

rapport

A black and white portrait of Isabel Losada, a woman with long, dark, wavy hair, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a dark top and a necklace with a small pendant. The background is dark, making her face the central focus.

ISSUE FIFTEEN

SPRING 2009

Isabel Losada

on Enlightenment

Make
Laughter
Your Best
Medicine

Shining a Light

Marianne
Williamson

Seven Practices of Transformational NLP

John Seymour

THE MAGAZINE FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

SUBSCRIPTION ONLY



Welcome to the Spring issue of Rapport.

I may be biased (!), but I think this issue of Rapport is just fantastic. There are so many inspiring and motivating articles, I'm not sure where to begin.

Marianne Williamson is someone I have admired for years, and I do have her famous passage from 'A Return to Love' pinned up above my desk to act as daily inspiration, so I was thrilled when Eve interviewed her (p24).

As if that wasn't enough inspiration for one issue, John Seymour shares his thoughts on 'Seven Practices of Transformational NLP' in a special feature (p32). Imagine how much more we could all enrich our lives by taking notice of his pearls of wisdom.

Then there is Joe Cheal's fascinating article on Neuro Linguistic Dreaming (p18)...and Andy's call to action for all Social Media Marketeers (p4)...and Paul's passionate piece about the Magician's Apprentices (p20)...and Greg's modelling project in the Kalahari (p14)...Gosh, I feel like the child in the sweet shop, with so much to choose from. Thankfully, its all packed into this issue and I can read them all at my leisure – I haven't got to choose!!

Please do take the time to complete the Rapport survey included this issue (or complete it online by following the link on our website, www.anlp.org). Also visit our website to check out the new online sample of Rapport. From Summer 2009, we will be putting the whole issue online, so that even more people will be able to enjoy reading about the positive benefits and applications of NLP and coaching.

Its one of my New Year's Resolutions to laugh every day (p28). I reckon I have managed to keep that resolution so far, and with so much in my life to be grateful for, its going to be easy to keep it up for the rest of this year.

Until next time

Karen x

rapport contents

spring 2009

- 4 DEBATE**
Social Media Marketing
- 6 News**
Anatomy of a Plane Crash Pt. 2
- 8 Basic NLP**
Defining Your Goals
- 9 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
Expect the Unexpected
- 10 NLP**
Frank Bourke
- 12 COLUMN**
Presuppositions of NLP
- 14 NLP**
Stone Age NLP
- 18 LIFESTYLE**
Neuro-linguistic Dreaming
- 20 EDUCATION**
Magician's Apprentices
- 22 INTERNATIONAL**
Israel
- *24 CELEBRITY**
Marianne Williamson
- 26 COACHING**
Lifesong
- *28 HEALTH**
Make Laughter Your Best Medicine
- *32 NLP**
The Seven Practices of Transformational NLP
- *36 CELEBRITY AUTHOR**
Isabel Losada
- 38 BUSINESS**
Hertfordshire County Council



- 40 RESEARCH**
A Brilliant Tool?
- 42 TRAINING & WORKSHOPS**
DR. Susi Strang
- 44 DIARY**
- 47 BOOK REVIEWS**

- 48 AUTHOR INTERVIEW**
Judy Rees & Wendy Sullivan
- 52 REGIONAL GROUPS**
- 54 ENDNOTE**
What is NLP?

Cover stories*

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Social Media Marketing

Online Social Media (see box for my definition) has been picking up speed in early 2009. Facebook became the largest worldwide social network in mid 2008 and is growing fast. Micro blogging service Twitter is also growing rapidly with a three-fold increase in traffic this year and with celebrity members like Stephen Fry and Jonathan Ross giving it profile in the market. Andy Coote asks what that means for the Personal Development community.

As Social Media use grows, so the purpose for which it is used is changing. Using Social Media for marketing is growing generally. I've seen a number of people from the Personal Development community amongst the users of a variety of Social Sites. Are they using Social Media Marketing (SMM) and, if so, how they are approaching that?

The people interviewed for this article are a self-selecting sample as they were all approached online either through Facebook or Twitter. All are using Social Media for a variety of reasons, including marketing, and all have different approaches. I also spoke to Nikki Pilkington, a marketing consultant who is building a significant reputation in this area of marketing.

Do they have a strategy? Although she has a problem with the word itself, Nikki Pilkington does feel that a strategy is important. "Unless you know what you are trying to achieve, you'll never know if it worked," she says. The approach of "try, test and measure" is what makes the difference. Make incremental changes and don't do many things at once. Unless you are tracking the outcomes very well, you won't be able to tell which worked and will end up scrabbling in the dark."

Of the other participants, Adam Eason and Alan Jones feel that they are approaching Social Media Marketing (SMM) strategically whilst Andy Duffy and Judy Rees admit to being more tactical and opportunistic in their approach. Andy Smith doesn't feel that he does a lot of marketing of any description (though that is changing). "I'm using Social Networks mainly for keeping in touch with people. I'm not being



disciplined enough yet to use them for event marketing." He is using Twitter "to bounce ideas and discover new thought. Twitter seems to have a high proportion of my target market – intelligent and friendly individuals - and I'm now trying out some ideas there."

In contrast, Adam Eason has a process that works well for him and which, with appropriate

tweaks, he feels would work for others, too.

It does, he warns, require "hard work and a disciplined approach. But it will pay back the effort." It begins with a reading list that is extracted from a number of sources using Google Reader.

From the ideas prompted by that material, he writes a blog each morning, sets up trackbacks so

that he can see who also blogs about his article and tags it on sites like Digg and Delicious. A process automatically adds the blog to Facebook, announces it in Twitter and links it into FriendFeed. "I go through this process rigorously every day," he says. The end result is that he gets comments and starts discussions in a number of different places. "You do need to respond to comments in all those places – like Facebook, the members area of my blog and on Friendfeed. If you pitch the article right and express an opinion, you will begin to engage with more and more people who find what you are writing about interesting and, possibly, challenging. It is about building a reputation within a niche."

When writing articles or 'tweeting' (as it is known) in Twitter, or simply commenting on others' posts, it is important to be yourself and, where possible, to be congruent. People are buying an experience", says Andy Duffy, "and also buying into you. My approach to Practitioner training is less sitting and talking and more doing. We go out into Lincoln and use practical NLP skills in everyday surroundings. My posts are also about doing things. I always end my NLP tips with a question or a challenge to try something out." "NLP is about elegant communications," adds Adam Eason. "SMM

WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media includes a number of different services, most of them delivered across the Web. They include:

Online Social (and business) networks such as Facebook (www.facebook.com), LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com), Ecademy (www.ecademy.com), Xing (www.xing.com) and NLP Connections (www.nlpconnections.com).

Micro Blogging site Twitter (www.twitter.com) where posts are limited to 140 characters.

Bookmarking sites where you share your favourites like Digg (www.digg.com), Delicious (www.delicious.com) and Social Median (www.socialmedian.com).

Article submission sites of which there are far too many to list

Auction sites, the most popular of which is Ebay (www.ebay.com)

is an opportunity to demonstrate why people should choose to work with you. It allows you to be attractive in your own way.”

Judy Rees sees SMM as a way of long-term relationship building. “I met Andy Smith online 5 years ago and we’ve exchanged messages since. Last year, following publication of our book, he invited me to speak at his practice group in Manchester. At least one person is on our training this time as a result of that.” She sees it as a slower burn to get results, as building a light touch relationship though it is possible to also build deep relationships online.

Alan Jones uses SMM to have instant access to people and their feedback. “I use it when I’m preparing what I’m going to say in a blog or article. I put my initial thoughts online, get comments and sharpen the message. It is a safe rehearsal space for me.”

Andy Duffy suggests that it is better to vary the message and avoid relentless business posting. “Create an open invitation by letting people know what you do and where to find you whilst giving a glimpse of the real you. We are attracted to working with people like us. Create resonance and take people on a journey, that way it is their choice on their level of participation and the speed and direction in which the relationship develops.”

Putting course places up for auction on Ebay has worked for Andy Duffy and for Judy Rees. Duffy offered 3 places on a practitioner course in Lincoln including accommodation and certification. “My objective was to raise the profile of my training business. It worked. All three places were sold. One just broke even and the others made some money. Judy Rees was very late advertising a course last autumn (finishing her book got in the way) and found herself starting from scratch with 6 weeks to

Getting Started with SMM

- Start small
- Be respectful of the etiquette
- Don’t jump in feet first
- Vary the content – business and personal
- Let people see the real you
- Show your passion – but not your aggression
- Be patient – the results will take time to arrive but there may be quick wins
- Be creative – after using Ebay, Andy Duffy is now running a ‘donate your phobia’ event on Facebook for Comic Relief
- Be consistent and regular in your postings

Create an open invitation by letting people know what you do and where to find you

go. Having heard Andy Duffy’s experience, she also tried Ebay as an option. “The winner got a place on our Clean Language training at a bargain price. It was someone we knew who had said they were not available for the dates. We repeated the exercise a couple of weeks ago but listed just the first 2-day module. It went at 30% off the full price. This time others bid who we didn’t know and they have been added to our marketing list for future trainings. We can keep in touch with them because we know they have an interest in the courses.

Having an unfocused approach was not helpful for Alan Jones. He thought through how he could harness the facilities for promotion of his business and, once he had an aim, things began to fit together more effectively.

One of the biggest problems, highlighted by all of our participants, was trying to do too much, too soon. “SMM is not about marketing

AT people, it is about marketing WITH them.” notes Nikki Pilkington. “Start small and start where you are comfortable,” suggests Judy Rees. “Don’t expect miracles or quick results. Learn the ropes, what is acceptable behaviour and etiquette. Like taking over a new garden, discover what’s there and how it works before jumping in. You can plant some small quick cash crops but taking bigger risks without watching and learning would be stupid. People who blunder in find they upset people and leave without understanding what they missed.”

Both Alan Jones and Andy Smith are using Social Media for community building. Andy has tried using Facebook groups for his Manchester Business NLP group but “they have limited function. I’m now looking at wetpaint.com to

build a site.” Alan is using Ning for a similar venture with his practitioner groups. “It is a powerful tool and fully private. I can post notes, articles and videos and host discussions. I see it as a low cost equivalent to the ‘Blackboard’ software used by some colleges.”

None of our group is doing vast amounts of ‘traditional’ marketing. They all have websites and blogs and some have brochures. They might use occasional email (and more occasional postal) marketing. However, referral and word of mouth brings in the vast majority of new business for all of them.

SMM is, thinks Nikki Pilkington, “especially appropriate for an industry where personality is an important factor in customer choice”. She suggests that SMM is “still an experimental area. Even the experts are experimenting. It is only one part of the Marketing mix. Try it, see what works and take that into use but use it alongside proven approaches. And remember - test, test and test again.”

This approach to marketing isn’t going away. Adam Eason sees it as bringing “visibility and credibility. You can establish there is a rapport without speaking to clients and use the exposure to become the specialist. You will be trusted – even by people who have not yet met you - and your reputation will grow.” ●

Participants

- Adam Eason: www.adam-eason.com, twitter = AdamEason
- Alan Jones: www.alanbjones.com, alanjonesUK
- Andy Duffy: www.andrewduffy.co.uk, learnnlpfast
- Andy Smith: www.practicalcog.com, practicalcog
- Judy Rees: www.cleanchange.co.uk, judyrees
- Nikki Pilkington: www.nikkipilkington.com, nikkipilkington

Andy Coote – follow me at www.twitter.com/andycoote



Expect the Unexpected

By Mindy Gibbins-Klein

The other day, I was just about to throw a dead orchid plant into the compost when I noticed a small bud at the top of the brown stalk. It was coming back to life! Within two days, a beautiful orchid had appeared and it is bigger and more spectacular than any of the flowers that bloomed last year. I am amazed at how easily I would have thrown the whole plant away because it looked dead to me, and I would have missed this fantastic flower.

Just as this challenging economic climate seemed to appear quite suddenly, so can amazing positive things happen at any time, even in this climate. In my business, I never stop marketing, but I am stepping up my efforts even more now, to make up for the slowdown. Not only am I making more calls, attending more events and going through old notes and business cards, but I am also implementing a strategy that I call “expect the unexpected”. It simply means that good things can happen at any time and you never know where they could lead. In a refreshing coincidence, right before I sat down to write this article, I heard from a good friend of mine called John Hotowka. John is a fellow speaker, and probably one of the funniest after-dinner speakers I know. He called to catch up and thank me for an introduction and then he said, “You have to be open to little opportunities that crop up that can make all the difference.”

The key word here is “open”. Following my last article where I warned against the Chicken Littles of this world, I had some great feedback. It seems people like the fact that I gave them permission to be open. If you are, you will set yourself apart from the majority of business people. But how can you be more open? I certainly don’t have all the answers, but I have been doing a few things and thought I’d share them with you, in case they could be helpful.

You have to be open to little opportunities that crop up that can make all the difference

1. Do whatever you need to do to bring your energy levels up. During the short, grey days of winter, this can be a challenge even in boom times, and it is even more critical now. Simply exercising, eating well, staying hydrated and getting enough sleep can sort out so many of the issues we have. If you do not have as many client appointments as before, you can treat yourself to some of these healthy habits which will make you more effective when you do get in front of people or on the phone.

2. Ask the right questions. If you are looking to be open to more opportunities, some good questions could be “What could I notice right now?”, “What else could I do right now?” and “Who have I not spoken to for a long time?”. When I remind myself to ask these questions, I find I meet the right people and have productive discussions.

3. Do something different. Again, having

extra time is a blessing if you use that time well. Of course I am encouraging people to do their marketing strategy now while it’s quiet and spend time writing their books and articles, and there are some other wonderful things you could do, that you would normally be too busy

to do. For example: visit a museum, gallery, historic site or place of natural beauty. Take in the entire experience with all your senses and let your mind have a rest from all the worries of the business. It has been proven that new experiences create new connections in our brain and enhance our creativity. That could be really useful right now.

4. Meditate, read and visualise. You are probably already ahead of most business owners in this area, and I would really encourage you to push beyond your normal routines, because these are not normal times. In the past six weeks, I have read nine business and personal development books I have been meaning to read for quite some time. I have also begun meditating again, as well as re-focusing on my goals and visualising them.

It’s astounding how many opportunities are cropping up – or were they there all the time? Do you have an orchid somewhere that is just waiting for you to notice it? Unexpected things will happen every day, and I hope you will be open to the positive ones. Let me know what exciting things happen for you in the coming months. ●



Mindy Gibbins-Klein the UK’s leading writing and publishing strategist, best known as The Book Midwife and co-founder/director of Ecademy Press business publishing. Her mission is to create thousands of real thought leaders who will change business and society with their ideas.

An international speaker, trainer and consultant with 20 years in marketing, training and coaching, and over 100 clients who have written and published excellent books and articles quickly using the Book Midwife methodology, Mindy writes and speaks to thousands of executives, business leaders and entrepreneurs each year about how to become a thought leader and turning expertise into enhanced credibility and more business.

Neuro-linguistic Dreaming

(or “Learning the Language of the Unconscious”)

Dreams are the playground of the unconscious mind. Stories and art give us tantalising glimpses of the unconscious realm; dreams give us full, associated immersion. If you want to learn more about how the unconscious mind works (and plays) where better to do it than the unconscious’ own home.

By Joe Cheal

There are probably as many belief systems about dreams as there are languages in the world. Each culture has its own perspective on what dreams are and what they are about. It would seem that there is a generalised agreement that dreams come from or via the unconscious (or subconscious) mind. Perhaps they may channel some higher connectedness or some deeper consciousness. Or perhaps they may be simply a result of the brain working and sorting through data from short term to long term memory.

According to Carl Jung, dreams are a way for the unconscious mind to

communicate with us. Perhaps by paying attention to how dreams are coded, we can learn something about the natural language of the unconscious. But how does this knowledge benefit us? Ericksonian hypnosis and much of NLP is founded on the notion of communicating with the unconscious mind. We have a choice of trying to make the unconscious mind respond to our native language or learning to speak the unconscious language directly. Have you ever found yourself in a place where they do not speak your native tongue? Is it not more rewarding and effective to learn their language rather than expecting them to speak yours? We talk about building rapport with the unconscious mind, so isn't that easier if we speak its language?

As well as leading to further discoveries about how we might communicate with the unconscious in its own domain, dream-world exploration offers us a fascinating and revealing journey as we delve deeper beneath the surface of the dreaming mind.

Surface Structure and Deep Structure

To set the scene, NLP borrows the concept of surface structure and deep structure from Alfred Korybski. Surface structure is the

language we use to describe what we mean. Deep structure is what we actually mean. This is emphasised in the expression ‘the map is not the territory’. A description of something is not the thing itself. When someone presents a problem to us in NLP we utilise the metamodel to go beneath surface structure and further into deep structure. This is done to move people beyond their distortions, generalisations and deletions to a clearer idea of what the reality of their problem actually is.

Sigmund Freud, a pioneer of modern dream research made a distinction between what he called manifest content and latent content. The manifest is how the dream presents itself and the latent is what the dream actually means. Whilst this is not necessarily a widely held view amongst dream theorists we could draw an analogy with Korybski’s model where deep structure is like latent meaning, and surface structure is like the manifest.

In both dream exploration and in NLP we talk about metaphor. This is an all encompassing term to include all sorts of symbolism, imagery, analogy, simile etc. If the surface structure language of the conscious mind is words, the surface structure language of the unconscious would be metaphor.

The NLP-Dreaming Connection

Richard Bandler and John Grinder created NLP initially from the works of Fritz Perls, Virginia Satir and Milton Erickson. Fritz Perls was a well known dream theorist who introduced some excellent ideas about how to understand the unconscious and hence how to decode dreams. Milton Erickson, on the other hand, was utilising the language and processes of the unconscious to ease people into a dreamlike state. Let's explore this further...

Dream Parts

Fritz Perls considered that dreams needed to be decoded from a holistic perspective. All parts of the dream are parts of the dreamer. More specifically, Perls believed that dream parts are parts of the individual that have been disowned and projected. Whether he was right about this or not, the idea that every aspect of a dream is part of the dreamer is very empowering (although perhaps a little disturbing at times!)

If each part of the dream is part of the dreamer, this allows us to explore a dream from many perceptual positions. A woman once described a dream in which she was standing in a kitchen. What else was in the kitchen in the dream? A fridge, a cooker, a sink... When she took the position of the cooker she described her frustration of having to cook all the time, that she was taken for granted, she was tied to the kitchen and could never go out. This was a part of herself that she could identify with but she hadn't realised before how angry that part of her was.

Where there is conflict in dreams, there is most probably a conflict of parts in the dreamer. NLP has a range of techniques for integrating parts, including 'visual squash' and 'six step reframe'. As a practitioner working with someone's dreams perhaps we don't always need to decode the dream, but simply resolve the conflict of parts. If the unconscious mind is ready, it will probably present the underlying meaning spontaneously.

Utilisation

When exploring the meaning of dreams, it is useful to understand the process of the unconscious 'dream machine'. Not only is a dream based on our thoughts and emotions (past and present), it is also based on our physiology. Have you ever dreamt of trying to find a toilet and then woken up and realised that you actually do need to go to the toilet? Whilst we are dreaming, the dream machine will also incorporate outside influences (e.g. sounds) and respond to the reactions of the dreamer. Simply put, the unconscious mind will weave whatever it is experiencing into the dream narrative.

Milton Erickson, the master of unconscious communication, worked with the idea of utilisation. Whatever he was presented with, he would use. Not only would he utilise the client's language, metaphors, behaviours and beliefs, he would also utilise visuals, sounds and sensations in the environment. He might utilise a bird singing outside by saying: "and as you hear the distant bird calling... you to... go deeper and deeper into your experience... now." Not only would Erickson use the language of the unconscious, i.e. metaphor, he would also use the process by which the unconscious mind works.

Language Play

The unconscious seems to delight in word play, as if it is creating metaphor out of the conscious mind's learnt language. NLP practitioners are usually taught about the Milton model, including 'phonological ambiguities'. These are the puns and 'double entendres' that are also the stuff of dreams. A person will often be swapped in a dream for someone else with the same name. This can create some interesting scenarios for the dreamer to deal with. I remember one dream where I fell asleep on a rooftop with a friend called Lucy. I later realised that the day before, I had been watching a TV programme where the father of a girl (called Lucy) was angry because she had spent a 'night on the tiles'. For some reason, my unconscious decided, in its own way, to join her. In another dream I was in an ally wondering what was through the other side of a gate. It was an alligator! Only upon retelling the dream later did I get the pun.

As well as the sounds of words, the unconscious seems to like playing with the order of letters in words. The night before we ran our first Practitioner course, my wife Melody dreamt that an NLP Master Trainer was coming to observe the course. This was an understandable connection. However, there was great emphasis on the fact that he was coming by plane and we would have to pick

If each part of the dream is part of the dreamer, this allows us to explore a dream from many perceptual positions



him up on the morning of the course. Beyond some more obvious metaphors, the 'plane' carried a particularly interesting pattern. Look at the letters in PLANE. Look back along the letters without the vowels... do they mean anything to you? Coincidence maybe, but write down enough of your dreams and you will discover more about the playful nature of the unconscious mind.

If dreams are the playground of the unconscious mind... play on! ●

The Author

Joe Cheal has been working with NLP since 1993. As well as being a licensed trainer of NLP, he holds an MSc in Organisational Development and Neuro-linguistic Technologies, a degree in Philosophy and Psychology, and diplomas in Coaching and in Ericksonian Hypnotherapy, Psychotherapy and NLP. He is also a licensed practitioner of EI and LAB.

Joe has always been interested in the science and meaning of dreams, writing a dissertation on lucid dreaming for his first degree. The key findings of this research and many other articles on NLP can be found at www.gwiztraining.com.

Further Reading

Bandler, R. & Grinder, J. "Patterns of Hypnotic Techniques of Milton H. Erickson MD: Volumes 1 & 2" An analysis of Erickson's approach to unconscious communication by the co-creators of NLP.

Van de Castle, R.L. "Our Dreaming Mind" An excellent introduction to dreams and dream theorists.



Marianne Williamson

Shining a light

By Eve Menezes Cunningham

Lots of people who don't think they've heard of Marianne Williamson know her beautiful words about our fears, not of being inadequate but of being "powerful beyond measure."

The passage from her book, *A Return to Love*, is often attributed to Nelson Mandela because he chose to use it in his inaugural speech. Marianne radiates serenity and calm so it's strange to read about her earlier struggles in *A Return to Love*. This bestselling book was based around the principles in *A Course in Miracles* which she credits with transforming her life."

Now, Marianne is delighted about a more recent inauguration. She says, "Millions of people, not just in the United States but around the world, have helped create a conversation that fuelled the opening for Obama to run for President. Now he's won, it creates an even bigger opening.

"This is no longer a time in which people are hearing something new. We've all read the same books. We've all listened to the same tapes. It's time to move from belief into experience. Our nervous system is aligned with the truth but it's difficult to feel that way when someone in your life or on the news is making you want to scream. Intellectually, to a large extent, we've got it. Now collective impulse is necessary.

"In the 80s, everything was dysfunctional. Everyone wanted to get their own individual lives on track. What's happening on the planet now is not as simple as 'just do this, this and this' so the new challenge is not just to do something different but to become someone different."

While Marianne is very serious about issues like the economy, she says, "We all know in our hearts that this is an ultimately positive correction and one that had to happen. When we feel the hurt, it behooves us to remember there are people for whom it's worse." We should use it as

a great opportunity to differentiate between the 'things we want' and 'things we need'."

Marianne says that there are "Common anthropological characteristics among species. A mama bear sensing a threat to her baby bear will do anything to protect that cub. The adult female hyena will create a circle around her babies to protect them while they eat before she'll allow the male to get to the food."

She wants human women and men to build that same maternal energy. "We're being called to love at a new level. We need to love children across town and across the world. Women voters across the world need to say, 'Tell me first, how are we going to make sure that the babies are fed? No I don't want to hear about the bombs you're going to build until you tell me how are all the children going to be fed?'

"If the women of the western world insisted over the past forty or fifty years that all the babies had to be fed before anything else was done, 9/11 would not have occurred."

Ultimately, she's hopeful about the future of humanity and the planet. Marianne says, "Our problem solving repertoire is so much wider than what we do. What does prayer have to do with this? What does meditation have to do with this?" She quotes Einstein saying that no problem could be solved from the same level it was created.

Her answer for everything is meditate, meditate, meditate. And she's a great advertisement for finding inner peace this way. She says, "You teach what you need to learn. The days I don't meditate are harder. As a student of *A Course in Miracles*, I do the workbook." she also has a mantra from TM. "They're my tools. But don't give yourself a hard time [if you're not meditating] on top of not benefiting from it."

For people who may be wary about starting meditating in case nasty



I am not depressed when I look at the gap between me and an enlightened master because I look at the gap between me and the person I was

stuff surfaces, Marianne says, “That’s nothing compared to what will come up if they don’t meditate.” Meditating regularly will bring them “Greater peace, clarity and wisdom.”

“We’ve been trained to believe in the power of external forces and that we’re dependent. If things got bad enough, medicine, the economy or the government could fix it. It’s about building a house on a rock, not on sand. Your house is yourself. Our houses are falling down. Look at the economic crisis in the world today. Even ten years ago, the economic system didn’t look like the house of cards it’s looking like now.

“People got so excited about the film Titanic because, at an archetypal level, we know we’re on it. We’re heading towards an iceberg, environmental catastrophe, nuclear catastrophe. The Titanic Captain had the power to turn the ship around. But he was shouted down by the owner of the company so he went into his cabin and fell asleep.

Now, the news is so intense, we’re falling asleep at the wheel worrying about Britney and hemlines.

“In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus asked his disciples to stay awake. It’s like Amnesty’s soul force. Even when you can’t do anything, you’re not going to go to sleep in that hour of agony.

We’re turning things around and we’re turning it around in time, turning the world around in time. There’s a shift from, ‘well there’s nothing I can do about it’ to ‘well at least I’ll die trying’ from ‘these things happen’ to ‘not on my watch’. Those who hate on the planet today display more hate than the people who love display love.” Marianne believes that by taking responsibility for our own emotions, we’ll be better able to demonstrate love and bring about peace.

She says, “If you have insight into what makes an individual change, you have insight into how a nation can change. Each of us has an internal guidance system, power to guide us moment by moment. Our thoughts and behaviour make all the difference.

“We’re living in a moment of profound opportunity. Every single day look at your life. Look back on the day. Were you judgemental? Were you forgiving? Were you a blessing on yourself and those around you? Did you waste time or did you use it creatively? Check it out for yourself, wherever you got it right, be willing to keep doing it. Aim for more positivity than negativity.

“Did you show up for excellence? You can just wait for life to unfold in any way or you can decide ‘today is a day I’m going to give of myself to be my creative best’. When you make yourself a proactive participant, that and only that will bring you happiness. Happiness is not out there.

It’s something you generate.

“Stop reading bad books. Stop reading junk magazines. Stop watching bad TV. Go to the wheel and turn that thing around. Vibrate higher. God has the answer to every problem the moment the problem occurs. You can get high enough. I am not depressed when I look at the gap between me and an enlightened master because I look at the gap between me and the person I was. Upgrading the system is like upgrading a computer. But you have to sit there while programme downloads. That’s what we do when we meditate.

“Choose the great movie over the stupid movie. Choose the great book over the stupid book. Choose the forgiving thought. There are people having this kind of conversation all around the world. If we are spirits, there’s no place where one stops and another starts. To some extent, I’m the captain of the Titanic and I choose to turn this ship around. I don’t want to be who I used to be, I don’t want the world to be what it used to be. Become who you are capable of being. Know when you die that you died trying. Imagine thinking ‘Oh my gosh, there’s not a war on anywhere!’”

Marianne’s prescription for everyone is “Daily practice of meditation and prayer. Imagine a doctor’s prescription. Would you go back to see the doctor and say, ‘Well, I took them on some days but not on others?’ It’s spiritual exercise. It works if you keep coming back.

“You brush your teeth because you’re not going into the day today with yesterday’s dirt on your body. If you don’t meditate and pray, you’re not just sauntering out with your stress but with the stress of the economy, the war and everything else. We know what we have to do. We may not like what we know we have to do but we know. With spiritual experience as with physical experience, when you’re doing it, your body wants to do it. If I meditate in the morning, the chances of my sending off an email or something that I shouldn’t are greatly reduced.”

For anyone feeling a bit gloomy about their own life or the future of the planet, Marianne points out that when something’s not working, you “hit a wall and bottom out. Something in you cracks open. But when you look back, you see that it was not the end but a beginning. Circumstances eat you up but if you look at the world through the eyes of the spirit you see that there are only infinite resources.” ●

Visit www.marianne.com for more information and to order Marianne’s books and CDs.