



Interfaith Inspirer

An Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth News Publication

Learning to Let Go and Love by Norah Reilly



Trying to describe the shift of fear into love is a bit tricky. Not only can the two emotions be nearly impossible to articulate (try it sometime), but it's also difficult to grasp the idea of being able to transmute the powerlessness of fear into an all-powerful, yearned-for love. There are so many of us who walk around with the ache of having received only conditional love or even abusive "love", leaving us constantly wary. Fear becomes our intimate guardian, protecting us from again experiencing that hurt and crippling loss of trust that we often come to associate with love.

Further making the concept of changing fear into love seem unfeasible is the realization that there are many types of love: the love of parents for children, the deep affection between friends, self-love, the passion of lovers, and more. Trying to discern the kind of love that you feel toward another person can be a source of profound confusion, especially when the root of that

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confusion is a fearful distrust of love that you've learned to live with. Moving toward love requires a willingness to let go of that familiar old guard, fear. And that is where Spirit comes in.

Spirit makes it possible to take those first baby steps away from the paradoxical comfort of familiar fears and begin to turn toward the uplifting reassurance of true love. By true love, I mean love that is without condition or reservation of any kind, whether for parent, partner, or friend. When you allow yourself to acknowledge that it's possible to step away from fear and move toward becoming a more loving person, you instantly feel a bit braver, a little bolder, and even more open. It can be uncomfortable to start moving from a fear-ruled life, scary even. Spirit can help with that by reminding you that you are so much more than your fears or your longing, that in truth, you are not only deserving of the love that you seek but that you are that love. That is the single most important reality that you need to embrace.

Getting from fear to love is an arduous journey, one that requires practicing commitment to yourself, a willingness to be vulnerable, and perhaps most importantly, clear communication with those we meet along the way. For many of us, this last ingredient is the toughest to practice, perhaps because of our fear of being rejected when we do share with others.

Take the risk.

Don't stay mired in fear when the sublime truth of love is at hand.

Persevere.

Take a deep breath and then take another breath.

Now, take a step away from fear and toward the love that is always waiting for you.



Meet....
Dan Ramsey
 by Norah Reilly

Dan Ramsey was born in Fresno County, California, in the small town of Coalinga.

At the age of five, he and his family relocated to Dundee, Michigan, where Dan attended high school and lived for the next fifteen years. He remembers being in the class of one of his senior year teachers, Mrs. Gogan, who taught both Latin and English. Dan recalls that she was “tough and had high standards” and instilled those same qualities in him which have stood him in good stead throughout his life.

He moved to Chelsea shortly after his twentieth birthday when he went to work for the University of Michigan as a data processor (remember punch cards?) where he was engaged with the running of a 40’ x 40’ mainframe computer. He remained there for five years before moving on in 1972, when he left the University of Michigan to work for the Wayne County Intermediate School District. To keep his work commute manageable, he moved to Wayne, Michigan at the same time that he began his new job. After four or five years though, Dan missed Chelsea and moved back while continuing to work for WCISD in Wayne. After thirty years with the School District, he was offered a buy-out package which he accepted.

For much of the last ten or so years, Dan hadn’t attended church anywhere and found that he missed it. All the while, he has been feeling his way through to finding his spiritual truth while developing his own spiritual practices. Chief among these is walking, especially in natural surroundings. Dan finds these walks meditational, healing, and a good way to ground himself as he enjoys the world around him.

After having heard about the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth, Dan came to service one Sunday and was pleasantly surprised on all fronts. He finds

ICSG to be a safe space where all individuals are welcome to think for themselves. He frequently finds that the messages of the different speakers at the service resonate deeply with him, as does the music and songs offered each Sunday. Dan strongly believes that everyone is connected, and that we are all on this incredible spiritual journey together.

FUN FACT: Dan’s superpower is being patient, kind, and a good listener.



A Conversation With
the Black Widow Queen
 by Peggy River Singer

Last month while I was cleaning up my patio, I pulled out an old bucket and turned it over. Inside, I found a very surprised young female Black Widow, minding her own business in the center of her tiny web. She did not move toward me or threaten me; she just waited to see what I would do. I figured she would spend her short life in my little patio garden where she wouldn’t be a threat to anyone – now that I would remember to watch for her – so I released her into the Sweet Pea vines. I have not seen her or any other BWs since that day.

Black Widow Queen: *I appreciate how you have described this little one as simply an animal living its life. So many of your people immediately kill my people.*

Peggy: Lots of humans – including me – have a great fear of spiders. Years ago, I was told that there are worlds of spider beings who are very warlike and terrifying; somehow, there was some contact with Earth (billions of years ago), and that conflict is supposed to be the source of human fear of spiders. Does that sound true to you, Queen?

Black Widow Queen – continued on page 6



Ministerial Miscellany
Giving and Receiving
September, 2024
 by Annie Kopko

I think we have all heard that giving is receiving, but is that something we actually experience? I don't think it is very common. As a Catholic child growing up, I was taught "tis better to give than to receive." As a young adult, I remember thinking, "This idea sucks." "Why don't I ever receive anything?" After spending a lot of years complaining about not receiving, I realized that I just did not have any spiritual understanding of giving and receiving. I was thinking that every time I gave something, I should then receive something from someone in a similar way. That's not quite how it works. I have indeed been receiving endlessly throughout my life.

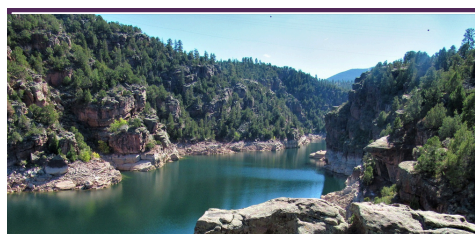
Giving and receiving are two aspects of the same flow of energy in the Universe. We inspire change and healing from an egoless place deep within ourselves. When we willingly give what we seek, we keep abundance of our universe flowing. I finally discovered I could never manipulate receiving - just be available and here it is. I gave up being needy. It took some growing up. All of you are great examples!

Our special events at Interfaith in September will give us all opportunities for giving and receiving. More information is on our website: interfaithspirit.org.

On September 8th during Sunday service, we will have our Gathering of the Waters Ceremony, celebrating our end of the summer return Home with each other. We bring a small bottle of water, commemorating where we have been this summer, sharing a memorable aspect of our experiences.

Blessings for a warm and mosquito-less Fall,

Annie



Water Ceremony
Sunday, September 8
10:45 AM



- September 4 - Linda Rykwald
- September 5 - Connie Snow
- September 6 - Amy Advey
- September 9 - Nicholas de Paul
- September 9 - Michael OShea
- September 11 - Laurel Beyer
- September 18 - Steve Lyskawa
- September 21 - Sue Booker
- September 23 - John Lang
- September 23 - Mary Seibert
- September 27 - Darlene MacLeod
- September 29 - Courtney Fitzpatrick

Haiku from Dexter

by Cooper Holland, Barb Fisher
 and Sandy Hill

Summer fun with friends
 Screen door slams...up 3 stairs
 Hi mom I'm home!





Volunteer Corner
September 2024
 by Annemarie Howse

There are many ways to participate in the Interfaith community by volunteering

once in a while or on an ongoing basis. To learn how, please visit our website at [Volunteers & Committees | Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth \(interfaithspirit.org\)](http://Volunteers & Committees | Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth (interfaithspirit.org)), where you will find information including where and when volunteer opportunities are available, what is expected, the time commitment, and who to contact for more details.

Thank you to the following volunteers:



Scott Alf and Lance Clark—The safety committee has been meeting and making a number of recommendations to improve the safety conditions

of our space. Among their recommendations was creating an additional exit on the south side of the building. Thank you, Scott and Lance, for removing the sheetrock in the sanctuary to expose a set of double doors leading to the landing dock, allowing for an additional exit in an emergency. They also added a beautiful wood trim to the opening. There is still work to be done, but the bulk of it has been tackled.

Marice Clark—Every Sunday, Marice shows up with a lovely display of flowers for our altar. Sometimes, it is a bouquet in a vase. More often, it is an Ikebana arrangement, a Japanese art described as being more subtle,



sensitive, and sophisticated than other methods of arranging flowers. Thank you, Marice, for your lovely arrangements.

Darlene MacLeod—Darlene loves gardening, and it shows! She keeps our indoor plants watered and healthy by fertilizing, repotting, and discarding as appropriate. Please check with Darlene before



deciding to contribute an indoor plant. Thank you, Darlene, for keeping our social hall looking bright, spacious, and cheerful.

These are just a few examples of the many dedicated volunteers in our community.

If you have any questions or are interested in discussing some of our volunteer opportunities, please contact Annemarie at ahowse21@gmail.com or call or text 818-667-2815 and leave a message.



Do you like to sing? And who doesn't?

The Interfaith Chorale will be performing in the fall and again around Christmas during our regular scheduled services. If you are interested in joining, please text Dawn Swartz, our choir director, at 313-204-0060.

Please submit articles and other content for the Interfaith Inspirer to Norah Reilly by September 10th for the October publication. Content that is not time sensitive may be saved for a future publication. nkreilly58gm@gmail.com

Parkinson's Music Support Group

by Annemarie Howse

If you have the occasion to be at the Interfaith Center on a Tuesday afternoon, you'll probably hear joyful sounds from the Sanctuary; drumming, singing, and other noises that may not be easily identified. Roberta (Bobbi) Justice, MM, MT-BC (Master of Music, Music Therapist-Board Certified), leads a Parkinson's music support group every Tuesday at 2:00 pm. Bobbi has over 50 years of experience as a clinical training supervisor in music therapy. She facilitates a program that combines evidence-based techniques in music therapy with speech and physical therapy exercises for people with Parkinson's. The exercises are designed to slow the progression of the disease and alleviate some of its symptoms. Bobbi is passionate about her work, and it shows!

Parkinson's is a debilitating disease with no known cure, but it can be slowed down with intervention. Tremors are often one of the first noticeable symptoms and they can usually be managed with medication. In addition to tremors, Parkinson's disease may cause joint stiffness, freezing (a sudden stopping in one's tracks), poor balance, speech difficulties, depression, and emotional changes. Low dopamine levels are also common in Parkinson's disease, and it has been suggested that music can activate the brain regions responsible for dopamine production, potentially improving mood and aiding in symptom management.

I recently attended a Tuesday session myself to find out more! Bobbi graciously provided information about the group, answered all of my questions, and allowed me to take photos (with permission from the attendees).



The session started with vocal and facial warm-ups similar to those done by singers or yoga practitioners. These exercises included breathing practices, making sustained siren sounds, exaggerating vowel sounds, using a kazoo, and practicing tongue twisters (e.g., "Which wristwatches are Swiss wristwatches?"). These activities were all intended to warm up the vocal cords and muscles needed for speaking and swallowing. Participants were encouraged to project their voices as best as they could. Since music is a significant part of the experience, each person selects a drum to use intermittently while participating in the exercises. Bobbi plays the piano and guitar, and leads the drumming. Hand chimes are sometimes used along with other handheld instruments. The last half hour was filled with singing, as the words to familiar songs such as "Summertime" and "Lazy Days of Summer" were projected onto a large screen. There were also seated stretches and movements, as well as birthday and anniversary announcements and other notices about upcoming social events. Social connections are beneficial for dealing with potential depression and isolation, and singing and playing together promote a sense of connectedness.

This group was established in 2010 in Ann Arbor. Bobbi became a leader in 2012 and took over from a co-worker around eight years ago. She mentioned that in the beginning, the group used to take summer breaks. However, she observed that after the first summer break, the group had lost most of the progress they had made during the year. Now, they continue meeting during the summer months, and they have very good attendance as people recognize the value of their efforts.

There is no fee to participate. Eastern Michigan University sponsors this support group as part of its community support program and the Interfaith Center offers the space at no charge. For more information, please contact Bobbi at rjustice@emich.edu.

Black Widow Queen – continued from page 2

BWQ: *Hmmmm... Well, there are spider planets, of course, just as there are bird and lizard and snake homeworlds. I would suggest that memories of the Spider Wars plus the innate “otherness” of spiders both contribute to this deep fear. I expect Creator also designed humans to notice and pay attention to any animal that is so different. Anything that is very different and not understood can be a threat in some way.*

Peggy: What is the purpose of the colorful patterns on a BW’s body? They don’t seem to prevent some animals from eating BW’s.

BWQ: *Colors, as you know, have a frequency, a vibration, an energy. So, these patterns do serve as warnings on different energetic and psychic levels. Animals who eat spiders can learn to do so without being bitten. The venom, ingested, is not dangerous to predators. It is the INJECTED venom that is deadly.*

Peggy: Black Widows seem to prefer to live in quiet, dark places like woodpiles and abandoned buildings. Is there any special reason for this?

BWQ: *Our purpose, our mission, is to spin Light into those dark places of stagnant, decaying energy to bring balance to the area. This is not a form of physical light that can be seen by the human eye, you understand. Our bodies – which are free of the hairy furring other spiders have – absorb and transmute Light energies like living crystals. We spin threads of that light to make our “messy” webs, which are actually perfectly designed for our purpose. These are different frequencies of light than what you are used to, and our webs reflect that. We spiders are a very practical people, you see, and our webs – in their thousands of designs -- are multi-purpose in ways that human [scientists] are only now beginning to suspect.*

Peggy: The big, showy Argiope web spinners create handsome geometrical wheel shapes that are suitable for catching prey in open spaces in broad daylight. But BW webs with irregular patterns give you a better chance of trapping prey that live in low-light conditions?

BWQ: *[pleased] Yes, very good.*

Peggy: Since webs are made of energy, do they have or produce any audible frequencies? Can we hear them in any way?

BWQ: *Yes, the webs can produce sounds. I do not know of any humans who can hear these frequencies, but the fae folk can. In fact, they sometimes help the Argiope’s “tune” their webs in preparation for celebrations and such. Yes, it is possible for the fae, who are beings of delicate, high-frequency energy, to play a web like a harp. It takes many years of practice and peaceful collaboration between the fae and the host spider.*

Peggy: Can a tuned web be used to send communications beyond the stars?

BWQ: *Yes, that has always been true. This allows us to keep in touch with family and friends back on the homeworlds of our various species. Transmissions are almost instantaneous since a certain specific frequency is used. You could compare it to your phone devices.*

Peggy: What else would you like to talk about today?

BWQ: *This opportunity is much appreciated. I hope these words will contribute to balancing the relationships between our peoples. This interview is complete.*



Author Bio

Peggy River Singer is a Lightworker, all-beings communicator, faerie ally, Reiki practitioner, and lifelong writer. More of her articles are posted on angelsfairiesandlife.wordpress.com. To request a reading, please call 734-548-0194.



Dances of Universal Peace

by Susan Slack

Join us!

Saturday, September 28

7:00 – 8:30 PM

The Dances of Universal Peace (DUP) offer an oasis for your whole self in an evening of chanting and gentle folk-dance movements with live music; a moving meditation. Circle dancing is an ancient practice and anthropologists suggest that our brains and societies co-evolved together partly through communal, singing and dancing. Rhythm and music have been a part of almost every conclave of civilization since before recorded history.

This particular DUP practice came about in the 1960s in San Francisco by Samuel Lewis, who was recognized in many spiritual paths, including Indian musician and Sufi master Inayat Khan. DUP offers the experience that many long for —being with others in a peaceful, trusting, kind, and fun presence.

During the Dances of Universal Peace, participants learn short phrases in sacred languages from the Earth's traditions. We learn through experience that humanity is ONE being longing to give, receive, and embody compassion, harmony, and beauty. Most DUP leaders and musicians are volunteers who train for years and agree to ethical guidelines to become certified leaders. Each leader can select from hundreds of dances that honor the many beautiful traditions of the Earth.

On September 28, we will focus on the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Thanksgiving Address, which is spoken prior to ceremonies. We'll dance from the Mayan tradition, and learn "Wichita," a fun dance done at powwow's. We'll sing to the Moon with the Seneca name, Neesa, Neesa and, from the Navajo, a "Beauty Way" dance.

The next Dances of Universal Peace event will take place at ICSG on Friday, December 13. We are always seeking acoustic musicians, trained or not, to participate. Email Susan at peaceinacircle@gmail.com

For more information:

Facebook page: Ann Arbor Dances of Universal Peace 2024

International website: dancesofuniversalpeace.org

Meet Your Interfaith Community Members

If you are new to Interfaith and trying to familiarize yourself as to who everyone is and what they do, please take a few minutes to look at the Interfaith Center Electronic Billboard (or ICB) located between the coffee station and the classroom. You'll see photos, learn what some folks do, (minister, staff or volunteer, for example), and something personal about them. It's a great icebreaker if you wish to strike up a conversation!

INTERFAITH CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

BENEFIT CONCERT

Evening of Musical Fun!

Saturday, September 14**7 – 9:30 PM**

All Proceeds Will Go To The Interfaith Center

PATH**7:00 PM**

Ann Arbor's favorite folk/soul band PATH. Songwriter and guitarist Chris Hedly joins Tim Prosser on mandolin and Scott McWhinney on harmonicas for sweet melodies, vibrant vocal harmonies, handcrafted rhythms and upbeat musical fun.

**Griff 'n Shek****8:15 PM**

Griff 'n Shek are the musical duo of Griff Griffin and Shekinah Errington. They cover a wide range of musical genres, from the early 20th Century, to the 2000's, including a few of Griff's folk-rock originals. Griff 'n Shek have invited a Rhythm Section of Eric Fithian, Marc Hubbel, John Donabedian, plus Special Guests: Scott McWhinney, Gary Williamson, Paul Girard—and *Mystery Guests*!

Join In Person or via Zoom**Tickets: \$10.00 each**

In person: Pay with cash or check at the door.

Doors Open at 6:30 PM

Via Zoom: Purchase tickets at <https://interfaithspirit.org>

For more information contact:

Scott McWhinney (734) 223-3025

scottmcw@umich.edu <https://path.band>**Community Sing with****Matt Watroba****2nd Wednesdays****beginning October 9****7:00 PM**

Community Sing at Interfaith resumes in September, and continues through December on the 2nd Wednesday each month. Matt is committed to inspiring the world to sing-- one town at a time. He says "You don't need to be a good singer (whatever that means) you just need to have a love for it."

Your Donations make this event possible and are greatly appreciated.

Peace Generator with**Craig Harvey****Friday, September 13****7:00 PM**

Meets 2nd Friday, this month only.

Kath Weider & Spirit Singing Band**Saturday, September 21****7:00 PM**

Join lead vocalist Kath Weider, band members Dan Bilich, Sam Clark and Lori Fithian and special guests for an evening of songs, song prayers, chants, and improvisational group 'Circle Songs'.

Suggestion donation \$10 per person**Dances of Universal Peace with****Susan Slack****Saturday, September 28****7:00 PM**

Celebrate the fall equinox with this joyful, interactive evening of chanting and gentle folk dance movements.

Susan Slack: peaceinacircle@gmail.comdancesofuniversalpeace.org**Suggestion donation \$10 per person**