

# Evolving™

*your spirit*

A free publication celebrating your evolving spirit • Issue Forty Five • March 2011

## Beauty

The most beautiful things in the world  
cannot be seen or even touched,  
they must be felt with the heart.

—Hellen Keller

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# Beauty...



There are so many ways to explore the concept of beauty, we covered some of them here, and you most likely have your own ideas of what beauty is. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, as they say.

And, the more I work with these concepts and ideas, and the more I grow, I know that though we are used to thinking about beauty as a visual concept (I have been an artist all of my life, so I immediately go there) to me now, it is also a *feeling*. When I see something that is really beautiful to me, the *feeling* of beauty rises up from my center. It feels like *love*, and maybe it is.

Who can say what is beautiful? We all agree that so many things are. I often wonder, when the sun is out and the breeze is soft, and everyone I see mentions what a beautiful day it is... I agree. And then on some days when it is rainy and grey, or snowy and cold, are these not beautiful days? I love a good rainy day, inside by the fire with a warm cup of something and a magazine or book to read, or a good movie to watch.

I'm going to keep focusing on beauty. It has stirred up a lot for me. What about being beautiful? I surely don't feel beautiful much of the time. And why not? I would say to all who ask me that they should feel beautiful no matter if they're having a good hair day or not. So I will be looking at that myself. And, of course, acts of kindness. A beautiful gesture, a beautiful mind. Seems that all that has a quality of true good, love, intention can be called beautiful.

Many beautiful blessings to all of you as we navigate these challenging times together. May you see beauty everywhere, and experience it with all of your interactions.



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*Issue Forty Five, March 2011*

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## Check out our Website!

We've got a great Calendar of Events up there (you can sign up to receive it monthly as an email!), all the past issues of the magazine that you can download, as well as info on how to sign up to have *Evolving Your Spirit* delivered to your home if you like.

The next issue of *Evolving Your Spirit* will be available May 15.

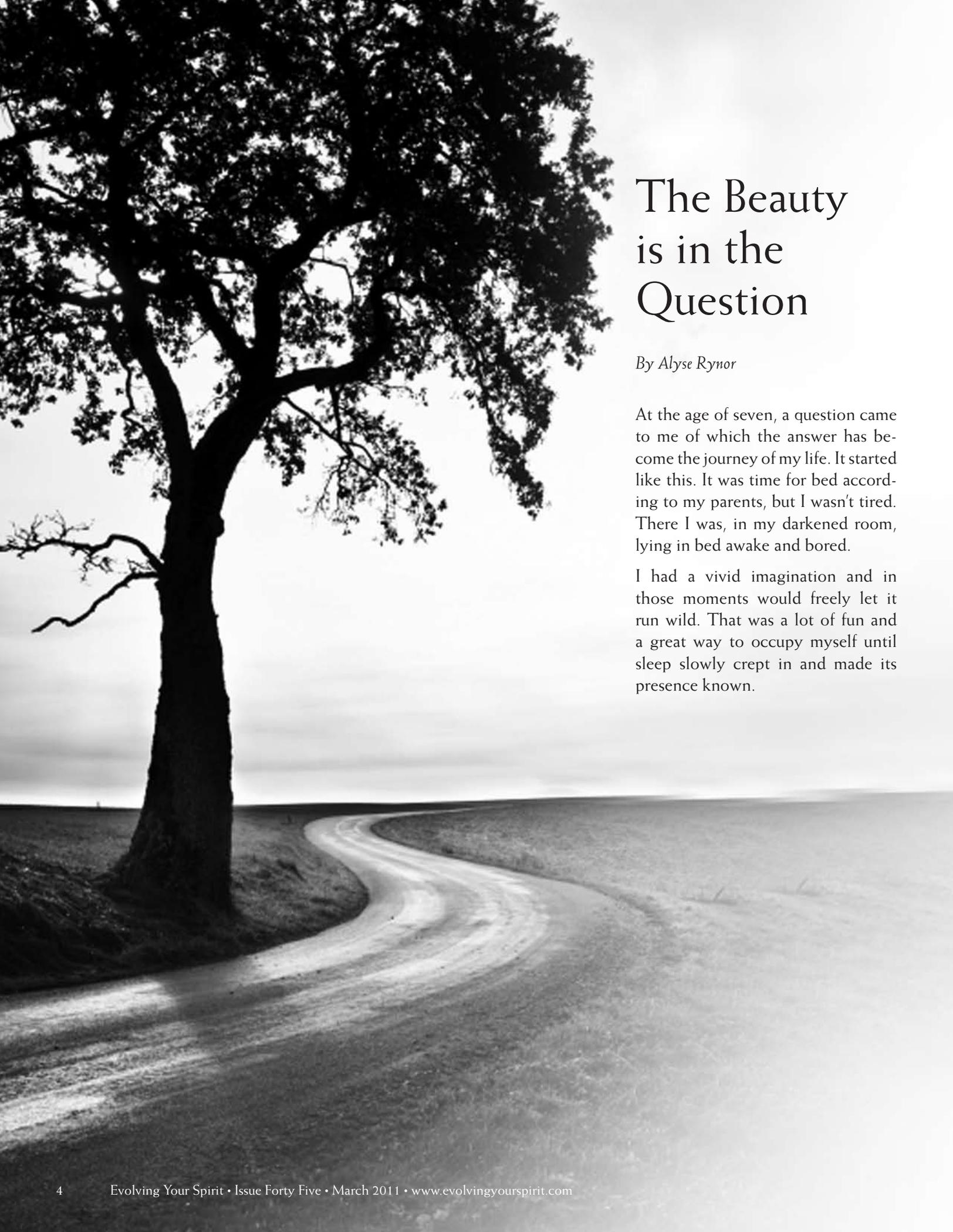
Our theme will be *Rhythm*.

Please write in with your ideas and comments to [debbie@evolvingyourspirit.com](mailto:debbie@evolvingyourspirit.com). Thanks!

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# The Beauty is in the Question

*By Alyse Rynor*

At the age of seven, a question came to me of which the answer has become the journey of my life. It started like this. It was time for bed according to my parents, but I wasn't tired. There I was, in my darkened room, lying in bed awake and bored.

I had a vivid imagination and in those moments would freely let it run wild. That was a lot of fun and a great way to occupy myself until sleep slowly crept in and made its presence known.

On that particular night, I closed my eyes and put my hands over them to make it as dark as possible. Then, I decided to take an adventure, flying up to heaven to meet with God. I had so many questions to ask. I wanted to know if I'd get the bike I wanted, how long I'd live and how the flowers knew when to come out, just for starters.

Asking all of those questions might be fun, but just felt a bit too easy. So, I added a challenge to this venture. I figured that God was very busy and decided that when I met with God, I needed to respect God's time. Therefore, I changed the rules and decided that I could only ask one question and it better be a good one. I then thought and thought and thought for quite awhile. I wondered if perhaps I could outwit God by cleverly asking in one question something that would take in all of the other questions that I could possibly have.

I wanted the big two-for-one deal. That was when I decided, I could ask God, "How does life work?" I thought, that one questions should answer all of the others and more. If I had the rules, I think I would have the answers.

Perhaps that's a question that you, yourself may have pondered at some point. To me, it seems to be most encompassing. I don't remember if I actually asked the question, or even heard the answer. I may have exhausted myself enough that I fell asleep. However, today I can see that the answer to this question is the beauty of life itself.

I think all of us who are walking our spiritual path know we are walking through the answer.

Over the years, whether learning biology, astronomy or sociology in school, or reading books about the law of attraction, reincarnation or Oneness, I began to see a thread that so beautifully wove together what I often call the fabric of life.

This tapestry, when viewed from afar, can be so beautiful. For, when I stop to really take a good look at it, through the use of observation, (for that is about as far as a human being can go while in a body), I can see the intricate design in the outer world, and fully feel it in my inner world.

It seems that life so perfectly balances itself with one thing complimenting or opposing the other. Everything so perfectly connected; the seasons that change, the feelings I experience, the family I have, the thoughts I think and the choices I make. All so beautifully orchestrated. And, the secret is that through the duality of this physical plane, I can experience myself and know more fully who I am.

Have you noticed that life offers us such beautiful ways to discover and recognize who we are and even choose who we want to be in the next moment? This is beautifully done through what is called the law of opposites. Through this duality, we get to know ourselves by experiencing opposites. For example, we can know we are tall because there is another size to be, which

*continues...*

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# The Beauty is in the Question

...continued from previous page.

is short. We can experience hot because we know what cold feels like, and we experience happiness and joy because of the times we have felt anger and sadness. We may not always like some of what we experience in the moment, but the real beauty can be in stepping back and noticing the bigger picture.

What a beautiful gift I have been given when I realize that I am the creator of my own life. And, I understand all too well that it doesn't always feel that way. Yet, everything in life, whether we want to admit it or not, is affected by our choices; the environment, our weight, relationships, health, finances and career for example. We are always at choice.

At the same time we are all connected as a part of the tapestry called life. I think that if you could stand back far enough, as if you were looking at a picture on the wall, you would be able to see the big picture, the whole tapestry and in it, the true beauty of life. Then you might recognize the important part you and others play in it.

The goal in looking at the tapestry as a whole, is for you to see the gifts that each person and situation brings for your own personal and spiritual growth. Sometimes the people you have the most difficult time with are offering you the greatest gifts. I have found that this is one of the many misunderstood beauties of life.

It's easy to take life for granted, as each day we wake up and get on with the tasks that we do. Making breakfast, getting gas for the car, using the cell phone, doing the laundry and so

forth can easily keep us mired in the narrow focus of our day and mundane comings and goings.

Life seems to have been perfectly designed for us to do it this way. We stay deeply immersed in such a way that supports the age old adage that, "You can't see the forest through the trees." Perfect. Beautiful! You are on course with your life right now. For when you are cheering on your favorite sports team and feel that winning is a life or death situation, or if you get angry because someone cut you off in traffic or even if you feel like you are in heaven while you are enjoying the best piece of chocolate in the world, that is beautiful as well.

The wise Sage knows that to truly live life means to take a step back and observe yourself living in it, knowing that your choices and actions are a part of what makes up the whole. My work as a Holistic Psychotherapist is both to guide people towards seeing the larger fabric of their life and to point them in the direction of the truth of who they are.

There are many universal laws that are in place for our growth. The law of attraction is another of them. Through this law, you can also recognize yourself more clearly by seeing what is showing up in your outer world as a reflection of what is going on in your inner world. Just another beautiful way that life works.

When you see the beauty of life and begin to understand its workings, you can recognize and want to take responsibility for your part in it. You can see that you are the creator of

this little section of life that is yours, for it was given to you. That is why I believe your life is so precious. It is a beautiful gift.

Through a variety of ways, life gladly gives back to you, in accordance with your every thought, word and deed, just what you have put into it. It is like a mirror, reflecting you to yourself.

## **Do you see the beauty of who you are in the mirror?**

The mirror is Life. Each moment you are given a new opportunity to do this and look in it once more, if you choose to. Life is a wondrous design. It is an opportunity that has been created for you.

Through our everyday choices and actions, big and small, we get to know who we are on the inside by seeing what is happening on the outside. I invite you to join me in living awake and aware and enjoy the beauty and the process of Life, for life is you, externalized. You are the gift and the beauty of Life. ✨



*Alyse Rynor, LCSW is the founder of Soul Choice Counseling in Evanston, providing Holistic Counseling & Integrative Coaching*

*to those on a path of personal and spiritual growth. Private counseling sessions are available in her Evanston office. Call 847.840.0884 or email [alyse.lcsw@gmail.com](mailto:alyse.lcsw@gmail.com).*

# Stop Controlling and Start Creating

by Julie Murphy Casserly, CFP®, CLU, ChFC

## Control.

There could be somewhat of a negative connotation with that word. When you're trying to get control of something—your weight, your relationships, or your finances—does that mean that the area in question is out of control? Think about the last time you said you needed to "get control" over something. Did it come from a place of healing and power, or was it out of exasperation?

### Let go of control

Let's throw away the word "control" for a moment and consider what we're really trying to do. When you want to "get control" of your finances so you can save up for a house, your goal is to make noticeable yet attainable adjustments to achieve your home-owning goal. Or if you want to "get control" of your emotions when things go wrong, your true goal is to have a healthier mind set when dealing with uncomfortable situations.

When you let go of trying to "get control" of things you consider out of control, the landscape changes. What you really want is to mend whatever you feel is broken, not to wrangle the bad into one small space while trying to overpower it with the good. So stop trying to get control of the things you want to reverse: bad money habits, excess weight, bad relationships, etc. Instead, start creating.

## Creating.

It's a simple idea. But it does take work; creating the life you truly want is a process. Usually, when one aspect of your life is out of whack, the rest are soon to follow. When a ma-

yor relationship in your personal life is struggling, it takes focus away from your work life. Or if your work life doesn't fulfill you, it changes the way you deal with your financial life. To counter your struggles, you attempt to control them in order to get them back to normal. And it works for a few days, until you lose steam and fall back on old habits.

And that's why you need to change your thinking. When you stop looking at things from the negative perspective of "control" and start coming at it from the positive place of "create", you get different results. Instead of "getting control" of your finances to buy a house, create the financial life that will make you a home owner. Controlling your anger at a job you hate won't work, but creating the work life you crave will.

### Where to begin

It's a lot easier to create a new you when there's an appreciation for the "you" that's already in place. Accepting that you aren't perfect is one thing; but celebrating the beautifully flawed human being you are right now is another matter.

Creation is a process of evolution; it's an invest-

ment into an improved you. And creating a better version of yourself starts with the patterns of behavior you have right now. Something about those behaviors brought you to this less-desirable place. Identifying and analyzing the patterns in your behavior that got you here is where you begin at creating the "you" that you want to be. ✨



Julie Murphy Casserly, CFP®, CLU, ChFC, is a 15-year veteran of the financial services industry,

founder of JMC Wealth Management in Chicago and author of the award-winning book, *The Emotion Behind Money: Building Wealth from the Inside Out.* Julie helps people understand how their emotional attitudes and behaviors affect how they earn, spend and save. For more information, please visit [www.juliemurphycasserly.com](http://www.juliemurphycasserly.com).



# Beauty is simply *reality* seen through the eyes of Love.

by Susan Loraine Barker



*As far back as I remember, what I loved was beautiful to me. I remember my mother expressing her dismay that I always thought my friends were beautiful. She saw ordinary girls. She wasn't looking at them through the eyes of love.*

The higher truth is that there is beauty in everything when you look through the eyes of love. Most of us see the beauty in a flower or fall leaves or a fresh blanket of snow. But have you noticed the beauty of an ordinary pebble, a wintering tree or the rain?

It is easy to notice the beauty of a butterfly, a cardinal or a majestic cat. But have you noticed the beauty of a spider's grace, an opossum's winter coat or a toad's skin?

Viewed through the eyes of love, I think everyone and everything is beautiful. This is one of the richest laws of life.

My husband gets embarrassed when I express how beautiful I think he is. Apparently that is not the right word for the male gender. But I think it is the perfect word for what I see through love. My son could be caked in mud or painted blue and I will still think he is the most beautiful child in the world. This is not unusual, I understand, but what of the rest of humanity?

What of the rest of life?

When we deem something or someone different, inconvenient, scary or ugly, we seem to have decided at the same time that they are unworthy of respect, pleasure, happiness or even life. I know that one does not have to enjoy a personal relationship with others or understand something to love it. When we are in right mind we understand that everyone and everything is worthy of love, esteem and a pleasurable life. With all of this in mind, how can we not?

I'll tell you where I think it all went wrong. It started with the prepos-

terous idea that we, ourselves, are unworthy. I believe it began with the belief that we have to somehow prove our worth by competing with everyone else because there is only a minimal amount of worth to be had.

That erroneous belief results in a lifetime spent never being enough and out of alignment with everyone else and life itself. The belief in competition and lack results in fear, which is about as far from love as one can get, and that fear results in separation, bullying and death. There is no way it can lead to unity, oneness, peace and love. Compassion begins with love. Gratitude begins with love. Worth begins with love.

The good news is that it all begins with you. You do your part to elevate our world by seeing yourself through the eyes of love. You were born worthy. Nothing you do or don't do changes that. You are not in competition with anyone else to receive love. You are beautiful and magnificent every day of your life.

There is a part of you, the part that knows the higher truth that is agreeing whole heartedly at this moment.

And then that other voice starts in. That voice presents all the evidence of why your worthiness is in question. But that voice is not the truth. It pedals fear, guilt, shame, and old tapes played through our childhoods. That voice keeps us in check, holds us back from stepping it up, and worse, keeps us isolated and suspicious of everyone else. Go ahead and listen to that voice. Take note of what it is telling you. If you don't listen, the voice will just get louder.

Acknowledge those familiar feelings and then put them in the light of

truth. Give them over to love. Love is much more powerful than anything that voice has! Ask God, your higher power, the benevolent universe to help you see yourself through the eyes of love. Then ask to see everyone else that way. Especially be willing to see differently that person to whom you have been giving your peace of mind every day. Ask to see all of life through the eyes of love and revel in the beauty of it all.

We are all worthy of the kingdom of heaven right here on earth, right this moment. I suggest that you dispel every thought that tells you otherwise and you have created a more beautiful world for us all. ✨

*Susan Loraine Barker is a Certified Life Empowerment Coach, specializing in mandalas and sacred contracts. You can reach Susan at 847-566-5884, [empowermentcoach@comcast.net](mailto:empowermentcoach@comcast.net) or visit her website at [www.themandalacoach.com](http://www.themandalacoach.com)*



# Defining Beauty By Jean Kadkhodaian

Throughout the ages, from Queen Nefertiti and Helen of Troy, to Botticelli's Venus, to Greta Garbo and Marlene Deitrich, Audrey Hepburn and Michelle Pfeiffer, human personal beauty has always and continues to both awe and mystify us. What is it?

Many have discussed the forms of facial attractiveness, and in general have agreed that the basic components come down to two "ideals", Symmetry and Harmony.

To those with a design background, you may know that the "Golden Ratio" (1.61803399) is the mathematical formula that has been used in nature, art, music and math. This ratio is found in all living things. If you measure the length of your body then measure from your belly button to the ground you will find that the ratio of the total length of your body to the length of your belly button to the ground is 1.61803399. This is also the ratio of the Earth to the Moon and the Sun to the Earth. Seashells, leaves and puppies all have this golden ratio. Everything.

I have also found that the thing that is most difficult for a person to perceive as beautiful is one's self. Maybe it is that our eyes see outward and not inward and the only way to see ourselves is in a mirror or through reflection. When a person closes their eyes and allows the world to fall away and takes a good hard look within, they tend to find, under the layers of wounds and mistakes, that there is someone in there that is worth loving. That we are all not so different. This is a kind of harmony.

That we are all imperfect but we all want to be seen by our potential not our short comings. When a person has that realization they are able to see the world in a loving non-judgmental way and that my friends is BEAUTY! ✨

*Jean Kadkhodaian is the co-founder of The Lighthouse Emotional Wellness Center in Arlington Heights, Illinois. Please direct and comments or questions to [jean@lighthouseofillinois.com](mailto:jean@lighthouseofillinois.com) or for more information visit their website at [www.lighthouseemotionalwellness.com](http://www.lighthouseemotionalwellness.com)*

## Beauty Exercise

Focusing on the good in another is a great way to shine your light brightly out into our world—to see beauty around you and express it is a powerful exercise.

Here's a process you can do, with another person, or within your meditation or contemplation practice:

Think of someone in your life. It can be someone you love now, who brings happiness when you think of them, or even more challenging, someone who you are having issues with. See them before you, and look into their eyes.

Repeat this to each, filling in the end however you wish. Do it as many times as you want to, until you feel complete with that person for now:

"The beauty I see in you is..." put your sentiments in there from your heart and deepest connection.

Here are some examples: The beauty I see in you is the playfulness and humor I always see in your eyes. This makes me happy and brings me joy.

The beauty I see in you is your sincere nature and your ability to see the good in everyone.

The beauty I see in you is your dedication to your work, your integrity and your willingness to do whatever it takes to get the job done.

The beauty I see in you is your radiant spirit, and your shining heart, ready to help without needing to be recognized.

The beauty I see in you is your love for your family and friends, and your great humanity to animals and our planet.

See how many people and qualities you can find—you may not want to stop!. ✨

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# EVOLVING *Community*

## Meet Susan Loraine Barker

### The Beauty of the Mandala

"What I love about mandalas is that they always depict the beauty and wholeness of the creator. Whether a mandala is made by a human, spider, water or the universe it always is exquisite and unique. I have made and taught the art of making mandalas for over half my life because they always dispel the illusion that you are unworthy, broken or lacking in any way. Your mandala is a snapshot of your spirit and shows you in full color how powerful and beautiful you are. Mandalas are everywhere. They are the dome of a mosque, the



rose window of a cathedral and the pattern of a woven rug. An astrological chart, Da Vinci's Vitruvian man, a sun dial, labyrinth and the Yin Yang are mandalas. Everything in nature is a mandala. You are a mandala from your eyes and energetic chakra system to your growth and expansion physically, psychically and spiritually. A mandala shows you, in full color, your beauty through the eyes of love."

Susan Loraine Barker owns *Mandalas by Loraine* in Mundelein where she offers mandala playshops, Sacred Contract work and spiritual life coaching. Her playshops offer the expression, meditation and experience of making your own mandala and understanding its message for you. Whether making mandalas, revealing your contracts or coaching, Susan's passion is reminding you of your greatness. Her philosophy is that to raise the collective consciousness and heal the world, we must each do the work to live from peace within. Then we will have peace without. ✨



## Update on Sara Connell and her Beautiful Baby

We've received several emails with comments and questions about Sara Connell and family. Her article was in the last issue of *Evolving Your Spirit, Compassion* and titled *Divine Mother's Milk*. If you didn't see the article, it can be viewed on our website at [www.evolvingyourspirit.com](http://www.evolvingyourspirit.com), and click on *Past Issues*.

Since then she's had her baby, and has been featured in some local news stories as her mother served as surrogate for her beautiful son, Finnean Lee, born on February 9. Sara's mother, Kristine Casey, at age 61 is said to be perhaps the oldest woman to give birth in Illinois.

A story of great love and perseverance, whatever your opinion on the procedure— we know we are so fortunate to have her story and great energy here. Don't miss it!

We'll feature her story in the next issue of *Evolving Your Spirit* which distributes the week of May 15 just in time for her first Mother's Day! ✨

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# Beauty and the *Family* by Annie Burnside

I would like to share a recent energy exchange with my oldest daughter who is now fourteen years old to exemplify a blossoming conscious awareness of inner beauty. Of course, interior beauty has been there all along and remains throughout eternity, and yet, it is the emerging self-realization of it that provides the empowerment, freedom and joy. If we as parents can assist our beloved children in a greater self-awareness as to their inner SHINE then we will have done our job. I feel that everything stems from this recognition!

First of all, yes, my daughter texts, posts on Facebook, and video chats. Yes, she is acutely aware of when it is "time" to freshen up the wardrobe with a few new pieces from the latest fashion trends. Yes, she often rolls her eyes at my "weird" behaviors. And yes, friends are at the top of her sharing list these days. Indeed, a typical teenager in so many ways,

EXCEPT for underneath the North Face coat and the Ugg boots, behind the gaggle of giddy girlfriends and the fluorescent computer screen, and even beyond our intimate family discussions and shared dinners, there lies a self-awareness and interior blossoming that seems unfathomable for a child her age— certainly not what I experienced several years back (alright twenty-six years back to be exact) at the tender age of fourteen.

Recently my daughter and I were discussing whether or not she would attend, once again, a three week all girls' camp for the fifth summer in a row. While we encouraged all of our children to try overnight camp at least once, we have told her that the decision to return is now totally up to her. As the discussion ensued, I became almost mesmerized by her capacity to articulate her vantage point on the subject. With a palpable gratitude for all of the opportunities

and lessons learned from her previous camp experiences, she began to share her deeper thoughts on this subject and beyond.

She shared that while camp is touted as a place to be fully and authentically yourself, create a sisterhood, expand a connection to nature, and explore your core through contemplation and solitude, the point of it all is to come to understand that inner connection is available anywhere, anytime, and most importantly in the NOW. She went on to give the example of seeing quite clearly that she doesn't need to go anywhere specific (camp), do anything special (canoe) or be anything different (a camper) to feel authentic, open, connected and free. While she definitely views camp as a blessing, she knows that she is enough just as she is with or without camp to remind her of that inner knowing.

## Ten Tips for Igniting Conscious Awareness of Inner Beauty in Your Children

- Utilize everyday life— such as friendships, nature, mealtimes, music, movies, and much more— as the perfect curriculum and forum to teach your children powerful, universal principles such as connectedness, self-love, presence, and forgiveness.
- Teach your children to allow multiple perspectives in all life situations and relationships by "flipping" challenges into positive, learning opportunities.
- Train your children to be more conscious of thoughts, words, and deeds so that they can assume greater responsibility for the shaping of their own reality.
- Encourage compassion, empathy and gratitude in your children on a daily basis by making them the most-used words in your home.
- Turn the JOY in family life way up by singing, dancing, smiling, humming, laughing, and relaxing rigid perspectives as often as possible through openness and gratitude.
- Model authenticity through speaking and living your truth thereby giving your children permission to do the same.
- Show your spirit daily so that your children can witness multiple aspects of you, and in turn, see multiple aspects in themselves.
- Teach your children that they are

She even voiced that the songs about sisterhood, respect, and caring, many with a "free to be you" theme, seemed a bit odd to her now, expressing that while appreciative of the sentiment, she hoped that her fellow campers felt free to be themselves beyond the activities in nature, communal cabins, and family dining. In short, everywhere! She assured me that she was not "knocking" camp in any way and may choose to return, but if she does go back for another year or three, it would not be because the camp experience allows her to feel more authentic in any way. Her return would be based on the conscious, sole (soul) choice to attend simply because she enjoys the experience not because it is a "safe" place to be herself fully in the world.

I was truly blown away by her expression of deep wisdom that has taken many of us divorces, health maladies, and endless searches through differ-

ent veins of the exterior world to figure out. What my dear girl was saying through the example of summer camp— one of any possible outer examples— probably resonates with most of us when looked at closely. We do not need to go somewhere special or do something out of the ordinary to live our own truth. In other words, freedom to be comfortable within our own skin should not be saved for places that we visit three weeks a year. Self-Love can be cultivated in all ways, always.

Yes, my daughter has her challenges, snarky attitudes, moments of self-doubt. Yes, she can sometimes be mean to her siblings, sassy to her parents, generally ornery. And yet, underneath it all are ever-expanding and deep cracks of self-awareness, self-love and true compassion for others that will serve not only her, but the world at large, quite well. While some parents desire status,

monetary reward and upward societal movement for their children— none of which are negative per say— beyond those exterior pursuits, my deepest heart's desire for mine can be voiced most succinctly through Shakespeare, "To thine own self be true." Enlightenment at its best...

✎

*Annie Burnside is a parent, educator, and professional soul nurturer, residing in the Chicago area. As a soul nurturer, she helps others to awaken to their own spiritual truths by providing spiritual support and encouragement. Her book, Soul to Soul Parenting is available now on her website, where excerpts and information can also be found: [www.annieburnside.com](http://www.annieburnside.com)*

intuitive, creative, eternal spiritual beings— much larger than simply their physical form— and filled with infinite possibility and the capacity for direct divine connection.

- Assist your children in understanding that an appreciation for life in the present moment, coupled with enthusiasm for their future, plants the necessary seeds for manifesting their true heart's desires.
- Provide the space and opportunity for your children to focus on their interior world as much as the exterior world, allowing greater intimacy with the voice of their own soul to feel what resonates as truth for them.



# The Power of Beauty

by Maggie Amari Wilkins

How often do you witness beauty and not really see it for what it is? Often what we witness as beautiful is only seen for what we think it is. You look at beauty through the mind's eye, you see color and texture and form, rather than from the heart, the pure state of beauty. I feel that the beauty of the heart offers transformation for the soul. I witnessed and experienced this type of beauty at a public talk I gave this year.

I was asked to give a talk in a town where I had an unpleasant experience, and was reluctant to return there—I had once owned and operated a spiritual retreat center in this Chicago suburb with my husband, Charlie. Our vision had been to bring teachers from all around the world to the community—providing a special place to introduce their teachings. We purchased five acres of land, remodeled the existing buildings to offer a meditation room and lodgings. We loved it there... there was a large fire pit, a sycamore forest we named The Fairy Forest and walking paths through native meadows. We brought in monks and masters of a variety of teachings and we saw many people experience spiritual growth. In our second year of operation, I received a letter that someone in the community was trying to close us down. They did not want what they considered a non-traditional religious commune in their

town. We invited them to visit and witness for themselves the benign nature of what we offered. They did not accept our invitation.

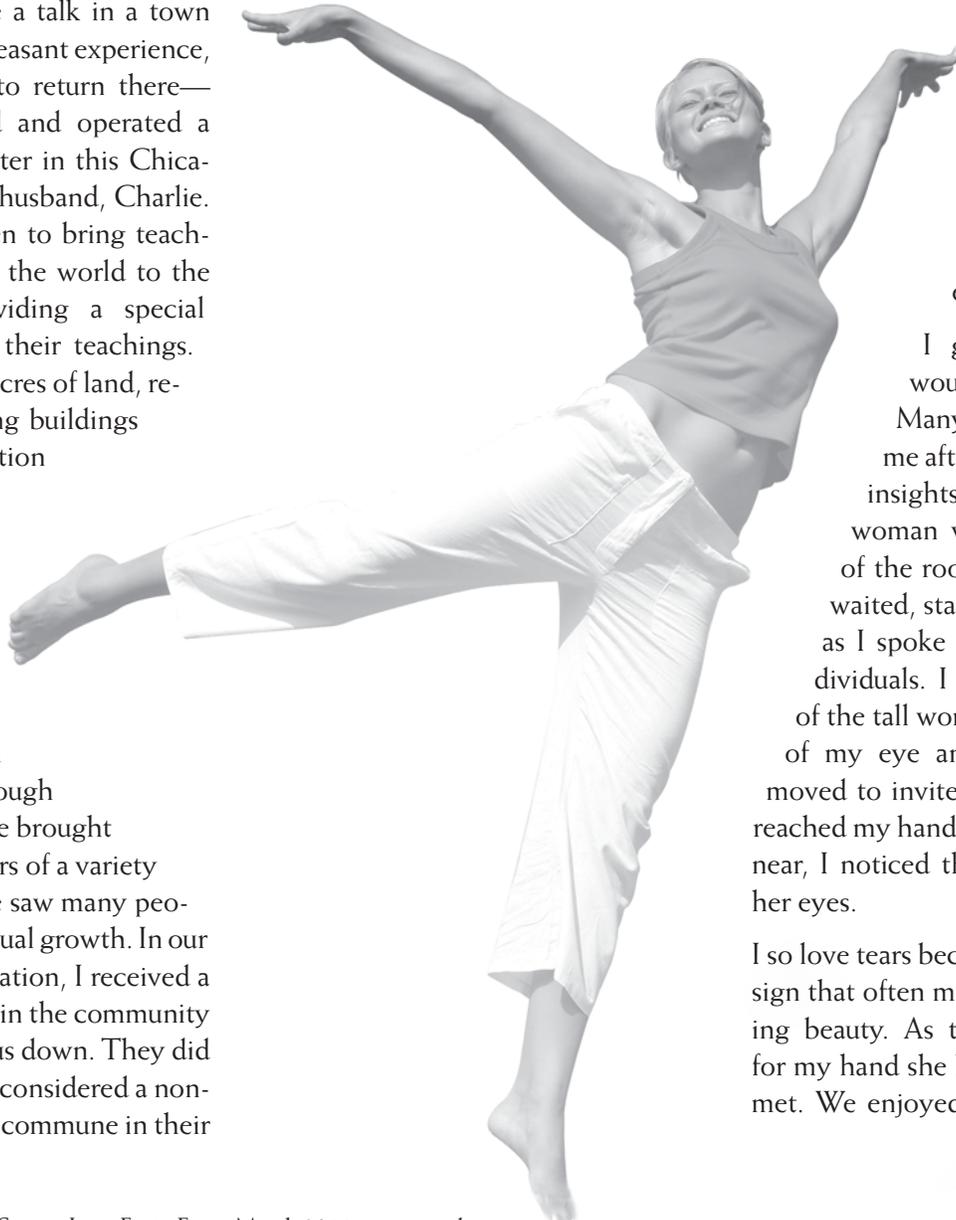
Within the year, our center was closed. Many contacted us and shared our disappointment. I felt a great sadness.

That was seven years ago. Even so, I felt nervous as I drove to do my talk.

Checking within, I recognized that my mind was telling me a story about the area I was going to, with judgments about the people who might attend because they lived near to where our center once was. I made the conscious decision not to listen to the story my mind created. Instead, I focused on my love and passion for offering my life work as well as allowing a higher intelligence to reveal and to unfold. A peace came over me as the group filed in that day. A stillness in my center reminded me of my belief that behind beauty exists grace.

I gave my talk as I would normally do. Many people approached me afterward to share their insights and I noticed a tall woman walk from the back of the room to the front. She waited, standing off to the side as I spoke with many kind individuals. I kept catching sight of the tall woman from the corner of my eye and eventually I felt moved to invite her to join us. As I reached my hand to her and she came near, I noticed that she had tears in her eyes.

I so love tears because I feel they are a sign that often means we are witnessing beauty. As the woman reached for my hand she held tight. Our eyes met. We enjoyed the silent moment





between us. I stayed in the moment because I sensed that she had something to share with me. I nodded a welcome for her to share.

Tears flowed down her face and she said "Please forgive me, I did not know." I thought to myself that there was nothing to forgive as I didn't really know her. She persisted with humble passion "Please forgive me, I did not know." I had never felt such a pure offering of love. My whole body responded by becoming very still. In doing so, I realized through her words that she was one of the persons who had closed down our gathering center. Once her place in my life was acknowledged, a powerful energy surged between us and flooded our bodies. I felt a tender joy shared—a joy that needed no words. We were complete.

This was the most beautiful experience of courage, love and acceptance I had ever felt. The beauty that manifested from that moment transformed both of us in a blink of an eye. The loss of our spiritual center was a seven year teaching that I will allow, embrace and continue to awaken love within me. I was not to attach myself to what had happened, but to trust a higher intelligence to love all that unfolds. It is wonderful that we never really know how that higher intelli-

gence works. I witnessed and felt that higher intelligence at work within the moment shared between the woman and me. A strong ego mind act that had created pain for many seemed to be healed with one simple, beautiful step of love—all from asking for forgiveness.

My suggestion to all is—the next time that you see something of beauty that awakens your attention, feel the depth in the connection between you, the seer, and that which is being seen. Whose life can you change today from your beautiful heart? ✨



*Maggie-Amari Wilkins was Eckhart Tolle's personal assistant when he first published *The Power of Now*.*

*Maggie now works and teaches in the Chicago area and in Vancouver BC, sharing her experience and knowledge in various groups and workshops. Reach Maggie at [www.one-heart.net](http://www.one-heart.net), or call 847-648-8955.*

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# Beauty is Being You

by Laurie Buchanan

**Editor's Note:** Typically, *Evolving Your Spirit* has a policy where we "don't make someone else wrong to make a point." I feel that an idea or opinion can be expressed without pointing to another's actions or viewpoint and saying that their opinion or belief is incorrect. That said, I think Laurie's opinions here are bringing forth an interesting point of view. See how it resonates with you. As always I love to get your feedback.

A quick internet search on the word "beauty" returns a bevy of links that lead to information on cosmetics, skin care, fragrances, hairstyles, tanning, plastic surgery, fashion trends, weight loss programs, diet pills, and exercise regimens. They seem to suggest that men, women, and teenagers alike are concerned—some obsessed—with physical attractiveness and perceived imperfections.

Many people gauge their beauty based on how they think other people perceive them. Emphasized by the media, this line of thinking is based on externals—on physical appearance. Most of the cosmetics industry banks on people

comparing themselves to airbrushed models and falling short. In the United States alone, \$20 billion is spent annually on cosmetics; \$300 million on cosmetic surgery; and \$33 billion on dietary products.

To me, this type of spending illustrates the extent to which we're consumed with physical appearance, and it flies in the face of reason when we understand that beauty isn't meeting a prescribed set of criteria. Beauty is subjective; it's different for each person. But I feel that it can't be denied that inner beauty—a beautiful heart—makes a beautiful face.

To me, some of the gemstones that shimmer in the crown of inner beauty include compassion, humor, intelligence, diplomacy, integrity, and trustworthiness. When these qualities are indwelling, I think that the flow of

Beauty, to me, is about  
being comfortable in your own skin.

That, or a kick-ass red lipstick.

— Gwyneth Paltrow



beauty from the inside out is more effective than any work done by the most skilled of plastic surgeons.

As a person who spends a lot of time behind the lens of a camera, I've noticed that the younger or older a person is, the more they are themselves; they don't try to appear different from who they are. When we remain ourselves—untainted by the vagaries of the world around us—we're beautiful.

Salma Hayek—actress, director, and producer—has been quoted as saying, "People often say that 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder,' but I say that the most liberating thing about beauty is realizing you ARE the beholder. This can empower us to find beauty in places where others have not dared to look, including inside ourselves."

To me, being attractive is only skin deep. True beauty is much deeper—it's being yourself. ✨



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Drugless Practitioners. She is the owner of HolEssence in Crystal Lake, IL. Please visit her website at [www.HolEssence.com](http://www.HolEssence.com) and her blog, *Speaking from the Heart*, at <http://holessence.wordpress.com>.

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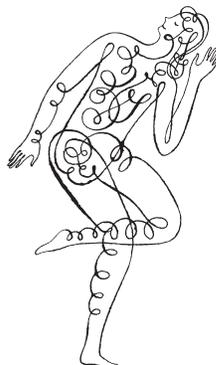
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WILDS



Debbie Mackall is the Creative Director and artistic visionary of *Shine Visual Communications*. She will personally oversee your project, designing and producing your materials to provide the most dynamic and impressive image for your company.

As needed, we will provide all of your media needs from design, writing and web programming through printed materials and delivery.

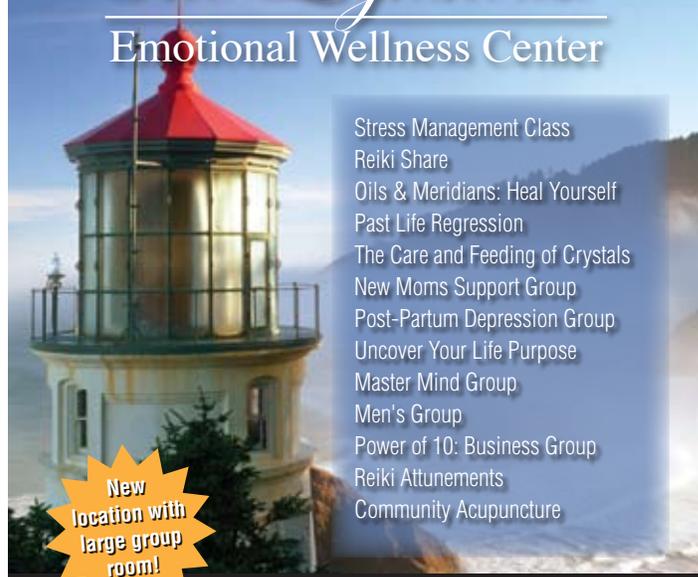
See our website for samples of satisfied customers.

**Let's get started!**

**847-726-2093 | [www.shinevc.com](http://www.shinevc.com)**

# The Lighthouse

## Emotional Wellness Center



- Stress Management Class
- Reiki Share
- Oils & Meridians: Heal Yourself
- Past Life Regression
- The Care and Feeding of Crystals
- New Moms Support Group
- Post-Partum Depression Group
- Uncover Your Life Purpose
- Master Mind Group
- Men's Group
- Power of 10: Business Group
- Reiki Attunements
- Community Acupuncture

**New location with large group room!**

**847-253-9769 | 121 S. Wilke Road, Suite 500, Arlington Hts**

Call or visit our website for information and our workshop schedule!

**[www.lighthouseemotionalwellness.com](http://www.lighthouseemotionalwellness.com)**



### CENTER FOR CONTEXTUAL CHANGE



For 20 years the clinicians of the Center for Contextual Change have been assisting individuals, couples, and families to enhance their strengths, develop new coping strategies, and heal emotional wounds.

#### Our services include:

- EMDR
- Yoga Centered Psychotherapy (individual and group)
- Transformative Insight Imagery
- Reiki
- Mindfulness
- Expressive Art Therapies



To inquire about our services and/or make an appointment in one of our three office locations, contact:

Dee Crowley, LCSW, RYT  
847-676-4447 x314

or

Peg Duros, LCSW, RYT  
847-676-4447 x221

**Chicago | Elmhurst | Skokie**

**[www.centerforcontextualchange.org](http://www.centerforcontextualchange.org)**