. Swope and I are working on this. Babies are just a kind of icon that always appear.

I have always been afraid that if I did not give Karl money he would sell drugs. He use to threaten me with this. Then one day he confessed that he “could never do that to children.”

The “school in the Berkeley hills” refers to my job, my future, my *life*. It is on hold while I am still trying to help Karl.

He is making so much progress. I am so proud of how he has accepted the changes in our financial relationship.

Question:

Can you have a mild case of manic/depression. Sometimes my mind races and other times I am depressed, but the manic episodes are not out of control. Swope did not respond. I guess he didn't have an opinion.

Guilt:

Nancy called. I feel so guilty about putting some distance between her and me. She is so mired in her pain and does not want to seek therapy because when she tries she gets an attack of paralysis in the waiting room or in the middle of the session. But I need a break from the Stanton Clan (mom, Cheryl) and she lives with them. I love her. I often

wonder if I ever help her. She is so stubborn. She rarely heeds my advice. I am glad she did not die from the overdose. She is now at a day care center for adults. *I am so proud of her.* I hope this lasts awhile.

Confidential:

The degree of Nancy's guilt about the incest (paralysis in therapy) makes me wonder if she really did not know it was going on. I forgive her. I guess she needs to know that.

August 14, 2001

Rosie O'Donnell:

She said on television that there is a relationship between hyper sensitivity and depression. Others have a window, shade, curtain ,etc. (according to her therapist) to protect them. Depressed people don't. They take it all in—the empathy. Yes!!!! This was the pain Christ felt on the cross; the sins (pain) of the world. The nails were a piece of

cake. Reminds me of the Stark Trek episode of the “Empath.” This, I am sure, related to my codependency.

Good session today. Dr. Swope wants me to be more extemporaneous and not rely so much on my notes. I will *someday*.

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August 16, 2001

My sexual fantasies are about subservience. I am the handmaiden to the king. He is old; I am young and innocent. I guess this is normal for a "daddy's girl." It stems from covert incest. It can ruin your life.

What I am learning about myself in therapy:
Kindness is seductive; compassion is seductive;
intelligence is seductive; listening is
seductive—at least when you are lonely.

My rage at my mother helped me avoid feeling
my own guilt about being a bad mother. I
“screwed” my children as a dream I had once
violently show me. So being angry with mom
had a “payoff” as Dr. Swope puts it. This is the
essence of scapegoating, displacement, etc.

In the *Power of Myth*, Joseph Campbell
providing a missing piece of the puzzle. I
always knew that the male child had to leave the
hut of the women in the tribe and go live with
the men in the village, but Campbell reminded
me that before the new living arrangements
begin the boy is taken out and some kind of
pain is inflicted on him. Karl has to *suffer* to get
on with his life. This has given me the courage
to let go. I can do for him (a mother’s love or
codependent love—however you want to look at
it) what I cannot do for myself.

I need to put some distance between me and the
Stanton Clan. They don’t understand me and
that hurts. I keep trying to explain and they

don't get it. They want me to conform to the family system which was set up years ago. You forgive instantly and move on. You don't talk about the past. You don't reveal your childhood wounds. You do not ask for them to help you heal childhood wounds. You ask like nothing ever happened and when you fight you just forget about it.

Cheryl really hurt me with the following words (paraphrased): "I was having a nice, quiet afternoon and you call me with all of this 'stuff.' Why are you bothering me about your feelings about mom. What about you. If you want us to sympathize with you, you can start by apologizing to us for all of the outbursts you had at the family gatherings. I remember those camping trips . . ."

I don't mind her revealing her hurt about my tantrums over the years. What hurt was the "I am having a nice, quiet day and you are bothering me." Let me add that I have only once or twice in my lifetime reached out to my sister for comfort. NEVER AGAIN!!

Kathy's anger at Karl runs deep. But she is trying. I love her for it.

Therapy is really helping!!!!

August 18, 2001

I chaired an AA meeting to day. Afterwards people made comments on what I said. I realized that AA is the great equalizer. At every meeting there are always people who like what you say and those who don't. This is just like life.

When I spoke, I quoted a lot of people—Nietzsche, Campbell, Maslow, Berne. When David Richo did this in a class he taught at Cal Extensions, I was enthralled—I love it. At this AA meeting two people liked this, but another person said, “Only in Berkeley can you find someone who quotes people.” Another person said, “My boyfriend is an intellectual and I hate the fact that they feel they have to comment on everything.” I felt bad. We have a story in AA: If 20 people in the room like what you said and one person doesn't, all we remember is that one person.

Still, this new meeting at the YWCA on Bancroft has graduate students, professors and other “over-qualified staff” so I feel understood

and accepted here more than I did at El Cerrito Fellowship.

God really took care of me (invisible hands) by introducing me (through Kathy, a woman I sponsor) to this meeting (the noonie tooners). Not being able to get to the El Cerrito Fellowship (no car) was sad at first, but I realize now I have outgrown a fellowship-type meeting.

September 1, 2001

In therapy yesterday, Dr. Swope and I talked about focusing more on one subject at a time and seeing what kinds of feelings come up. The subject of compulsive talking also came up in relationship to one of my “demons.”

I thought about this all afternoon. I talked about it at an AA meeting. I decided that perhaps I had been gushing for weeks with Dr. Swope because (1) I wanted him to know me because I want so desperately to be “seen” (understood and cared for). (2) I wanted to shock him with how horrible my past was (old habit of mine to get attention; this needs exploring). (3) I was trying to avoid getting to some painful feelings. When painful feelings come up I get depressed.

I can tell when painful feelings are trying to come up because my throat constricts. Thursday night I had the following dream about Dr. Swope and I.

Dream: I came to our appointment. You were sitting at a conference table with two other therapists. I think they were both women. You posed the idea to me of trying a radical new therapy, since my condition was so serious. I think the new treatment was an experimental drug. I feel shy and self-conscious. I sit at your side and to feel at ease I lean slightly toward you. You don't seem to mind (although I think you might). Despite feeling shy, I like the attention I am getting. These people are really taking my problem *seriously* after all these years. The room looks like you and your colleagues had a party just before I arrived. There is cake on a counter.

The session is over. I agree to the radical new treatment. You and I go outside the building for a walk. You tell me that this new drug was actually discovered in the 40's and is just now being tried. After awhile we go into a bar. You ask the bartender where the C bus goes so I can get home. For some reason you and I are in an

unfamiliar neighborhood all of a sudden. *We* really don't know where we are. Still, I am so excited about being cured after all these years of therapy.

We leave the bar and walk through someone's back yard. It is full of bramble bushes. It is hard to get through the bushes. We get stuck and have to climb over things. Suddenly you say goodbye and leave me there. I feel sad and a little worried, but I am okay. It is getting dark so I break into someone's house to spend the night. The next day I sneak out of the house. A man outside with his son see me, but he leaves me alone (he does not report me for breaking into the house.) I start working my way home in the daylight. I'm kind of sad you left me.

Initial Analysis (feeling when waking up):
Issues of trust are coming up. I may be worried about abandonment a little, I am not sure. Maybe this is why I am avoiding exploring some things.

Secondary Analysis (while typing this): I am also worried, even at this early date, about the sadness I will feel when you and I go our separate ways—when the work we are doing is

finished. I realize (intellectually) that all relationships must end, but emotionally it still hurts. I may be worried about abandonment a little, I am not sure.

Final Comments: My depression came back after this dream. My manic episode was over and I had two more closets to clean.

September 5, 2001

When I ask for help and get turned down it triggers my wounded inner child. Is this because she has an insatiable, narcissistic need. Or does it remind me of something painful?

Example:

When I was around 10, I was so distressed about being teased at school for being fat. I begged my mother, on my knees with tears and sobs, to put me on a diet. I wanted her to be strong because she was my mother. I was weak. I wanted her strength. She had none. Her mother had tortured her about her weight. She saw it as kind to let me alone about it. She said, "It will happen when you are ready." This is not what I wanted to hear. Everything from that point on

(all the pain, all the bad decisions) stem from being fat and in my inner child's mind it is all mom's fault. So when I ask for help all this is triggered.

September 21, 2001

Karl called to say the Sterling needed to be towed from the shop. He wanted it fixed. I said he would have to fix it himself and store it in the meantime. He got angry. I got upset and had an anxiety attack, but I stuck to my guns.

I was reminded of the movie: "Days of Wine and Roses." (Jack Lemon and Lee Remick) It was not just about alcoholism, but about codependency. At times they were both addicts; at other times one was trying to get well and the other one was not.

The story of the Sterling . . .

Karl had some money in college to buy a car. Like me, at his age, he wanted a nice one. I used to spend my welfare money on a leather purse instead of a cheap one. He wanted to buy the Sterling. I tried to discourage him. I called some shops. They said it was a luxury car with some

problems. Bad year. Electrical problems. Hard to find parts. Hard to find mechanics to work on it. But I told Karl it was up to him.

Within a week the car was in the shop. Over the next few years we kept fixing it. Karl was in love with the car. I wanted to make him happy. I wanted him *mobile* because (1) it kept him happy and that made me happy; (2) it kept him out of my hair; (3) when he did not have a car he got hurt by his friends who would not help him; (4) I thought it would help him get and keep a job.

The transmission finally went out. Karl stored the car and tried to do without it. He was miserable. Finally, I could not take it anymore and I borrowed the money to fix it. It was down hill from there. Blown head gaskets, wiring, fuel pumps, hoses. Karl kept buying accessories in the junk yards to fix up the inside. After three accidents he fixed the front end each time. Mechanics hated the car. We had to go from one to the next until they got burned out. Then the transmission went out again. I had some money so I said let's get it fixed. Karl said forget it. He was *sober* at this point. But by now I was *hooked*. So, against Karl's will (we argued

about it) I made him let me fix the transmission for \$3,500. I bought a lifetime warranty for \$700. I am on a run now. I am in control. A week later the motor blows up. Karl goes to the junk yard and buys a motor. He has it installed for \$1,200. It doesn't work. I run out of money. I am finally finished, but now Karl is hooked again. He wants to fix it. I am now \$20,000 in credit card debt. This is what we fought about.

The Days of Wine and Sterlings . . .

September 25, 2001

Oprah is a prophet.

Repeating patterns of childhood. After watching her show I realized the following:

As a child, I escaped by going into my room to read. To this day I don't like to go outside to socialize.

My nest is so important to me. As a result problems with my noisy neighbors are so painful and get out of hand. I want it quiet like when I was growing up in a small day where you could hear the birds singing in the trees.

September 22, 2001

I had an argument with Monty last night. I asked him to help me with my website. He said he couldn't commit. I sent him an e-mail saying "You really hurt my feelings." He sent me an e-mail this morning. This is the e-mail dialogue we had.

From Monty:

For the time being I am going to ignore last night.

Your note here is sharp, but that is OK, because you are just expressing your need and making sure that I understand that this is important to you. It is urgent without being demanding or threatening. The Good Book warns about let our anger lead us into sin. In other words Anger or expressing our feelings is not sin. If it leads us to harm others or thing only of ourselves first that ..., well that is when we need Jesus and the Spirit.

Buying Dreamweaver and the Book is the best help I will ever be able to give you according to the expects that I turn to for Web ideas. I forgot

about the new computer you are using, could you please remind me what its and how much memory and hard drive space free?

In the next 2 months should be OK. I just can not commit to Sept or Oct times until after Labor Day. I am under serious stress at work and it takes me up to 3 hours a day in commute. I can review documents while I am commuting, if I am not the driver that day. After my day to day stuff I can put you on the top of the list for that time frame.

Can you leave the dog in the Lord's hands, I had to. By the way thank you for trying to get a hold of us as camp meeting. I did not know what to do and I asked the Lord for help. He answered buy giving Kathy the "What to do" and the time, but then she was over burden. He answered that prayer by bring in Valerie to talk on a night that I was at a meeting. Valerie help Kathy clean the house. Another answer came from Nana and Nancy, by them come in and doing a good chunk of the camp meeting laundry. The status on the dog is that it looks like nothing happen except now the complaining neighbors will be considered harassing neighbors and the dog is licensed for 3 years. I do not believe that the

Lord wanted anyone else to help but Kathy, I just had to leave it in his hands before He could take care of it.

Please let me know if this helps.

You can always express yourself with me. I may not agree; however, I still have had respect for you. Please do not try to control me, I can only give one response to that and it is "No".

Dear Monty:

Please save this for when you have some free time. You are too busy at work to carry on an e-mail dialogue with me at this time and this is really not that important in the scheme of things.

My reaction to your e-mail this morning on a "feeling" level is below. Logic does not apply and the facts are irrelevant when it comes to feelings. Feelings are perceptions, not facts. Feelings cannot be controlled. They pop up like flowers and weeds. The flowers you water and tend, the weeds you pull out and throw away. The only problem is that sometimes it is hard to tell the weeds from the flowers. And some people think flowers are weeds and weeds

are flowers. In the Oakland museum there is a sign that says “A weed is a flower whose potential has not yet been found.”

Your comments followed by my initial feeling reaction:

“For the time being...” Feels threatening. Next time you will really let me have it.

“I am going to ignore last night.” Feels patronizing.

“Your note here is sharp.” I said in my note, “You really hurt my feelings.” How awful that I might share how I feel. This is a sin in the Peabody Clan. I respect the fact that it “felt” sharp to you. I respect all feelings, rational or not.

“The Good Book” Feels like a lecture. Feels patronizing.

“Buying Dreamweaver ...” Feels good. Thanks for the advice.

“In the next 2 months...” Feels irrelevant. Never mind. You expressed your real feelings last night. I accept that.

“Serious stress at work ...” Feel sympathy. Will keep praying for you.

“Can ... dog ...” I feel guilty because I know you are right and I am being a nag. Feel gratitude you took him in.

“Please do not try to control me. . .” Feels like you missed my point and misunderstood my request.

Conclusion: Possible you do not like to come to my house for your own reasons and that is why you wanted to help me from your house. Possible that you work on computers all week and do not want to help me. Possible you do not really understand why you do not want to help me. My gut (feelings) say that it is not because you are too busy. You are busy, I agree, but when I say three hours with you in my home working on my future together would be a more meaningful birthday present to me than a whole day with the extended family in Concord, then your “I don't have time” argument fails. You

had reserved that whole day for me and I wanted to exchange it for something I wanted more. It was a good argument up to that time. But your reaction about how the party was more important because it was the whole family, triggered my narcissist inner child who wanted the day to be about me.

Having expressed my feelings, which is very therapeutic, let this be the end of it. I am aware that my family is very generous to me. You are a good father, husband, host, etc. and do a lot for me. Asking for something “specific” may be selfish and I am willing to concede that. On the other hand, asking for help is hard for me and when I am rejected it brings out a lot of pain. I will work this out with my therapist. I have to remind myself that you are not my therapist and cannot help me with my pain. If you want bread, you do not go to the hardware store. I just thought we had a rapport. I thought “Nobody understands me but Monty.” But last night I felt like you trivialized my needs and the symbolism attached. (Feeling not fact).

You have a lot on your shoulders. Just do the best you can and don't worry about me. I will take care of myself. I had a long talk with

myself in the mirror this morning. I will also take care of my inner child. This is what I teach and this is what I need to do. Have a good day. I LOVE YOU. THANK YOU FOR TAKING SUCH GOOD CARE OF MY DAUGHTER AND GRANDCHILDREN.

This note came at a time when I am waiting. I underline waiting, because it > is one of the stresses that is giving my stomach knots. I can respect feels and I am going to save your email because pieces of it are very well written. I think I need to respond to what I am afraid of. It would help both of us. I am not afraid of coming to your house for dinner or a talk or to watch some TV. I am afraid of going to anyone's house to help them fix a fence, put up Christmas stuff, or do computer stuff that is not within my expertise.

I do what I can to help anyway when the other options are not good. I do not think you understand what is involved in setting up a web page and how expensive people are who have even a little bit of skill. On the other hand with a little bit of study you could set up a good web page from your house for free. I have not set up a web page though I have done most of the

more complicate stuff you might need. If you do the basics, then I can add items that are needed to it. Yes I do need to come see your setup and verify that it should do the job. That can be done in an hour or so.

First you need to do the basics and I can help with that. You do need another opinion beside mine and that is what the book is for. The book does need to be of your own choosing after going over some possibilities in your favorite bookstore. Can you write out your purpose and plan for the web page?

This much more important than the doing. I believe this is what you need to do next. Include in this research of web sites that you like. Note what is included, how they flow from one point to the next, and URL. You might include things you do not like. Always observe color and spacing. A good web page is always laid out on paper first. I would like to review these as soon as you have them. I hope this helps. I am sorry about last night, I am not a professional like you, I am only a good listener when the subject is not about me.

Dear Monty,

Thanks for your note. I guess there has been a misunderstanding. A few years ago you and I were going to design a website called Wellsprings. At the time I thought you said, “I know how to create a website.” So after doing all of research (more to come) it all came down to installing dreamweaver and sitting in front of the monitor with a friend who knew a little bit more of the computer vocabulary than me.

So if the directions said “plug in your @#!&*\$” that person would know what that is. On the phone yesterday (while I was doing research) the DSL lady said “tower” and I said “What is that?” She said, “The computer (stupid implied).” She said “You need a modem.” I said “What is that?” She said in exasperation, “Let me connect you to our tech department.” All I kept hearing in my head was “I am stupid.” Shades of mom all over again. Anyway, I HAD NO IDEA that you didn't know how to build a website or I would have never asked you.

I don't ever ask people for something they can't give. It is just that when you said “I can't commit” you didn't mention “I really don't have

the expertise to meet your needs, but I love you and you are worth the time so I would have if I could have . . . “ Having not heard this I felt rejected. When I called to qualify last night (e-mail is better) my inner child came out when you kept saying you did not have time. So now that I understand the situation better and that you have feelings (fear of being overwhelmed, inadequate, embarrassed, disappointing someone, etc. [am I right?]) then that sheds a whole new light on everything.

I am not being rejected. WONDERFUL. By the way, I found a friend to help me. She knows what she is doing. The only down side is that she is dying of cancer and I have to get her over to my house before she leaves us (a little gallows humor). So I am fine. I LOVE YOU FOR GETTING HONEST WITH ME. THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE. HAVE A GOOD DAY.

September 25, 2001

I sent the following letter to my mom for closure . . .

Dear Mom,

I just wanted to drop you a line to tell you that I love you. As you know, it is difficult for me to say this in person. I don't think it really matters why. It is just one of those things.

The past few years I have been angry at you and it has occurred to me that you may think this means I don't love you. I do love you. And it also occurred to me that you may think that I have been angry about the past, especially my childhood. So, to clear up any misunderstandings, I want you to know that I am not angry about that. Perhaps it is presumptions to say I have forgiven you, because much of what happened was not even your fault.

I feel that you did the very best you could under the circumstances. You were abused by your brothers, you had a very controlling mother, you were denied your life's ambition to be a doctor, you married a depressed, withdrawn man still suffering from the affects of WWII and growing up in an alcoholic home. Despite all of this you tried your best to be a good mother and wife. And you succeeded. I will always be grateful for

the love and generosity you have shown me over the years.

The reason I have been angry at you for the past few years is because when I got into AA 19 years ago and began reading self-help books, I had a lot of questions about my early years and I did not feel you were willing to help me understand those years. When I explained this to my therapist, he said something interesting. He said, “She couldn’t do it.” I stopped dead in my tracks when I realized that he did not say “She wouldn’t do it.” He said she “couldn’t.” What a difference a word makes.

Your comments to me over the years (my perceptions not facts; you may not have used these exact words) about how the past was gone and talking about it can’t help, how talking about the past is painful, how you don’t *remember* the past, etc. etc. triggered in me the feeling that you were unwilling to help me solve the mystery of all my pain—the source of my depression, rage, etc. Now, with the help of my therapist, I realize that you did not willingly keep secrets from me—secrets that I thought would save my life. I have always known this intellectually, but my “inner child” needed to

know this. She is the part of me that retains the old pain, the old wounds. Wounds that sprang as much from being teased as a child at school as from anything going on at home.

I am not asking you at this point to dig into the past. I realize that your memory of the past is gone and that you cannot retrieve it even if you wanted to. The Lord will help me understand what I need to know. He will reveal it to me in his own time and in his own way.

Nancy mentioned that after my fight with Monty recently, that everyone thinks I am suicidal. I had to laugh at that. For one thing, I have always been suicidal so that is nothing new—not because of anything you did, but because of choices I made as an adult. Also, after all I have been through because of the mistakes I made, why would a fight with Monty push me over the edge.

Still, I appreciate my family's concern. So I just want you to know that I am fine. My therapist is really helping me, even if the depression might get worse before it gets better—no pain, no gain. So thank you for all you have done for me and please know that I really love you despite

all the outbursts and crazy things I do. The anger has always been just symptom of deep-seated pain and as I continue to place myself in the hands of my therapist and the Lord, I think the anger will begin to dissipate. Then maybe the family can stop suffering at my expense. I know I have tried to take you all hostage over the years and make you suffer without realizing how harmful it might be to you. Please understand that most of the outbursts were just a cry for help. They were always impulsive and I always regretted them afterward.

And as you know, what goes around comes around—now that I am on the receiving end of Karl's anger I know what you have gone through.

I wish I could promise to never hurt you again, but my feelings come and go with the tide and I can't really say that I will never be angry again. My goal is to deal with the anger in therapy and stop making you my scapegoat.

So let me end this by saying that I hope you can forgive me.

P.S. Remember that one can never be a perfectly Christ-like in this world and it is both egocentric and fruitless to try. We all have a “thorn in our flesh” [a shortcoming] and God meant it that way. It keeps us humble. All God asks of us is that we strive to move forward not backwards. Wherever we are on the path the moment we go home is fine with him. As I say in my book, “We are all perfectly imperfect.” Just to be standing in his light is enough for him. It may be hard to understand this if you grew up Catholic, but I believe this with all my heart. We are all the “prodigal son” and God rushes to greet us with open arms when we come home no matter what we did while we were away.

P.S. Could I ask a favor from you. Please do not call me about this. I find intimacy difficult. And it is enough for me that you have received this note. Someday we can talk about it, but not now. Please don't be offended by this request.

Love, Susan

October 5, 2001

Thoughts from Blanch Coffman Horan (my maternal grandmother) which may explain some of the stress in my life as a child.

[Question: *Was it stressful to visit my grandmother?*]

Letter to me from grandmother when I was around 14 years old.

“When your mother went to the hospital when Eddie was born — Grandmother Peabody [paternal grandmother] took Cheryl, your aunt took Nancy and your father put you on a plane to come to me. A very dear friend of mine who has died went to the airport with me to meet you. When you got in the car you said ‘Grandmother, I wet my panties. There was no bathroom on the airplane.’” [All of us kids wet our bed until we were about 10 years old. Also, the visits with grandmother were accompanied by enemas.]

[Question: *Could a 4 year old feel the pressure of being a stand-in for a dead son?*]

Letter from my grandmother to my mother when I was around 4 years old.

“I think we ought to arrange some how for Sue to visit for a few weeks this summer. She certainly will! That little angel just seems to be sent from heaven to fill my heart with gladness. You will think I am cracked when I say that in God’s good providence I believe he has put in that little child’s heart the balm of healing, because she is just the way Philip was as a baby. Everyone said, ‘He worships his mother.’”
[Philip was her son who died in World War II.]

[Question: Was it stressful to be grandmother’s favorite. I know it was stressful to the object of my father’s affection. Could my grandmother’s love for me have put a strain between my mother and me. Mom used to say, “You are just like your grandmother.]

Letter from my grandmother to my mother when I was around 4 years old:

“I told Alice [her daughter-in-law] when she was visiting me that you were so sweet to let me show a little partiality to Susan, because *you* said ‘I find everyone has her favorite among my

children so no one is slighted.’ Little Susan, as you can see, really has a special feeling for me. Tell her Grandmother Horan is coming home to see Susan.”

[Question: *Was it stressful to be a showpiece for grandmother?]*

Letter from my grandmother to my mother when I was about 6 years old:

“You will smile when you read this but I keep thinking how wonderful it will be to take Susan home with me when I come up for your birthday, but (this is what will amuse you), I didn’t like her hair curled in the Xmas picture. And when I have her over, I so want her to have that ‘Gretchen’ look with her straight hair. . . . And I thought ‘I wonder if that was a permanent in Susie’s hair.’ If it was, I must write Kathleen and ask her not to give her another one and to let it grow out, at least for *our visit* so she will have that little personality that is so naturally hers. You wouldn’t mind just the time I have her would you? I know it is not my business whether her hair is curled or not, but if you think I am crazy (which I probably am) just humor me this time. Now I have settled my

mind by unburdening myself on this momentous issues. I know it will give you and Don a terrible wrench to part with her even for a short time, but I do hope you won't back out in this suggestion YOU MADE TO ME! [Discuss later the issue of mothers bartering their children for their mother's affection—mom, grandmother and me; then mom, me and my daughter Kathy]”

[Question: *Was I being set up for a fall later? After being the object of such adoration is it difficult to be criticized so harshly?*]

The iron fist—letter to me when I was around 14 years old—the punch line.

“I will have to admit that I am heartsick to learn you have gained weight. I never enjoyed a visit so much as my last one in May when you were all eating scientifically and healthfully. You know how I watched that you ate like a hawk when you were visiting me.. Ah that wonderful, wonderful *four* weeks to me. I guess I should not have written you darling until I had taken more time to get over feelings as I do. Now darling, you sit down and write your grandmother a good long letter. See how much

weight you can lose in the 3 weeks before Grandmother comes for Christmas. When I was a little girl and learning to write, one teacher had us write ‘eat to live but not live to eat.’ With your wonderful mind, taste and judgment you will know and be glad to have Grandmother help you get on the right track. You know there is nothing in this world I would not do for my Susan—because I love yo—love you, love you and know you have such wonderful potential. But Susan darling—what future do you have with *boys* who all go for the slim girls. I want you to be popular as you get older so you will have a good time while you are studying and going to college and above all be healthy and popular with boys.

Everyone keeps talking about you darling—your lovely manners, your fine mind and very attractive personality. You had such a lovely figure. You can and will get it back and keep it. Ask mother to buy the dietetic food for you alone. Now don’t feel sad and hurt over this letter darling. We all get in the wrong tack from time to time. This is just a tiny thing, but very important. We will have some talks when we are together. Have you ever seen a picture of your mother with her lovely figure when she

was married? But I had to watch her weight. Now this letter is just for you—and of course mother—who will comfort you because you will be sad. But don't be sad. Be determined.



I had a stomach ache the whole time I typed this. I kind of went into shock and felt cold and clammy. I wanted to stop typing and I just screamed to myself: “Just finish it. You can finish it. Just finish this one part and you can take a break. You can do this. I know you can do this.”

The pain is not just about what happened to me. It is about the guilt I feel for doing the same thing to my daughter. God forgive me.

Epilogue

About a half hour after transcribing the letters above, I finished watching a movie. It is entitled *Before and After*, with Meryl Streep and Liam Neeson. It is about a family whose son kills a girl in the heat of anger. At first the family tries to cover it up. Then the mother decides the family can only be free if they confess. Then the

son sees it as the only answer as well. Finally the father agrees—reluctantly. The father and son serve time in jail. Then they are free to be a family again. This closing line is from the younger sister a few years after her brother is released from prison. “Sometimes I feel happy again. I wonder if that is allowed. But I guess you can’t keep happiness out of your life any more than you can troubles.”

I feel that God had sent this little message to soothe and comfort me—as he always does.

From I *Corinthians* 15:51

“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye . . . [and] then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory. Oh death, where is your sting? O’ Hades, where is your victory?’”

October 10, 2001

Intimacy: I am afraid and embarrassed by intimacy. I think it is because of the emotional/covert /erotic intimacy with my

father. He drew me into his loneliness and sadness and depression. It was too much for me at that age—too intense. It also got eroticized because it happened when I was experiencing the Oedipus dilemma. It was erotic for him as well. My mother told me he used to get an erection when he held me on his lap.

My Aunt Nancy said, when I asked her about it, the he couldn't wait for me to be born because mom was so wrapped up in the twins.

This all ended when my brother died. Then daddy just abandoned me. He retreated into the bottle (his alcoholism). I got very angry and stayed that way for years.

The discussion today in therapy was how this all affected me as I got older.

First of all, unrequited love, became the norm for me. Loving someone from afar who was not available.

Shame about sex developed. If I wanted to sleep with my daddy then *sex* is bad and more to the point, *I* am bad.

The great loves of my life that were so painful and almost destroyed me came next — David Strand, Barry Morgan, Gary Venden . . . the flame of desire.

Food, drinking, codependency to compensate.

Now it has to end. I hope therapy helps.

Incest/Shame: The root of all my pain.
(Covert/erotic incest is just as insidious as sexual incest—maybe more.

“And you shall know the truth. . . .” *Sometimes I get tired of this, but I cannot deny it.*

September 16, 2001

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Cast of Characters: The great loves of my life that were so painful and almost destroyed me came next—David Strand, Barry Morgan, Alan Swope . . . the flame of desire.

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sexual incest—maybe more.

“And you shall know the truth . . .” *Sometimes I
get tired of this, but I cannot deny it.*

P.S. I almost mailed the “cast of characters” to
Dr. Swope for his file. Then I realized that my
needy inner child was getting greedy and
wanted more of his time than was allotted.
Impatience is one of my demons and one that I
associate with my inner child. When the need
for instantaneous gratification is rearing its ugly
head I know I am in the “child ego state.” Put
another way, the kid is out again.
September 24, 2001

A few weeks ago, after a session with Dr.
Swope, I wanted to write him a letter. It was just
an urge that came up. I started to do it then I
realized that I was starting to do to Dr. Swope
what I had done to Barry—confess all of my
feelings of endearment—endlessly. Poor Barry.

So I resisted the urge and was proud of myself.

This morning the urge came back and I realized that it was Susie, my inner child, who wanted to write the letter to Dr. Swope. And since this was all in my head I thought it was safe to let her go ahead—as long as it was just a fantasy. (I hesitated, because I was frightened that she might be falling in love with Dr. Swope and I wanted to avoid this at all costs.)

In the fantasy, Susie was sitting in a overstuffed arm chair bending intently over a pad of paper. I looked over her shoulder. She had written “Dear Daddy, I love you.”

I was shocked. I started to cry.

It occurred to me that through transference (see Freud) I was projecting my feelings for my father on to Dr. Swope, and that perhaps I had never really grieved his death.

The question: Do I tell Dr. Swope.

September 25, 2001

Susie’s letter to Dr. Swope, “I love you Daddy”

→ Projection → Grieving Daddy → Karl

Transference is very painful . . .

September 28, 2001

I have been asking my inner child (Susie) why she does not want to grieve daddy's death—a question posed by Dr. Swope. The only thing she says is that “I don't' want to let him go.” So for a brief moment I got angry with her and she got upset and she said “I will try. As long as I have you. You are more important to me now. I love you mommy.” I patted her on the head. She was standing next to me and she wrapped her arms around me.

She is short so her arms came up to about my thighs. As I am writing this I bend down and hug her with all my might. “I love you,” I say. Then I take her by the hand and we walk down the road . . . I have to get back to work.

How do I grieve Daddy? Well if grief is the royal road to letting go, then I feel my feelings and then move on. If Dr. Swope is a stand in for my father then I let begin to see Dr. Swope as a doctor and not try to turn him into my father. Would this be a facsimile of letting go? I will think about this.

My inner child had the following to say on Saturday afternoon:

Why do you keep calling me Susie? My name is Gretchen. [Gretchen was my father's nickname for me.] I said "OK."

Then I remembered that Daddy used to call me Princess as well. So I said, "Can I call you Princess as well?" She said "No." [I think Princess is my spoiled, ego-centered inner child. You may have met her in passing. I don't know.]

Susan (yet to reveal her name) is the child filled with irrational rage. You haven't met her yet. When you said you thought I was trying to protect you from my anger, you were talking about her. To meet her you are going to have to be mean to me. But you have heard about her in relation to my mother. She is the one who keeps having those rage dreams (I think).

After this happened, I was overwhelmed with a feeling that this inner child work was getting out of hand—that I would be flooded by the inner child ego state and lose my adult personality that I have tried so hard to develop

in order to be a “mature” person. My anxiety this weekend is really off the charts.

The next day I began reading *The Drama of the Gifted Child* by Alice Miller. The operative word is “drama.” In her book Miller refers to what I am going through as “regression into childhood” and she says it is a necessary part of therapy. I guess I am somewhat relieved, but not really.

Miller has the following to say about therapy:

Experience has taught us that we have only one enduring weapon in our struggle against mental illness: the emotional discovery of the truth about the unique history of our childhood . . . In order to become whole we must try, in a long process, to discover our own personal truth, a truth that may cause pain before giving us a new sphere of freedom. If we choose instead to content ourselves with intellectual “wisdom” we will remain in the sphere of illusion and self-deception.

The damage done to us during our childhood cannot be undone, since we cannot change anything in our past. We can, however, change ourselves. We can repair ourselves and gain our lost integrity by choosing to look more closely at the knowledge that is stored inside our bodies and bringing this knowledge closer to our awareness. . . . (pg. 1)

As a result of reading Miller's book, we now have a new character in the drama of my life—the "false self"—yet to have a pet name. (Miller says the false self develops to please the mother.)



About the False Self versus the Authentic Self. The following happened before I read Miller's book so the analysis is in hindsight.

Last week, I was talking with Dr. Swope about getting past my fear of intimacy by accepting incest as okay. Then Dr. Swope said "So you will just re-write the rules." Dr. Swope is

always dropping these bombs in the most casual way. Anyway, his comment opened up another Pandora's box. (I think subconsciously I associate intimacy with incest because of my relationship with my father and that if I could just see the incest taboo as an outdated thing I could get around this.)

At first I was amused by his comment. Then a few days later I got ashamed. Trying to re-write the rules is so typical of me. I am always trying to do an end-run around the rules. I see this as my ego and my arrogance. It is also my way of trying to correct things I feel *powerless* to change. (I can't overcome my codependency and afford school, so I will just practice without a license.)

This Saturday I started thinking about all of this as I was lying in bed drinking my coffee. I wondered if being a teacher/counselor without a degree was trying to "change the rules." This brought to mind Gabby Kramer. Suddenly I started crying.

Gabby was a psychologist who I used to be friends with. She and I used to have lunch and I went to a party at her house. I was flattered to

be friends with her. I have always put educated people up on a pedestal. Partly because I admired my father so much for being a college graduate. He graduated from UCB in 1950 on the G.I. Bill. I was born while he was a student. But also, because this is my authentic self.

Once, when Gabby and I had lunch I said something to her and she jumped up and said “I have to phone my friend and tell her that.” I felt so proud that I had said something important.

I was seeing clients at the time whom I had met at the class I was teaching at Piedmont Adult School. Once I asked Gabby if she thought I was “breaking the rules” by charging money to see people without having a masters or PH.d? I had talked to a lawyer and he said it was legal as long as I did not present myself as a “licenced therapist.” The lawyer suggested I get a waiver. Still, I doubted my “right” to do this and I wanted Gabby’s opinion. She said she had no problem with it and, in her opinion, she thought I was good at it because I was so “intuitive.”

When my book came out Gabby admitted to me that she was jealous. I or she (I don’t remember) said “I will ghost write a book for you.” She

said “Great, I want to see my name in print.) I asked Gabby to prepare a rough draft so that I could edit it. Instead she wrote me a few lines of ideas and said she wanted me to do the rest. I told her she needed to do more if she wanted her name on the book. This project never worked out.

One day Gabby said she wanted to co-teach with me at Cal Extension. I told her that they would not let me teach because I did not have a Masters. I had already tried. She said she would put her name of the course and we would c-teach.

One day, Gabby asked me to co-teach a workshop. I arrived and we sat on the couch together. She taught the workshop and did not even introduce me. I said nothing throughout the evening. I felt humiliated by what appeared to be her rejection of me.

Finally, Gabby asked me to type her Ph.D. thesis. I agreed. I noticed as I was typing that she was having me take out block quotes and treat them as her words. I did not say anything. (Later one of her signers tried to withdraw her name when she realized what Gabby was doing.

Gabby was fighting this. I don't know how it turned out.)

There was a disagreement about payment. I was afraid she would not pay me so I asked for the money up front. (A good prostitute always gets her money up front.) She thought this was childish but she paid me. Finally, one day, she asked me for the disks. She said she had sent the book to another typist who had said that I was doing it all wrong. It really hurt my feelings.

Today Gabby trains interns at a clinic she set up.

(As I am typing this something is going on. I am crying onto my keyboard.

Analysis:

I am a kind of groupie around educated people. I love stopping the professors in the hall to chat. They are polite but hurry on. Some more than others. I secretly want to be their peer and complain all the time about how the law school is so divided between the staff and the professors.

I think I started crying about this because when I ran away from home and had the kids I blew my chance to get on a normal career track. (By this I mean right out of high school when you are young and have a lot of energy.) I left college to run away to San Francisco. I always thought I had the kids because I was lonely, but there were other contributing factors. I had a experience of prejudice that made me feel unqualified to have a career. I went for my first job interview and the woman took my application. Then she turned to a chart on the wall and said, "We have a weight requirement. When you weigh this much in relation to your height we can give you an interview." I didn't apply for another job for twenty years. When I got my first job twenty years later I kept thinking, "I thought they didn't hire fat secretaries." I also became aware of my feelings of not being good enough to have a career when I was going to college. I went to Laney College to please Dr. Steele. I agreed to take one class. I got an A in my most difficult course, so I stayed for 2 years. When it was time to transfer I wanted to go to Cal because that is where my father went. I assumed I would not get in.

Then one day I saw an advertisement about a program at Cal for disadvantaged students. (I was on AFDC [welfare] at the time.) I went for an interview to be accepted into the program. The woman was embarrassed when she saw me and said, “On the phone you sounded black. This program is for black students.” I was so disappointed. She said “Why don’t you just apply to Cal in the regular way.” “Can I do that?” I said. She asked, “What is your grade point average?” I said “4.0.” She just looked at me and sent me upstairs to apply. I got in. I graduated Phi Beta Kappa. I went on to get a teaching credential. When it was time to apply for jobs as a teacher for some strange reason I took a job as a secretary. I guess my false self was overriding my authentic self. (More about this later.)

As I write this I am sad about all of this. I am also sad because my codependency with Karl is still causing me to put off having a career. I want to change all of that.

P.S. The wall I feel between me and “professional, educated people” may be why in the “DREAM” Dr. Swope and his colleagues

looked like they had been having a party before I arrived.

Note to Dr. Swope: My admiration for educated men is why I was so hesitant to get back into therapy with a man. I was afraid my admiration would bring up feelings I did not want to deal with. I was also afraid that my inner child would transmute the feelings to romantic love like she did with Dr. Steele and that I would have to leave—go find another therapist because the feelings would be so painful and just another fiasco like the one with Barry. *However*, I am also open to the idea that all of this is just bringing up things that need to be discussed. I don't know. I just know my throat is constricted and it hurts badly. I feel like I am feeling sorry for myself and that makes me feel ashamed. (Thanks A.A.)

Addendum: In an article I read later called “Frequently Asked Questions About Psychoanalytic Therapy,” the author listed the question, “Do you have to fall in love with your doctor to get better?” I thought this was hysterical and God's way of putting me at ease. God does have a sense of humor.



Dream on Friday night (before I read Alice Miller's book):

I have had this dream before.

Part I: I am living in a huge apartment complex on the second floor. Each door of each apartment opens up to a large courtyard with two huge swimming pools. I live with Karl/Rudy (Karl's father) I do not know. Rudy [I think] leaves. While resting (in the dream) a flower in the apartment gives birth to a puppy. I think that this is unusual. I decide that I *have* to keep the puppy even though I really don't want the obligation.

Initial analysis (before reading Miller's book):

I am living with Rudy. The flower is me. As a flower, I give birth to Karl (a puppy—the dog metaphor [inferior, sexual, a slave to instinct] coupled with innocence, helplessness, etc.)

I am sad about this dream and I am not sure I understand it until I read Alice Miller book the next day. In *The Drama of the Gifted Child* she

discusses the tale of Narcissus who turns into a flower.

Narcissus wanted to be nothing but the beautiful youth. He totally denied his true self. In trying to be at one with the beautiful picture, he gave himself up—to death or, in Ovid’s version, to being changed into a *flower*. This death is the logical consequence of the fixation on the false self. It is not only the “beautiful,” “good” and pleasant feelings that make us really alive deepen our existence, and give us crucial insight, but often precisely the unacceptable and unadapted ones from which we would prefer to escape [Jung’s *shadow*]: helplessness, shame, envy, jealousy, confusion, rage, and grief. These feelings can be experienced in therapy. When they are understood, they open the door to our inner world which is much higher than the “beautiful countenance! . . . His passion for his false self makes it impossible [for Narcissus] not only [to love others] but also, despite all appearances, love for the one person who is fully entrusted to his care: himself. (p. 66)

This makes me think that in my dream the flower who gave birth to the puppy was my “false self.” This makes a lot of sense to me. I

was not really meant to be a mother. I have often felt this. But I thought having children would prove to the world that I was loved. Someone loved me enough to impregnate me. Also, the ideal woman grew up to get married and have children. I got this from my grandmother's letters and from my mother as a role-model. Also, I wanted to be like all the others girls in school (not a misfit). This meant having a boyfriend, getting married, and having children—even if this was not really me. I may also have wanted to be a wife and mother because my inner child wanted to be my father's wife. (See Freud.) So my grandmother, who ran away from home to go to college ends up a homemaker; she refuses to let my very intelligent mother become a doctor, and I let my feelings of inadequacy deter me from a career after I get my teaching credential—all because my authentic self is afraid to come out.

This all relates to my father as well. He got a college degree but he wanted to go on to get a degree in naval architecture. He decided not to get an advanced degree in order to support his family. He had four children by the time he graduated from Cal. She he lived an unauthentic life and was very depressed. Maybe this is what

he drank over. So I am repeating the pattern of my unfulfilled parents as is Kathy and Karl.

I find it interesting that I had the dream about being a flower before I read this passage. Does this make it an archetypal dream as Jung would say?

Part II: Suddenly the pools are full of animals. I have given them safe harbor. Then, one of the animals in the pool escapes and the landlord comes to ask me where these animals have come from. I say I have rescued them from another apartment complex.

Then all the animals run away and I go chasing them. Someone gives me a ride and that person turns out to be evil. I jump out of the car. A woman from the apartment complex comes to rescue me. She is accompanied by the apartment custodian who is a black man. We decide to go back to the apartment. I ask the black man why the flower gave birth to the puppy. He said that is very common and that it happens all the time.

Analysis: The animals in the swimming pool are all the troubled people in the world who are perceived as animals (inferior, misfits, etc.). I

am trying to save them and, vicariously, Karl. They run away. I run after them. (The reason I am not sure whether I am living with Karl or Rudy is because I still confuse the two. They are very much alike. Although Karl is also very much like me as well.)

I have always wanted to save the world. This may seem egocentric, but I know I can't do it. I have always just wanted to do my part. This is a Christian ideology. This is the A.A. philosophy. A.A. says 12-Step work will keep you sober. My first 10 years in A.A. I did prison ministry at San Quentin and Vacaville State Penitentiary. Before that I used to visit inmates (10 years) I always tried to turn it romantic (Larry and Cornell).

I even *bartered* Kathy do to it. Cornell at San Quentin said he wanted Kathy and Karl to be his children because he missed his own kids. I was instructed not come visit him without the kids. One day, another woman visitor told me that Kathy (who was 12) should not be sitting on Cornell's lap. I got angry at her. I kept visiting Cornell—even when he got married in prison. I went to meet his wife (at his instruction) and pretended that Kathy and Karl were his real

children. I can't believe I did that. Just before Cornell got out of prison he sent me a picture of himself and asked me to give it to her. I was shocked when I saw the picture. He was naked. I kind of came out of denial, I think. I stopped seeing him. For years, I thought I had thrown the picture away. Kathy told me recently that I put the picture in a box and that she later found it. My God! Why didn't I throw the picture away? Why did I forget (deny) that I had *not* thrown it away. I feel guilt, shame, anger at myself. As I type this I am getting nauseous. I tell myself it was just my disease (love addiction).

I wish I could believe that. I have often told my students not to confuse charity and romantic love. I wish I had been able to do this before my kids were scarred. I asked Karl if those visits scarred him. He said "No, I think they kept me out of prison." He knew from those visits that prison was not where he wanted to be. Despite Karl's attempt to reassure me, I put him in a very scary place and that may have helped him in one way, but also traumatized him.

Question: Does the "dog" metaphor have any sexual meaning?

* * *

I have been trapped by my past, my addictions and my depression. And I have dreamed about another life. From the bondage of sorrow, the captives dream dreams. Jim Manley, *The Spirit*. It is up to me to make some of these dreams come true. Do I have to sacrifice Karl to do it? That is up to him. I want to find a middle ground.

November 1, 2001

The commitment to honesty

What does Susie want from you?

Friendships as the middle ground between isolation and enmeshment

Why did Susie yell “no” when you asked if she wanted any friends a few months ago?

Conies says Susie may be afraid if I finish the therapy she will lose power, be diminished. Explore this. Less control over me? Be abandoned by me? Have to grow up? Have to make friends against her will?

November 26, 2001

It took me a few days to figure out the hidden agenda in the note I sent you. At first I thought I was writing the note because I had slipped into the role of acceptance. Acceptance is the great pacifier and I had finally accepted the limits on the relations. It was not going to be like my fantasy, it would going to be therapeutic plain and simple.

Later in the week I started thinking about the cryptic reference in the note to “games.” I began to see this as a Freudian Slip. Games, as Eric Berne describes them are interactions between two people in which they go back and forth between the role of “rescuer” “persecutor” and “victim.” Last week I was having a horrible anxiety attack and you tried to rescue me by reassuring me that you would not abandon me. This helped a lot, but it was not until you mentioned the pressure of being my last crutch did I instantly switch from the victim role to the role of rescuer. This is my strong suit and I was totally empowered by this. So I called you and told you that I was doing fine so you would not worry about me. The note was a follow up.

At the time I really needed this to get through the anxiety I was feeling, so I am glad it happened and considered it God-given. However, at the same time I realize that it is not good to play games with your therapist unless you talk about them.

I see the deepest kind of emotional pain as being inherently narcissistic and the by-product of self-absorption and self-pity. As the Bible says, there is a season for all things, and there is a time to set this aside. My question to you is (1) would exploring it be beneficial if it doesn't kill me and (2) will you feel pressured. If so, would it help to know that I do have a support network outside of therapy and that I may prefer your confidence, but can survive without it?

You said last week that you thought I was angry at you because you would not see me twice a week. I wasn't then, but later I realized that while I was not angry at you per se I am angry about the power men have over women, the power men have over me, the power that the object of desire has over the one doing the lover. It may or may not come out in session.

November 28 2001

Getting In Touch With Anger: The Tyranny of the Therapeutic Hour

It is 11:50 on Wednesday and I am angry. I am angry at my father. I am angry at the men I have known. I am angry at Dr. Swope. I am angry at myself.

The anger began when I realized the similarity between the thereapeutic hour and the times my father came into my bedroom. He was in charge. He had all the power. When he was finished he left. In therapy I am expected to get in touch with my feelings. I even agreed to give up my notes and be “spontaneous.” But there is a catch. It is called “times up.” So now, instead of my father leaving the room, I have to go. I am left frustrated. I turn to masturbation — sexual and emotional. I have imaginary conversations with Dr. Swope all day. I have sexual fantasies. I cry because I am so frustrated.

My old therapist, Dr. Steele, said masturbation was healthy and empowereing, but to me it is the loneliness act a human being can engage in.

I cry real tears every time I do it because deep down I want to connect with someone, not masturbate. Susie wants to get in touch with these painful feelings she is discovering with Dr. Swope because she thinks he is the only one who really understands these issues. And, right or wrong, she wants to do this when they come up, not just during the allotted time. But Susie and I have no power here. So the sadness has turned to anger. How the ego rebels against powerlessness. How the woman in me rebels against the power of men. But there are always the soothing tears: From my new book, *From the Bondage of Sorrow the Captives Dream Dreams*:

I never cried without shame until I met Susie. When my father died there were no tears because I wanted to be strong. But Susie taught me to let those tears stream down my face without shame. Then she applied for membership to the Scar Clan and she has found many friends there.

From *Women Who Run With the Wolves* by Clarissa Pinkola Estés.

Tears are a river that take you somewhere. Weeping creates a river around the boat that carries your soul life. Tears lift your boat off the rocks, off the dry ground, carrying it downriver to someplace new, someplace better. There are oceans of tears women have never cried, for they have been trained to carry mother's and father's secrets to the grave. A woman's crying has been considered quite dangerous, for it loosens the locks and bolts on the secrets she bears. But in truth, for the sake of a woman's wild soul, it is better to cry. For women, tears are the beginning of initiation into the Scar Clan, that timeless tribe of women of all colors, all nations, all languages, who down through the ages have lived through a great something, and yet who stood proud. (p. 374).

As I write this my throat hurts and I am crying.

The Letter

Writing the letter to Dr. Swope was complicated. On one level I was getting my power back. Dr. Swope says we should do all of our work in the therapeutic session. I rebelled and said I will reach out in between visits in a way that will go unnoticed. Unfortunately, Dr. Swope did notice. Busted!

The letter had a Freudian Slip. I said, “I thought we might play a game.” I realized later that “games” is the term Berne uses in his book, *The Games People Play*. So I asked myself “What game are we playing?”

In games two individuals vacillate between the roles of victim, persecutor and rescuer. At the beginning of our last session Dr. Swope began trying to rescue me (the victim) by reassuring me that he would not abandon me. I needed to hear that because I was in an emotional crisis. However, it was not totally successful and toward the end of the session Dr. Swope inadvertently said he was feeling pressured by the idea of being my “last crutch.” I realize now that this is just what I needed to hear to calm myself down because he was giving me the

opportunity to rescue him. This is my strong suit. This is where my power is. So I went back to work, feeling so much better, and left a message telling him that I was doing fine. The inference being, “Don’t worry. Have a great vacation.” Then I followed up with a letter outlining how I was now going to accept the limitations of our relationship—no sex. Then, without realizing it at the time, I began playing the games again by referring to Dr. Swope as Alan. I was trying to be his friend. Susie really had a field day with that letter. She absolutely refuses to see Dr. Swope as her “doctor.” We will have to keep working on this.

The Hera Complex

While Dr. Swope is right when he says I am sexualizing our relationship because I am more comfortable offering myself sexually to men because I lack confidence in my social skills, there is also another factor that I call the “Hera Complex.” Jean Bolen in *The Goddesses in Every Woman* writes about the Hera archetype. Hera was the wife of the Greek God Zeus. Women who have this archetype (personality type) like to be with powerful men. A variation on this for me and many other love addicts is

the desire to be with an “extra-ordinary man.” For *me*, this is the by-product of two things: (1) The covert/emotional incest with my father who was “extra-ordinary” to my 4-year old eyes; and (2) The deep-seated yearning to be with Christ who is the real Zeus. The Hera “archetype” becomes a “complex” when a woman gets caught up in this syndrom to her detriment. In other words, she won’t recognize it and she won’t give it up. She becomes obsessed with it. Or at least her inner child does. For me, Dr. Swope is a stand-in for the “extra-ordinary” man because he is intelligent, wise, experienced (30 years in the business), intuitive (like Christ who read the mind of the Samaritan woman at the well *John 4:14*) and compassionate. He is also a healer. All of these characteristics make up *my* version of the “extra-ordinary” man. In other words, Dr. Swope was a sitting duck. Only some of these characteristics resemble my father. Most of them are related to my love of Christ.

John 1:14 says “And the word became flesh.” To Susie, this is exactly what happened. The word became flesh in the form of Dr Swope. Now the question arises: Can we turn back the clock and reclaim Christ as a spiritual being

attainable only through the Holy Spirit? We will see.

Philosophical questions arise: Did the incest predispose me to the Hera complex and after this to becoming a lover of Christ. I don't know, but certainly Christ as a phantom lover is less painful than a crush on Dr. Swope. I read, *The Beast in the Jungle*, that Dr. Swope referred me to and while I don't want to live my life waiting for something to happen that is already happening or has happened, until someone special comes along, or I learn how to find someone special, Christ would be better than Dr. Swope. Also, maybe I can learn to love John — to give him a second chance as Dr. Swope has encouraged me to do with friends who let me down.

In the past few weeks I have seen all this intellectually, but I have failed to withstand the emotional pull to love someone like Dr. Swope. Susie has just had her way with me. But I am not finished with her yet.

Addendum:

As I finish this I am not angry anymore. Writing is very therapeutic for me.

Future topics:

Pushing Dr. Swope away so he is the one rejecting me.

How my anger is spilling over into my work and unraveling all the progress I have made.

Freudian Slip on bus: From Susie to Dr. Swope: If he really loved me he would listen carefully (in reference to reading this).

November 30, 2001

I sent my doctor an article I had written that was recently published on the web. It had a brief cover note. I wanted to (1) share the article; (2) reassure him that I was okay since in our last session he said he felt “pressured” and (3) reach out to him between visits since we did not have a session on Thanksgiving. (This last motive was an anxiety reducer for me and it got me through a horrible 2 weeks.)

Susan wrote:

I am sorry that I sent you that journal entry the other day. That was over the top. Still, if you want me to stop asking you questions you are going to have to be blunt. I can take it — I think

When I arrived at my session yesterday my doctor returned the letter unopened. He wanted to discuss it but I was too shocked and embarrassed and needed time to reflect. His position is (I think) that (1) we should only work together in the office, and (2) he wants to discuss everything in person because he thinks I hide behind letters. While this is true, I was still hurt. I am a writer. I told him early on that when I give someone something I have written it is a gift.

And my inner child did not want the gift returned so it could be analyzed. She just wanted him to open it. So while I will accept his boundaries and what I call the “tyranny” of the therapeutic hour my other therapists had no problems accepting my little offerings. I should have picked up on how he kind of missed the fact that I was a writer looking for validation when he returned the copy of the book I had

written. My former therapist accepted the gift and put it in his bookcase. I knew he didn't have time to read it but that was a nice compromise. Is it just me? Oor is this guy too rigid? Take care.

Neil wrote:

Hi! I appreciated you sharing the journal entries very much. The Este quote was delightful too. You are phenomenally bright and creative and a keen observer. Notwithstanding those wonderful assets, we must embrace the humility of Freud when he said “The only problem with self-analysis is the counter transference!!

Our lenses unconsciously may filter out some “realities” that are anxiety-laden. The therapy to which you are committed sounds to me like it is in full-force. Obviously this therapy situation is different than others you have experienced and that is good, since the others may have left some stones unturned which you now sincerely want to address. Trust is the issue for all of us. Trust your therapist; it sounds like he is trustworthy. Who knows? What he did might be a key at this point in the process?

Be good and we'll get together soon. Love,
Neil

Susan wrote:

You are brilliant and a good friend. Yes! his refusal was an important key. He was like Judas. He betrayed my inner child, but he played right into God's hands. What he did was meant to happen. It took the edge off a painful infatuation because my "ideal" man reads what I write. And I have to stop confusing my ideal man with my therapist. Also, my therapist and I can continue to talk about:

1. My loneliness and my endless search for my "soul mate" (who does not exist — see Henry James, *The Beast in the Jungle*).
2. How I hide behind my writing.
3. My *impatience* when I want to reach out to someone.
4. *Boundaries*, etc. etc.

Thanks your great input. Take care.

Cut from the original:

From Neil: Unfortunately for me, and for others, “feeling better” right away is not always correlated with “getting my head together” (i.e., preventing future repetitive pain) and I must be patient and trust. I have I always found the kernels of my “stuff” in the things I have taken for granted about myself (e.g., my competencies and assets). I was fearful if I looked I would have to give up these positive parts of myself. That is not the case — just remove the little “splinter” neurotic stuff.

December 5, 2001

When I left Dr. Swope’s office I was angry at myself for putting myself in danger back in the 60’s and traumatizing myself so that now I live in fear of the night. It is painful. That is why I let Karl have the car. Deep down I just wanted an excuse to stay home and sleep. I told myself that Karl really needed the car. The part of me that pushes Karl away knew that if Karl had a car he would not bother me or whine about not having a car. I also told myself that he needed a car to go to work because he hates the busses and Bart. But my inner child had a hidden

agenda. She is the one who just wanted to stay home. This did not become apparent until someone offered me a car for free and I turned it down.

I got so afraid. But losing my car led to the end of my teaching and a downward spiral emotionally. I began moving away from my authentic self—the teacher. Giving the car to Karl also brought contempt from my students. I did not have the sense to lie. At first I said the car was in the garage. Then I said I could not afford to fix it. When I admitted (because I felt guilty about lying) that I had given it to Karl, I got that look from people. I knew I was being judged negatively. One woman said she did not want to work with me because of my codependency with Karl. Anyway, it was all meant to be. It got me to therapy and I am really getting so much from that.

I have come to understand that Karl is having a hard time letting go of me as a *provider* not just because he is lazy (which he is) although he is also depressed and manic like me. But Karl also associates love with being provided for. When he was a child I provided for him. The welfare check came in and I took care of all his physical

needs. At night when wanted me to sing him a lullaby I made excuses. I used to wonder why. I still don't know. Fear of intimacy? My mother used to sing me lullabies. Anyway, I have been taking care of Karl and pushing him away for 31 years. He is a bit confused emotionally. Still, I have to begin behavior modification eventually. I have to wean him so can find what he never got and still can't get from me. My eyes don't light up when he walks into the room. He knows I give him money to get rid of him. We have discussed it.

December 10, 2001

The morning after my session with Dr. Swope my inner child (Susie) started worrying that Dr. Swope was angry at her. She said, "You know he got angry when you called what you were doing with him soul searching. You were trivializing the work you are doing by calling it that. You know people only have contempt for spiritual talk. Just like you used to: remember?" I told Susie that I did not think Dr. Swope was angry at her and that this was all in her imagination. Then I tried to explain that it didn't matter anyway. It didn't matter if he was angry or not. Susie kept at it. It was a struggle to deal

with her. She nagged me to death. Then she tried another tack. She said “You know he is not very interested in your writing.” So I said, “That’s okay. He is not my editor, he is my therapist.”

So then she tried again. She said, “He really wants you to stop reading those notes and be spontaneous.” I said to her, “He may have his own preferences, but he really is quite willing to let me continue exploring the way I am most comfortable.” So at this point she lost it and began yelling at me “Don’t you understand, he doesn’t care about you and your stupid book because you are *bad*. You are a *bad* girl. You slept with your dad or at least you wanted to. You break the rules all the time. You’re fat, and you feel sorry for yourself all the time.” I started to cry. I started to write this down in a vain attempt to switch from emotional to thinking. Still, I kept crying. I could not escape the shame I felt from my “inner critic.”

Analysis:

I think my inner child is projecting on to Dr. Swope again. Susie must have worried a lot about what her Daddy thought of her—whether

he loved her or not. Dr. Swope is a mystery because he is a therapist and boundaries are a crucial part of the therapeutic process, but because of this he is like my dad. My dad was a mystery to me. He was quiet and introverted. He never expressed his feelings for me. He never said he loved me. I have always assumed he loved me because everyone tells me how much he loved me. I wonder if Susie *felt* that love?

December 12, 2001

Addendum:

Lately, *thinking* as a defense mechanism is not working as well. So I have tried harder to think more and this had triggered my mania. Eating is not helping either—or television. I guess that is why I thought once or twice about taking a drink or to cut myself. But I love AA so much and love it more powerful for me than giving into the pain of wanting to drink. I have a high tolerance for physical pain like the urge to drink and a low tolerance for emotional pain like having my friends in AA disappointed in me. I always say, “Nail me to the cross, but don’t hurt my feelings.” And I am not going to cut myself. I have enough scars.

Addendum:

I said a prayer and it helped. The prayer was just a “Keep me strong Lord. I need you right now.” I felt reassured and I got a idea for a new book. My little gift from God.

December 13, 2001

I was on the bus fantasizing about what it would be like to have a romantic relationship with a man. As I got to the part of the day dream in which this imaginary man and I were going to make love I felt this overwhelming shame. To compensate I want to please the man by doing something that he likes so that he doesn't care that I am over weight, or I want to become some beautiful, slender woman so he will enjoy being with me.

Then I had the following conversation with Susie.

I say to Susie, “I am so tired of the shame. I am so tired of the shame.” Susie is sitting on the curb looking up at me. After I speak she gets sad and looks away in embarrassment at how his mother is carrying on. Then she starts crying

because she feels how unhappy and am and it makes here feel unsafe that I am having these feelings. She would prefer that I be strong. She comes to me nd gives me a hug. She like to put here arms around me. She only comes up to my thighs. I bend down to holdher. I tell her everything is going to be okay. She signs and keeps holding me.

After this I think, again, about dieting. My pattern over the last few years has been to decide to lose weight and get off my meds which stimulate my appetite. Then I do fine for awhile and finally go nuts from being off my meds. So I get back on the meds and keep trying. Then to sabotoge myself, I remember that even when I was slender in 1983 I was not attractive because I had been heavy for too long. I remember my boyfriend at the time insisting we make love while I am dressed because he says I look so sexy in my clothes. When I remember this I give up on the diet and go back to eating whatever I want. I think the problem of shame goes deeper than can be solved with dieting. I think it also has to do with my father and the prostitution.

December 15, 2001

The movie *Driving in Cars With Boys* brought up some important issues like what the child feels like when mom announces to the world in a book that she never got to go to college because she had a son to support. In the movie, she blames her drug-addicted husband, but the boy feels like he is the problem and that he was a mistake.

At the end of the movie they have a great scene in which the boy meets his drug-addicted father. Poor Karl. He has done so well putting that into perspective. But it has to be hard on him.

The movie also depicts the emotional incest that occurs when a single woman raises a son. He feels responsible for her and has a hard time moving on. He may also grow up to be a “rescuer.” This is strong in Karl even though he believes (and maybe he is right) that he is just being a good Christian.

December 18, 2001

Imaginary conversation with Dr. Swope:

“You said something very important last week. You said Freudian slips happen when you are *ready*. Well I had this great revelation this weekend. The question now is whether or not there is any value in talking about it. Is it enough to solve the mystery? And since you are partly involved, are you the one to talk to?”

Another conversation:

“Dr. Swope: Do you believe in the enlightened witness? If the answer is ‘yes’ should I discuss this with you since you are involved, or shall I find someone else? I am so tired of the shame. Part of me thinks I just have to live with it. That it will never go away. The other part of me wants to talk about it in therapy as a last ditch effort to dissipate it. I do not mean to question your skills as a therapist, but I feel I need to ask your permission to talk about these things because they have come to life through the transference and so you are involved. I know you are a professional, but I don’t want to embarrass you, and I am starting to wonder if there is some deeper shame behind the cutting than just the covert incest and the prostitution. I am wondering if the transference is God’s way

of trying to bring the light that I wanted to sleep with my father.”

Sobs . . . I have to stop. . . . I feel lightheaded. Like I am going to faint. I want to cut. I want to die. Please God help me.

This weekend, I was having sexual fantasies about Dr. Swope. On Sunday afternoon I started watching a movie about incest about a mother and a son, “To Close to Home.” So then I wondered if the sexual fantasies I was having were transference and that this man was standing in for my dad.

Then I started fantasizing about telling Dr. Swope. In the middle of telling him about all of this I threw a pillow at him and thought about getting up and hitting, slapping him and choking him. Then suddenly I turned into a little child. I got in his lap and he rocked me back and forth in his arms and comforted me. Then he started fondling me and I jumped out of his lap and ran across the room. I stood there as a child looking at him both wanting him and hating him. Then I went back to him and we made love. I am still a child, about six. Afterwards, I walk back across the room again.

About this time I tried to stop this fantasy. I think about drinking to stop it. Then I picture taking a gun and shooting my father who is now sitting in the chair instead of this man. I also shoot Susie. I get up off of the couch as an adult and go over and look at the bodies. I walk out of the door and decide to never come back. I want to go back but I keep walking down the street toward my job. Then I turn around and go back. The fantasy begins all over again.

So I seem to have a love/hate relationship with my father that is very distressing and painful. I have never before gotten in touch with my anger at him, except when he left my mother. This is the very first time I am been angry with him about this.

God has made me desire you so that I realized I have needs. In an earlier session I remember saying I was dead.

My comment about you thinking you would be a bad therapist if I criticized you. That is me. I am bad when I am criticized.

December 19, 2001

I was living in an old huge house with 25 or so family members. They were supposed to be helping get all dressed up for halloween as a witch. They started helping me put on my makeup but they made to progress. They it was revealed that I was not going to be allowed to go out of the house. I was angry. I kept trying to get out of the house.

Someone looked out the window and saw that the world was about to explode. Two people in the house went downtown and decided to blow up one of the buildings to act as a fire break. I was supposed to help but I ran away stealing the other person's baby. I got away from the building before it exploded but I felt guilty. Then I wandered around looking for an escape. I ended up roller coaster car in healthy clinic. I was in the first seat and it rolled right up to a nurse who about to treat the baby and tell me how to take care of her. Then I woke up!

February 1, 2001

Dream #1

I was talking with Dr. Swope. Kathy was sitting on my left. She was about 8 years old. Karl was on my right. He was around 7. He had that beautiful soft, long, curly hair he had as a baby. Dr. Swope came over and tried to cut his hair. Then he lay down on a bed next to us. I looked at him, but all I could see was one part of his body. I think it was his feet, but memory fails me.

Analysis:

I think the cutting of Karl's hair was about my idea of going into therapy so Dr. Swope could help me with my codependency — my weak boundaries with Karl. Cutting "Samson's" hair would be symbolic of this. The rest of my dream was just about my wish to get closer to Dr. Swope and know (see) more about him.

Dream #2.

I am a Chinese girl (around 12 years old) sitting in a restaurant with my mother and father who are also Chinese. I am reading a book and I notice that a man at another table is also reading

a book. I am attracted to him because we both love books. Another man sits down with him and I realize that he is not available.

My mother asks me to do something. I refuse. I pour food all over her. My father gets angry and I get scared. I run away and he chases me. I am afraid he is going to beat me. He catches up with me and I start crying. Then he forgives me and holds me. He tells me that if I am not a good girl he is in danger from gangsters.

Analysis:

Dr. Swope may be the man with the book. We have a lot in common but he is unavailable as a friend or lover because he is my therapist. Of course, I always refused to obey my mother. I was always angry and rebellious. My father may have wanted me to obey mom, but he may have been afraid of me because he did not want me to tell anyone he was fondling me.

Dream #3

All the people in the world were gone except two small tribes. There was a mystical quality to the world. I wandered away from my tribe and

went to the other tribe because a man there wanted to make love to me. The man was Ravi at work. (He is from India and is very dark with black straight hair. I had talked to him earlier in the day.) This man was a shaman in his group. I was drawn to him but very surprised that he was interested in me. I kept thinking: Why does he want to make love to me?

We had intercourse several times. It was very erotic and pleasurable. We seemed to be levitating off of the ground and we were out in nature. Afterwards I noticed several religious artifacts lying around. I could not identify them. He then had to go back to his tribe.

I went back to my tribe and found a young woman still in camp. The others had left. We went looking for the others in the tribe who had gone on to some mystical place. We were happy and holding hands as we skipped down the road singing “We are off to see the wizard” from *The Wizard of Oz*. Off in the distance was a huge drive-in movie screen. We were laughing like school girls. I said to her with a giggle, “Maybe we will find some great sex.”

[I met Sandra a few months later and we fell in love.]

Dream #4

My father came home drunk. He was wearing a tuxedo. We were going to have intercourse. The police knocked on the door. They had been following him because he was driving drunk. He began to cry. I was scared they were going to arrest him. One of my professors at work was in the room. One of the policemen took me aside. I was sitting on the floor. He knelt down and said in a very nice, tender way, "I used to really love your dad. I have been following him for a long time." I said to the policeman, "He won't give me enough time to kick in." They decided not to arrest him.

Dream #5

I was in the hospital giving birth to my third baby. My son-in-law, Monty, and some of my family were there. My sister Cheryl was mad at my mother. Mom was going to take an old bed out of storage and use it. But when she found the bed it smelled like shit. So she wanted to buy a new one and Cheryl did not want her to. But

mom was determined to buy a new bed and haul it in the house herself if she had to.

Suddenly I realize that my second baby, who I had given birth to years ago, was missing. Monty and I started looking for the baby everywhere. We realized the baby had been gone for years and we had not noticed. We looked in closets and storage rooms. Monty said he may have put him somewhere to keep him quiet and then forgotten where he put him. In the dream I am in a panic. I feel so guilty for forgetting my baby.

Analysis:

If this “baby” is Karl, I have to remember that he is not a baby anymore. If the “baby” is me, then I have to find her and take her out of the

Dear Alan,

Since sex is out of the question, I thought we might play a game. In this game you are the therapist and I am the patient.

Once upon a time I learned that when one looks too intently for the gift they wanted, they forget to open the gift they have been given.

I wrote the enclosed article to get an old resentment off my chest? Interestingly enough, a magazine liked it enough to print it online. Writers do love validation.

See ya,

P.S. Susie made me write this letter. She has a lot to learn about patience— “The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” *Matthew 26:41*

Food stopped working. *The pain from the shame and my health problems became worse than the pleasure of overeating.*

My story . . .

Willingness to stay abstinent one day at a time from God.

The tools help for short periods of time. But when those deep-seated cravings overwhelm me it takes an act of God to stop me.

How do I keep the willingness coming? I pray for it. I work for it. I tough out the bad times, but basically I don't know why God keeps giving me the willingness.

My suspicion is that he loves me and he know that I need this willingness more than I need anything else to hold on to the good things that abstinence brings—self-esteem, a feeling of well-being and better health.

December 1, 2011

A friend of mine said to me once while driving home from a 12-Step meeting, “I hate the Lord’s Prayer.” “Why?” I asked. “It is too religious,” she said. It doesn’t belong in 12-Step programs.” I didn’t say anything. I understood, and accepted, what she said intellectually, but, emotionally, I was quite sad. Since then, I have thought a lot about it and here are my thoughts. Whether people like it or not, all 12-Step programs stem from Alcoholics Anonymous, and AA’s roots are deeply embedded in religion. It sprang from a religious organization called the Oxford Movement. What we have today, in the form of hundreds of 12-Step programs, is the flower of AA. It is beautiful

and brings beauty into the world. But if we cut the flower off from its roots, no matter how beautiful it is for awhile, it will eventually wither and die. So, in my opinion, rather than cut religion out of 12-Step programs, we simply incorporate all different kinds of religion into this movement. Because for every person who is offended by the mention of religion in a 12-Step meeting, there is someone who hurt and offended by the prejudice against it.

The Solution: *“There is a solution. Almost none of us liked the self-searching, the leveling of our pride, the confession of shortcomings which the process [of recovery] requires for its successful consummation. But we saw that it really worked in others, and we had come to believe in the hopelessness and futility of life as we had been living it . . . [Therefore . . . there was nothing left for us but to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our feet . . . The great fact is just this, and nothing less: That we have had deep and effective spiritual experiences which have revolutionized our whole attitude toward life, toward our fellow and toward God’s universe. The central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has entered into our hearts and lies in a*

way which is indeed miraculous. He has commenced to accomplish those things for us which we could never do by ourselves.” Page 25 of “There is a Solution” in the book of *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

December 31, 2001

Writers like to collect things and then re-arrange them in a book. I collect musings from my journal. I wrote this twenty years ago to my mother. In looking at it again, I can see I also wrote in myself. Finding it was quite timely considering what I am discussing in therapy with Dr. Swope.

Universal Woman

Wife of my father,
Mother of my body:
Life is full of the seed
That grows in the light of your love.

Daughter of woman,
Mother of woman:
You are the link
Between past and future.

Woman alone,
Woman among many:
Seek out the truth
Of your own identity.

Child of God,
Sister of mankind:
Let not your mourning body
Deter you from your quest.

Nameless soul,
Wandering in a timeless maze:
Be not afraid
Of your new beginnings.

Universal woman,
Smiled upon by all:
Your wounds will be healed
And you will stride proudly forth.

Addendum

I only kept a journal for most of 2001, but my deep process work took about 5 years. During this time I fell in love and married Sandra Patrick, my mother died, I discovered how the covert incest with my father damaged me for life, I lost one hundred pounds, and I wrote the

book, *The Art of Changing*. I highly recommend deep process work to understand yourself better and to find the courage to change.

Susan Peabody