

A LionHearted Spiritual Path Edition

A person is silhouetted against a bright sunset, standing on a rocky mountain peak. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the scene. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue, with some clouds. The mountains are dark and rugged, with some snow or light-colored rock visible on the peaks. The overall mood is contemplative and majestic.

Between Heaven
and
A Hard Place

A Divine Paradox

Dr. Stew Bittman



LionHearted Publishing,[®] Inc.
P.O. Box 618
Zephyr Cove, NV 89448-0618
888-546-6478

Email us at admin@LionHearted.com

Visit our web site at www.LionHearted.com

Cover design: M.A. Heathman

Copyright © 2004 by Stew Bittman, DC

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, except for excerpts used for reviews, without permission in writing from the publisher. For information contact LionHearted Publishing, Inc.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2004109326

ISBN: 1-57343-061-7

Printed in the U.S.A.

To Hillary and Ari



Acknowledgements

To my many teachers, including Dr. Jim Parker (may he rest in peace), Dr. Dick Santo, Dr. Cecil Collins, Dr. Reggie Gold, Dr. John Demartini, Dr. Dean Black, and especially, Dr. Jim Sigafoose: my deepest gratitude for your wisdom and your willingness to share it.

To my chiropractic family: my sincerest appreciation for your support and for your passion.

To my many practice folks over the years: my undying regards for putting up with me and for all the blessings you *brot* me.

To my birth family: my humblest thanks for your unconditional love and for your great humor in helping to shape my life and my gifts.

To my wife, Hillary, and my daughter, Arielle: my grandest love for your patience *thru* this process, for your help with it, and, most of all, for the sweetness, joy, and light you both bring into my world.

Introduction

I recently read *thru* my first book and the words are only vaguely familiar. They make me laugh and cry and sometimes cringe. I notice I am just beginning to truly live and experience some of the things I wrote about so confidently years ago. I suppose I was writing by faith, not by sight. I'm happy to be catching up. Undoubtedly, I'll be saying the same things about this book someday.

That being said, a word or four of caution before we proceed. There is little contained herein that could be described as progressing in a linear or even logical manner. The same can be said, however, about my life. Also, *tho* I take great pride in the fact that I am rather proficient in the lost art of spelling, you may notice—as spell check certainly did—I misspell words like “thought” and “brought” *thru-out* the book. I have followed the example of B.J. Palmer, the Developer of Chiropractic, and removed the “ugh” from these words.

Speaking of “ugh,” the word “Schmootz” which literally means “dirt” in Yiddish, has been substituted for the word “shit” in my vernacular.

Finally, while much of what you read is not “serious” and may often border on nonsense and near blasphemy, please keep in mind that nearly every word came from a place within me that is as real as I get. It's a place that represents my highest truth. *I have dedicated my life to uncovering this place that lies within all of us and represents our refuge, our safe haven, from*

*I have
dedicated my life
to uncovering
this place that
lies within all of
us and represents
our refuge, our
safe haven, from
the storms of
illusion that our
minds create.
When you and I
are in that place,
we are indeed
one. Finding that
place and then
living from that
place are the
most important
things we can
ever do, for
ourselves and for
the world.*

the storms of illusion that our minds create. When you and I are in that place, we are indeed one. Finding that place and then living from that place are the most important things we can ever do, for ourselves and for the world.

This book is a travelogue of my ongoing journey from a hard place to my heart. I offer my journey to Spirit as a gift. I hope that by witnessing my struggles to become whole, you will allow yourself the same permission. As I share my attempts to obliterate my ego, and ultimately to make peace with it *thru* laughter and tears, sense and nonsense, may you find the freedom to love all your pieces.

Thank you for joining me,

Stew Bittman

Chapter <0: (Less than “0”)

Somewhere Between Paradoxes?

*“He may look like an idiot and talk like an idiot,
but don’t let that fool you. He really is an idiot.”*

Groucho Marx

So where am I now?

My mind, my ego, and my programming, which I generally refer to collectively as the “*Schmootz Brigade*,” all have their own opinions. They have me bouncing somewhere between focusing on my chiropractic practice and traveling, speaking, writing, and teaching. Somewhere between here and there. Somewhere between being and doing. Somewhere between yesterday and tomorrow. Somewhere between heaven and earth. Somewhere between clinging to the last shreds of the illusion of control and surrendering. Somewhere between serving me and serving God. Somewhere between despair and hope, between anger and hysterical laughter, between confusion and clarity, as I observe the world and its apparent clueless-ness and chaos.

At times the *Schmootz Brigade* has me furtively roaming, without compass or watch, reckless of my bearings, yet absolutely captured in space and time. It ceaselessly beckons to lead me astray, pulling the wool over this moment’s eyes, hoping I don’t notice. It wants to keep me swimming in the quicksand of paradox.



*If we
acknowledge that
our choices
determine not
only our lives,
but the state of
the planet as
well, then it is
time to reflect on
how well we are
doing.*

There's a line in a Woody Allen movie, *Sleeper* I believe, in which Woody claims that everything our mothers told us was good for us is actually bad. He includes as examples the sun, milk, red meat and college. There's a ton of truth in there. And it's not that our mothers were wrong or had hurtful intentions. They simply shared with us the prevalent thinking of the time.

And the prevalent thinking of yesterday is a major source of humor today. Why is that? Why does the prevalent thinking change so rapidly and so often?

When I was a kid, the diet plate in restaurants consisted of a hamburger without the roll, a mound of cottage cheese, and a bowl of canned peaches in heavy syrup. Then, for many years, it was the roll and none of the other stuff. Now, the hamburger and the cottage cheese are finding their ways back onto diet plates around the globe. What's going on? Have our nutritional needs changed that much in the past 45 years? Or has something else changed? Which is true?

Nowhere else is this phenomenon more evident than in the realm of health and healthcare, where I tend to hang out most of the time. Breast-feeding is good. Nope, it's bad. Well... maybe it's not so bad after all. Circumcision? Was good for some, then good for all, now maybe not so good? In the past, when some kid on the block got the measles, the parents would get all

the kids together for a measles party. Now, that's crazy. Let's put the kid in isolation. Better yet, let's make sure he or she *never* gets the measles by inoculating with measles vaccine. Maybe if we sterilized the universe we would never get sick! Hmmm? And then there's the disease of the month club. The popularity of rheumatism gave way to hypoglycemia, then candidiasis, and currently fibromyalgia. "Alternative" care, which for thousands of years was considered to be mainstream, is becoming mainstream again. Have these bodies and the best ways to take care of them changed that much? Or has something else changed? Which is true?

Our reliance on the current idea of "truth" becomes the basis for many, if not all, of our choices. *If we acknowledge that our choices determine not only our lives, but the state of the planet as well, then it is time to reflect on how well we are doing.* If the truth, as promised, will set us free, why are so many of us not free? Why is there so much suffering; so much hate, so much disease, so much disharmony, so much war? Is the problem not enough money or science or technology? Are we suffering from a lack of truth?

Reflecting on my own life, I would definitely say I suffered from a lack of truth. The prevalent thinking was always my truth. I was extremely well versed in it, and yet I always suspected there was something extremely important missing. My brain, by society's standards, was as good as anyone's, and the truth continued to simultaneously beckon and elude me.

Indeed, what is truth? Is it something for science to decide? Can the truth be determined with our minds? Is the truth, according to my mind, true for you as well? Is there any such thing as a fact? As I have explored my spirituality, the answers to these questions have bounced around like a Mexican jumping bean. There have been times of the utmost clarity and of the utmost confusion.

As my principled path brings me into another year, I notice that the things I see along the path, even the path itself, become

*Love
has been my
metal detector as
I've tiptoed thru
the minefields of
paradox
encountered on
the journey from
my head to my
heart.*

*I can choose to
see the
arbitrary nature
of the material
world...
and rely more
and more on the
spiritual world.
On things that
are real...
chiropractic,
friendship,
love, God.
And my
connection to
God,
in chiropractic
what we call
"Innate
Intelligence."*

less and less concrete. What is real? More and more the answer that comes is, "not much."

Everything in our society is so arbitrary!

The New Year's holiday was another reminder. Our beautiful green planet takes another trip around the sun, starting from and returning to some arbitrary spot in space, and we celebrate a new year. We argued over the "real" first day of the new millennium, while a billion or so Chinese didn't even think it was the first day of the year. My life revolves around things like a three-meal day, a seven-day week, a twelve-month year. My 40th birthday was somehow more important than my 43rd. All arbitrary!

The arbitrary-osity of things led me to look the word up in the dictionary, and Mr. Webster says, "left to one's discretion; regulated by one's own judgment or choice."

Most of my life I have chosen to accept all the countless myths fabricated out of someone else's judgment or choice, accepted by sufficient numbers of other people to become the deceptively real framework of my day-to-day existence. I became trapped in an illusionary structure of my own creation. I felt safe and secure in this fun house of cards and called it the "material" world, even *tho* it's all as arbitrary as which way to face the toilet paper—of course we all know it's supposed to face in.

Thru it all I have been confronted with paradoxes!

My brain whines and reels, seemingly blown in every direction by the paradoxes that it conjures up. It offers no solace, nor instructions for reconciling the paradoxes. It just keeps adding to the list, like an endless train careening off the tracks of my old belief systems and programming.

These paradoxes provide me with the raw materials I need to become increasingly grounded in Spirit. They force me to realize I can never reconcile them *thru* my intellect. They challenge me to open my heart. They empower me to see a bigger picture—to rest in the balance and perfection that always exists and is always manifesting—to look past the duality, past the good and bad, past the illusion, and find love.

Love has been my metal detector as I've tiptoed thru the minefields of paradox encountered on the journey from my head to my heart.

Regulated by my own judgment or choice, *I can choose to see the arbitrary nature of the material world, which includes the Schmootz Brigade, and I can rely more and more on the spiritual world. On things that are real. Things like chiropractic, friendship, love, God. And my connection to God, in chiropractic what we call "Innate Intelligence."*

The more I focus on these things, the better person I become, the better chiropractor I become, the more successful and aware I become.

Focusing on these things, I can awaken to the fact that my eyes and ears and brain generally deceive me. I can watch from a still and silent space, even when my brain and body are joining in mischievous and often downright ugly pranks with my ego. I can then take the illusion they represent and shake it by the scruff of its neck.

I realize that only some electrochemical activity in my brain is keeping me separate from everything I see and don't see, all of which is truly part of me. I can see arbitrary beliefs and filters are keeping me trapped in a trance; and in that trance I manifest all the expectations and attachments and jealousies

*With love there
are
no paradoxes.*

*With love
I am finding my
truth.*

*And so will the
world...
and we will all
be set free.*

*Neither
truth
nor facts
can be
considered
absolute.*

*Both are very
much relative
to common
experience,
consensus,
personal
perceptions,
belief systems,
cultural factors
and a host of
other things.*

and attacks and defenses that discolor my life and create all my suffering. I can even choose to change my electrochemical activity to align with the perfection that always exists in each moment.

I can and I do, sometimes.

With love there are no paradoxes. With love I am finding my truth. And so will the world... and we will all be set free.

So where am I now, really? I'll let you be the judge.



Chapter 0:

Becoming Zero To Impact Millions?

*“Baravelli, you’ve got the brain of a four-year-old boy,
and I bet he was glad to get rid of it.”*

Groucho Marx

“Paradox,” according to that oft’ quoted Webster guy, is: *a statement that seems contradictory, unbelievable, or absurd but that may actually be true in fact; or something inconsistent with common experience.* Interesting. A long time ago somebody knew that things outside the realm of common experience could actually be true in fact. Even that phrase “true in fact” seems redundant, as if truth could possibly not be factual, or facts could possibly not be true. In fact, is anything absolutely true?

In my years on a spiritual path, I began to learn that *neither truth nor facts can be considered absolute. Both are very much relative to common experience, consensus, personal perceptions, belief systems, cultural factors and a host of other things.* This is often forgotten. So when you don’t agree with my “truth,” that creates an apparent separation between you and I. Since you’re obviously wrong, I am therefore justified in my attempts to convince you, to manipulate you, to judge you, to hate you, even to kill you, since I have the truth on my side. In this way, the belief in the absoluteness of truth and facts has indeed led to all kinds of suffering, hatred, and war. *In many ways, man’s inhumanity to man can be traced to an incredibly strong desire*

*In many ways,
man's
inhumanity to
man can be
traced to an
incredibly strong
desire we all
share to be right.*

*I strive to
reconcile the first
and foremost
paradox
in my
experience:
being less to
become more.*

*How is it
that the less
I become,
the more
I influence
others?*

*I spend
less time in
judging good
and bad,
and more time
in awe.*

we all share to be right.

What if we WERE all right? Or all wrong? Scientists tell us that we are aware of far less than 1% of all the energies bombarding our senses in any moment. From this incredibly narrow perspective, the brain puts together its version of "reality." Having done this, it then vehemently defends its position, using this defense as another bit of evidence of our separation from everyone and everything else. Some of us learn to attack in our defense; others to become so pliant that we agree with everything in order to avoid confrontation (that would include me); while still others simply enjoy arguing. Most of us come from a place of separation and learn strategies to manipulate our worlds as much as possible so they conform to our limited perspectives.

All this judgment and manipulation and limitation keeps us so busy, we don't even realize all the things we're missing. Things like love, joy, peace, abundance, harmony, and wisdom; things that are built into the heart and are extremely difficult to experience when we seek them outside of ourselves.

My goal has been to move from my head to my heart. To open my heart wide and bask in the glow of the glorious gifts contained therein, and to share them with the world. *I strive to reconcile the first and foremost paradox in my experience: being less to become more.* I borrowed this

one... When asked if he desired to become the president of India, Mahatma Gandhi replied, "I want to be zero. And I want my actions to affect millions of people." Definitely a paradox there.

How is it that the less I become, the more I influence others? What did Jesus mean when he reminded us that "of himself, he could do nothing?" I think Gandhi and Jesus were talking about the same thing. Of themselves, they could do nothing, and when they removed themselves from the equation, they changed the world.

When I become less, by relegating the *Schmootz Brigade* to lesser status, I allow more of Spirit's perfection in and out. I am closer to True Present Time, and therefore closer to expressing the perfection that I am in essence. My movie is then closer to the Creator's Idea. *I spend less time in judging good and bad, and more time in awe.* I express my gifts and my mission, closer to my maximum potential, and closer to Divine design.

The Innate Intelligence within me, which I refer to as "Innate," not only knows how to run my physiology, performing and coordinating 600,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 things in every second, It knows how to run my life! According to chiropractic philosophy, *Innate is the personification of Universal Intelligence, or God. It is my connection to All. It knows how to run my life from a place of wholeness, love and service, with the biggest of pictures in mind.* I don't know how to do that. I'm generally too busy running away from the present moment to run much of anything.

I believe there's a plan for everything in this Universe, and apparently I'm in it, so that includes me. And you, too. I don't think it's the kind of plan that's etched in stone; but somehow the whole thing is rigged so that everything works. 98% of the atoms that comprise my physical body are replaced in one year. New ones arrive *thru* my consumption of Twinkies, and other than the occasional emergence of a new gray hair, it still looks like me! Seems like a plan to me! My Innate converts Twinkies

Innate is the personification of Universal Intelligence, or God. It is my connection to All. It knows how to run my life from a place of wholeness, love and service, with the biggest of pictures in mind.

Only in those decreasingly rare moments when I am able to sit back and relax fully knowing this uni-verse is indeed one song and I am simply an indispensable note, do I become zero—my mind is in time out, and I feel the connection. I feel the plan. And I feel my impact.

into me! It nearly triggers an acid flashback when I really ponder the conspiracy that goes on in our behalf. The intricacy and interconnected-ness of the dance in which all of creation is engaged is truly mind-boggling.

Just to consider the workings of my own body or even a single cell in my body is humbling to my puffed-up little mind. That doesn't stop it from thinking it can do better, of course. This is one of the most dangerous hallucinations that brains conjure. Sure, I can't rub my belly and pat my head at the same time, but not only can I do better than this body, I can do better than whatever it is that keeps an entire universe in balance and harmony. Uh-huh. *Only in those decreasingly rare moments when I am able to sit back and relax fully knowing this uni-verse is indeed one song and I am simply an indispensable note, do I become zero—my mind is in time out, and I feel the connection. I feel the plan. And I feel my impact.*

I have experienced this most vividly while doing chiropractic missions in Central America. My wife Hillary, my daughter Ari, and I have participated in six missions: four in Panama, one in Costa Rica, and one in the Dominican Republic.

Since chiropractic is simply removing interference to the expression of the plan in anything with a spine, we delivered that gift to people with whom we couldn't converse, people to whom we couldn't

have an attachment, people of whom we couldn't have an expectation, and people from whom we didn't desire to receive anything. Deprived of all that usual brain food, and not having any time to think anyway, we were forced to open our hearts and deliver our gifts, just for the sake of giving, loving and serving. And the response was enormous every time.

The third time we went to Panama, 147 chiropractors adjusted over 300,000 people in six days. Miracles abounded; people got out of wheel chairs, hearing was restored, the nation's crime rate went down! Many of us had the crystal clear experience of being used by God, undoubtedly because we became zero. We became, as the great Native American, Black Elk, urged us to become, "clean hollow bones" for God to express *thru*. And when that happens, whether in Panama or in our everyday lives, miracles follow. I want more!



It's been gray and rainy in these parts, which in a way has been a nice break from the yards of snow we were getting before winter's official arrival. It's been nice, too, especially as the holiday season has wound down, because it has given us the excuse to stay inside a bit more—it's difficult to *not feel guilty* while ignoring my dog's plaintive face when the sun is shining. We don't get too much of what I call jigsaw puzzle weather.

We've had time to sit with our intentions and goals and promotions for the New Year. We've been playing a lot with one of Ari's holiday gifts—I always get her the stuff I liked when I was a kid! And we're recovering from all that fun and relaxation we just endured in Hawaii. Our trip was perfect. *Thru* the realization it *brot* (no "ughs" this year!) of the importance of friendship, I've been gifted with another wonderful piece.

Do you know what I mean? Lately, life seems to come in pieces, like a jigsaw puzzle. Every experience, every person,

*Every single
piece is part of
the big picture,
and it definitely
fits in
somewhere...
as more pieces
come together, it
gets easier to fit
new ones in.
I rarely look
at the pieces
of my life that
way. I should.
I would suffer
far less.*

*What if our first
thought concerning
any event is that
it is a piece, not
good or bad,
and that it fits
somewhere as
part of the
perfect whole?*

every issue, every voice within me, every moment, is a piece. And God has the box with the big picture on it, while all my senses provide are the pieces. From one or two pieces—or two million for that matter—my brain generally thinks it knows the whole picture, I'd do really well on that old TV show "Concentration." In life it doesn't work as well. My assumptions and analyses and judgments are based on far less than the big picture, causing nothing but trouble; and yet on I go thinking I have all the pieces. I don't.

We've done lots of jigsaw puzzles, and I've noticed that some of the pieces invariably end up on the floor or stuck in the corners of the box. Some we never find. Among the ones we do, some are always easy to find and for others we hunt for hours. And some always seem to go directly where they fit, and others we try to force into where they don't really go. Some contain clear images of part of the picture, and others appear to contain no new information until they are placed within the framework of others. I never look at a piece of a jigsaw puzzle and throw it away, or bury it, or react emotionally to it, or get attached to it. Sometimes I have to put one aside temporarily and see where it fits later. Yet, I never feel guilty about doing that; nor do I worry about it not fitting. I realize *every single piece is part of the big picture, and it definitely fits in somewhere.* And I also realize *that as*

more pieces come together, it gets easier to fit new ones in.

I rarely look at the pieces of my life that way. I should. I would suffer far less.

When I do a jigsaw puzzle, I've found it works best to look at the whole picture first and THEN see how an individual piece fits. Usually in life we create an imaginary big picture from a single piece! That's what these brains do best. Invariably my imaginary big picture is different from yours. How could it not be? Yet, I assume yours should be the same as mine. AND I'll even defend mine, try to get you to change yours, and get pissed off if you don't! I expend loads of energy attempting to manipulate every piece I encounter into my private hallucination. Due to the sheer futility of this endeavor I experience moments of utter despair, raging anger and stark loneliness. Man, I'm nuts.

Does any of this sound familiar to you?

For me, the only answer to this madness is the spiritual life. What would life be like if we considered all its many pieces against a framework of the big picture? The big picture of wholeness and connection and love? The big picture of Innate? Of God? *What if our first thought concerning any event is that it is a piece, not good or bad, and that it fits somewhere as part of the perfect whole? Beyond that, what if we realize we actually created or attracted this very piece in order to realize more of that whole? What if our every thought and action is toward the whole and not the piece, toward connection and not separation, toward love and not fear?* One of my teachers used to tell us to "act with love, react with faith." My greatest mentor, Dr. Jim Sigafoose, reminds us to "walk by faith, not by sight." Aren't they saying the same thing?

Does any of this apply to chiropractic?

First of all, what doesn't? Every day in my office, I am confronted with pieces. Symptoms, questions, histories, opinions, personalities, procedures, etc. I was trained to assemble, from this soup of pieces, big pictures called diagnoses and treatment plans

*What if we
realize we
actually created
or attracted this
very piece in
order to realize
more of that
whole?*

*What if
our every thought
and action is
toward the whole
and not the
piece, toward
connection and
not separation,
toward love and
not fear?*

*It requires
faith... every
time my focus
and intent are
on the big
picture, the
world heals.*

and prognoses and reports and the like. Yet, true chiropractic philosophy dictates a more jigsaw puzzle way of looking at things. Start with the big picture (Innate Intelligence as a personification of Universal Intelligence or God) and see where the pieces fit within that framework. It's all perfect. I don't have to change a piece, or fix it, or mask it, I simply have to remove interference to allow that piece to fit more easily and beautifully into the whole.

This is ultimately the purpose of chiropractic, and it gives me countless opportunities to work toward becoming zero. This is harder to do. *It requires faith.* It requires me to forget my programmed tendencies. *But every time my focus and intent are on the big picture, the world heals.* All the pieces simply bring me peace. Peace.



ON THE PATH

*On the path, I am never alone
My doubts tag along
Old that patterns cling like burrs
My ego beckons me to turn back*

*"Things were so nice before," it mutters
"Everyone liked you"
"No rejection; no waves did you make"
"You submitted to all my commands"*

*So what if my life had no meaning?
No purpose or mission
No message to share with the world
No impact on a blessed soul?*

*It was comfortable, I recall
To sleep thru life
Floating along in tune with the echoes
Of the world's transient allures*

*Alas, my eyes have been opened
And it's too late
To ever return to the sleep walk
That was my life as a victim*

*Ego may sing its sweet lullabies
Or resort to old tricks
Like moaning "who cares"
While it gets me to beat myself up*

*If I allow this, the suffering mounts
And I fret and whine
Since I ought to know better, and
Awareness becomes the booby prize*

*But I've learned to jump from the boat
And remember my connection
To Spirit and to all of creation
And rest in the arms of Perfection*

*When I remember, my vision is clear
The fears subside
The voices dissipate like morning's mist
Revealing my true and highest path*

*So thru all the seeming chaos
The roller coaster of thots
The endless detours and distractions
I serve my mission with joy and faith*

*On the path, I am never alone
Innate is with me
And Its love resounds thru
This awesome deal I call my life*



*When in my
head, generally,
every chance of
growth or
connection is
rained out.*

Poetry dwells just below the surface of *thot*, and with our spiritual hammer, ax and pick, perhaps we can unearth a few gems.

Then we can mark them way up above retail while we're raping the earth with our rapacious rapacious-ness, all the while whistling our happy tunes upon the starboard side of the hill, where, of course, the grass is greener and way more expensive. Does it rattle your little nerves to see the plight of indigenous swallows that can never return to San Juan Capistrano without a note from their mothers? Or are you so cold that the mere sight of you could freeze the smile off the Pieta? Whoa there, Millie, don't be blaspheming; the Lord waits for slip-ups and then sends them to be reupholstered by the genius of fabric himself—Barney Rubble.

I look behind the appearance and there I may find absolutely nothing, Good God y'all, except the truth! And then I have a choice: submit for polygraph analysis or change my thinking.

What evil awaits those that turn their egos to the sun? At the worst, Ego might get a really bad

sunburn, and have to wear a T-shirt when it goes swimming. How demeaning! That would really be bad for its ego, for sure, but really good for you and me and for the world! I can slide head first into each moment and if I have to knock the crap out of the fielder at the base, never mind, he's just *"pretty and witty and gay."*

A committee should be organized to analyze me, and wouldn't that be a kick in the groin for all concerned?

Why do I ever think? It just gets in the way of all this subterranean genius that lies bubbling beneath the surface of my little peewee brain that is otherwise concerned exclusively with eat this and smoke that and I'm right and you're wrong and I'm better than him and she's better than me. What a crock of crock-pots!

To think for one moment

That thinking for one moment

Even begins to compare with

Not thinking in this moment

Is the height of thinking in the moment, if you ask me—

Which you didn't,

But if you're looking for privacy,

Write your own book.

Leaves leave and senses leave and folks leave

And we'll leave when we're damn good & ready

—so there.

Rough and ready and all that rot.

Theodore Roosevelt led the charge,

But James Watt couldn't hold the charge.

So the rest of us get charged way more

Than is allowable

"except void where prohibited by law."

Oh well. I'm not sure if that's poetry, but at least it didn't come from my head. *When in my head, generally, every chance of growth or connection is rained out.* We'll play a doubleheader

*Innate is
my third base
coach and it
waves me home
every time. No
losses, no
shutouts, no
putouts, only
assists.*

tomorrow and it'll do the same thing.

It's mind-boggling. The mind boggles, it bobbles, it screws up royally, it falls asleep on the job. It creates havoc and pain and suffering, and the insurance companies won't even reimburse you for it. And yet I still tune in to it as if it were God. My-my. No matter how many times I've seen the miracles and the natural rightness of allowing myself to be directed by Innate, the *Schmootz Brigade* still tends to jump in with its tall tales of woe. It slings fastball after fastball of sh-t and often I sit there and take third strikes. But more and more I swing away and sometimes even ignore what's being thrown and simply run around the bases stealing Ego's signals. *Innate is my third base coach and it waves me home every time. No losses, no shutouts, no putouts, only assists.* And I stand in the batter's box of life with my pen and my heart on my sleeve and I easily and effortlessly hit home runs over the walls of illusion and doubt.

My mind really and obviously bugs me sometimes. Why can't it just enjoy each moment? Where is this mechanism that causes it to worry, fret and feel guilty? Where is the switch to turn it off?

The switch is in my heart. It opens and a floodtide of love and awareness calms the surging seas of my mind, like a gentle wind pushing out a storm. The storm always lurks, but it has no power if I don't recognize it. I'm always working to

disempower my surging mind, since it is usually dead wrong.

Dead wrong, that's an interesting expression. Well, it's nice to be wrong and alive, and even nicer to be wrong and loving. I can see the need-to-be-right hitchhiking along the byways of my brain that are becoming less and less traveled. I can see it now... pulling up its pant leg in an attempt to look more attractive, continually bypassed by my new choices. It's beautiful out there on those long deserted stretches, and now I can enjoy the scenery, instead of flowing rapidly down the stream in my dream without even the awareness to scream. Ice cream, get your tootsie-footsie! Get your tootsies off the couch! Don't you know company is coming and the plastic has to look transparent so we can pretend it's not there despite the obvious sensation of melting plastic you feel under your behind? Dead wrong.

Yes, indeed, now I'm watching ever attentively. And I forgive myself. Disempowerment is not where it's at. Where it's at is on the inside: the core—my heart. Innate sings *thru* it like one of those old megaphones. And that song echoes *thru* the recesses of time and space, reverberating in each cell and in each atom of my being, and then out into the ethers to the realm of All. All was never our favorite detergent, but All is all there is, if you catch my drift (otherwise I'd be worried about you). I feel Innate rising up. It's coming like the cavalry without the drama and the bugles. And hopefully, without John Wayne, too.

Maybe I'm doing all right. I give myself an A-minus and my ego an Incomplete for being so incomplete in its awareness of the big picture. Ego, you are a classic underachiever and a major source of disappointment. "Dis" appointment just for you or for your entire family? How does 3:00 on Friday work for you?

Yes, I am doing all right, in my humble opinion, and part of that all-right-ness is that I consider my opinion to be humble. Dr. Stew, it is our humble opinion that you've done a good job with your life. We're happy with you, happy for you, and happy

*Whenever
I give my power
away to outside
influences,
especially when
I play the victim
of those
influences,
I lose some of the
true Power that
Innate provides
to manifest the
life of my
dreams.*

being you. Thank you, Stew. Thank you, Innate, and thank you, God, for creating Stew and allowing him to grow and develop and co-create—and procreate for that matter (we can't forget that one now, can we?).

Life is wonderful. I float on wings of truth and connection, merrily reminding myself that life is but a dream, and yet while I stay awake it has a very real impact on all. All's well that ends well? Nah, all's well, period. It doesn't end. It just flows, directionless and forever, onward and upward and downward and backward, in and *thru*, around, everywhere and always.



I've known some people who were heavily into astrology. That worked for them, of course; but you could never count on them for anything when Mercury was in retrograde motion.

Somehow, I hate the idea of being controlled by distant rocks, as if I was a puppet on a string. I certainly acknowledge the fact that we are subject to many energies and influences from the outside. And yet every Twinkie atom in my body resonates with the belief that we are one with the Creator, and therefore, limitlessly able to exert tremendous power in our lives based on our energy, our intent, our focus, and our love. It's an inside job!

Another paradox goes whizzing around

my cortical neurons like a really nauseating roller coaster. Invariably it ends up at the same place: *whenever I give my power away to outside influences, especially when I play the victim of those influences, I lose some of the true Power that Innate provides to manifest the life of my dreams.* Since I can only control what goes out from my consciousness, I am always better served, as is the world, by maintaining my focus on that.

There are countless opportunities to feel powerless. A one half-hour news broadcast contains many. Politics always makes me feel hopeless and manipulated. News in my own profession often provides the same opportunities. What can I do? I deeply appreciate the warriors we have, both in the principled chiropractic political arena as well as in the environmental and peace arenas, and I will write letters until my fingers ache; but politics is not going to be my real contribution, that much I know. What then?

My brain hasn't been very helpful with its tendency to come from a place of separation and powerlessness. It bounces back and forth between denial and anger, between resignation and revenge; what can I change on the outside? Innate, speaking *thru* my heart as always, thankfully reminds me to look within and to stay in my power. "Worried about medical ideas taking over the chiropractic profession?" It asks, "Well then, how free of medical ideas is your own consciousness?" Hmmm. While I'm at it, how free of hate and greed and everything else I don't like in the world is my consciousness?

Last week I attended a memorial service for one of our practice folks who died ten days ago with metastatic liver cancer, at age 49. I'd been adjusting her for about six weeks. Cynthia was only the second adult in my care under the age of eighty-something to die on me in sixteen years. Both had cancer. Both waited too long to come in. Both received a ton of hope *thru* the chiropractic principle. Both did extremely well under care. Both tried really hard to have faith, only to lose it because of symptoms and pronouncements from the "experts."

I adjusted Cynthia to turn on the power; I loved her; I saw her whole and healed and perfect. I knew without a glimmer of doubt that she would heal. And last week I listened to dozens of her friends and family beautifully recounting stories of the wonderful, giving person Cynthia was.

As I listened, *thots* of powerlessness tried to creep in. Not so much involving my inability to keep her alive, but more about my inability to prevent her from giving away her own power. Cynthia gave to many causes and to many people her whole life, but did she ever truly learn to receive? In the end, did she fully accept her healing? Did she fully accept God's love? Or was she literally tapped out? *Now* she is healed, and *now* she is basking in God's love. I wish I could have helped her realize these things while she was still here in her body, but as always, I don't know the plan. And I knew as I sat and listened, it is infinitely more productive to consider these lessons for myself.

How much power have I stolen from practice folks over the years having them look to me as the one doing the healing? *How much of my own power have I given away forgetting the Source of everything in my own life?*

Gandhi told us, "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." He didn't say we had to buy the change, or figure it out, or wait for others to do it, or to complain about it not happening. He

*How much
of my own
power have I
given away
forgetting the
Source of
everything in
my own life?*

said we had to be the change first. And as we work toward becoming zero, the changes we bring about in the world are infinitely loving and abundant. That is the gift he *brot* to the world, as did Jesus, Buddha, Martin Luther King, and many others. But I'm concerned that the world can't wait for another "savior" to happen along. You and I must be the change.

So, what is the point of all this rambling? Who knows? For me, it is a clear reminder of where my true Power comes from, and of the consequences of looking elsewhere. My senses bombard me with seemingly bad news, the world seems clueless and careening toward destruction, and chiropractic continues to circle the wagons and shoot inward. And I can't help thinking it's all for the same reason. We've forgotten where the Power is. In my own profession, we talk about the Power a lot, and we forget it a lot. In and out of chiropractic, we're all in the world, and I suppose we must play in the political arena.

And what would happen if we all remembered the Power in every moment? What would happen if we all became clear conduits for that Power? What would happen if, during every interaction we ever had with anyone, we tapped into that Power, acknowledged It in us and them, told the truth, and then, in a state of total presence and connection, simply loved? What would happen if we truly and completely became maximum expressions of Innate? Would the world change? When will it change? Are we all waiting for a political solution, or for Mercury to come out of retrograde?



September 11th, 2002

Beloved Creator,

As you know, 46 years ago today I was born into this world. Thank you for that! And as you know, too, this world has seen its share of hate and violence and war and greed and poverty

*Every time we
connect with that
Innate place
within us, peace
is created in the
world.*

and disease. For millennia, we as humans have begged, pleaded, whined, and bargained with you to erase these things. A quick look around, however, indicates clearly that we still have them all.

Some say that is evidence you do not exist, or do not care, or are somehow vengeful. I say we have been in error expecting you to work miracles upon us, when you are constantly and tirelessly working miracles thru us.

Today, I simply ask you to help us remember that you have lovingly placed peace, love, brotherhood, abundance, and health right inside each and every one of us. These are your thots, and I ask that you help us become zero so we can hear them and live them. We are all instruments of your peace.

Every time we connect with that Innate place within us, peace is created in the world. Thank you for that place, and for our intention to take up residence in that place. And thank you for the gifts you have given me that allow others to find that same place.

*Your child,
Stew*



Dr. Stew Bittman

An internationally acclaimed speaker and teacher, Dr. Stew Bittman has lived in Lake Tahoe for over 25 years. It is here that he has slowly recovered from his over-educated, uneventful mid-baby boom New York City upbringing and lives the life he always dreamed about. He has a deep love for the land, discovering God in the many flowering meadows and sun-kissed mountain lakes.

His reverence for Life extends to all humans on this planet, as well, and his mission is to empower one person at a time *thru* chiropractic. Dr. Stew has left no stone unturned on his own journey to facilitate each person's healing of themselves by rediscovering their own true nature and the doctor within.

Safe Haven Chiropractic is a healing center based on a donation-only system allowing all to achieve wellness. Stew has helped thousands of individuals and families to embrace their gifts, pursue their dreams and find the peace and wholeness (health) that already reside within. Additionally, he has traveled the world teaching the chiropractic principle, and has participated in six chiropractic missions to Central America, bringing that principle to life.

Stew's wife, Hillary, would like to add, "I think Stew would say that he is proud of what he's accomplished: a chiropractic practice that has literally changed the lives of thousands; a family that is very close and loving and that enjoys doing everything together; a balanced life which allows him to serve, to share his gifts and to live his dream. His mother-in-law thinks he is an angel. And, lest you think he sounds like a saint, I assure you that he is at least as full of *schmootz* as anybody else."

Dr. Stew can be reached for speaking engagements and seminars, for mentoring in practice and life skills, as well as for various audio and video products at drstew@etahoe.com.



Photo: John Wheelen

Dr. Stew Bittman

"I loved the book! I couldn't put it down. I laughed, I cried, I related. Your humor, satire, introspection, and honesty were exciting and inspirational."

*Audrey Forehand,
CommunicationWorks*

"Perfection is just around the corner but life is a circle. No wonder we're so dizzy... Does anyone have all this stuff figured out? If so, I'm sure they are wrong... It's mind-boggling. The mind boggles... it screws up royally, it falls asleep on the job. It creates havoc and pain and suffering, and the insurance companies won't even reimburse you for it...."

Dr. Stew Bittman

The spiritual/healing path comes complete with its pitfalls and pratfalls, its pity parties and power trips, its puns and poetry, its problems and paradoxes. Dr. Stew experiences them all on his journey from his head to his heart, and shares them with wit and wisdom, inspiration and irreverence.

This warm and honest travelogue will be an inspiration to anyone who knows their thoughts often get in the way of their dreams. Dr. Stew lives his dream inside and outside his chiropractic practice. The principles of Life are the beacon on his long, strange trip, and are the thread that holds it all together. Barely...

ISBN 1-57343-060-9



9 781573 430609

5 1999



"If you are inspired by Henry David Thoreau and Wayne Dyer, and laugh at Groucho Marx—you will love this wonderful stream of consciousness. Fantastic!"

Kaye Wolf, author, Up Please