

Creative Healing

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Chapter Two

How art and healing are one

Your inner artist finds your inner healer

The basic message of *Creative Healing* is very simple. Art heals you, art heals others, and art heals the earth. Each of us has deep within us an inner artist and an inner healer. The inner artist is the part of us that is passionately creative, that feels love, that feels connected to everything around us, that can see, that knows who we are, that is at home, and that is at peace. The inner artist can go anywhere in the inner world. No place is closed to them. They can even go to the inner healer and merge with it and bring it out. The inner healer is the part of you that balances your body perfectly and sets your blood flow, your immune system, your killer T cells to be in harmony. Art frees the healer within so you can heal yourself of an illness. Art frees your spirit so your mind and body are in harmony. Art frees your immune system to work at its optimum and help you heal. Art helps you conquer disease by freeing your inner healer to work at its optimum.

A let's say story

Let's say there is an aspect of you that you cannot see. And even more puzzling, it is the wisest and deepest aspect of who you are. Let's say that you are an ordinary woman or an ordinary man. You go through your daily routine- pick up your kids, run a business, do all the things you do. And still you somehow feel confused, disconnected from something deeper within you. You have a feeling that there is something missing, almost a life unlived. And then, one day, you get a diagnosis that you are ill, or find yourself in crisis. It could be any illness, or a life event that results in a deep depression. You go to all kinds of health care providers, physicians, psychologists, and alternative healers, to seek healing. You take herbs, do exercise, get body work done, and utilize many different types of therapies. They all help in differing degrees but none of them feels like the essence of healing. Your body experiences itself as ill and you feel disconnected from it and betrayed by it. You know that deeper within your body is the source of your life, and now that you are ill you feel the need to make contact with this source. Somehow you know if you can make the connection to that part of yourself it will help you heal.

Now let's say you can make art, any art and that this process will help you find the part of yourself that will heal, the part of yourself you have been looking for. Let's say it is that simple. Let's say that all you have to do is to find the part of yourself that can say "I am an artist." All you have to do is to allow yourself to be more creative, to move, sing, write, dance, and do it spontaneously without censorship. Let's say that if you allow it to be seen, it will liberate you so you can get in touch with the healer within. For example, when you paint with abandon, you find an aspect of yourself that knows the truth. You are manifesting your own creativity. This creativity is your passion, this passion is your life. Slowly something within you starts to stir. As you realize that you are the source, you realize that you are what you need to heal.

You can picture art and healing like a hero's journey, a myth, a story, or a fairy tale. Picture yourself as a person who needs to heal your land from a great problem or evil. You travel to a foreign land you have never seen before to find helpers. You go into the forests, the mountains, the deserts and the darkest places. You meet a person who is pure

magic, a teacher, a seer. They lead you to the secret place where the person who has the power to heal or solve the problem lives and they introduce you to them. The healer is stuck in a cave or prison and needs to be freed. Only you can perform the feat that lets them out to heal the land. You throw the ring in the fire, or say a prayer, or do a dance, and they come out and are free and their enormous power heals the land. Of course the meaning of this story is clear. You are the one who will be healed. The land is the inner world of your imagination. The figure who is the seer is you as the artist. The figure who is the healer is you too. It is all you. It only seems like they are different parts. This journey will bring you to them. This journey will make the story true.

When we each find our own song, as Larry LeShan says in *Cancer As A Turning Point*, and find out what we love the most, our self- healing mechanisms begin to function at their optimum. Deep within all of us is the place of perfect beauty from which we all come. It the same place from which we are born. It is the same place to which we will return. In that place we will find our deepest peace, our most profound memories of who we are. In our lives this is the place of the memory of our brightest moment. It is tied to our vision of being touched, being nurtured, being loved perfectly, being in the presence of something greater than ourselves. And it is also tied to our memory of our greatest sadness, of our losses, of our fears of our own death. In the center of this place of beauty, is the energy that heals us. This is also the energy of our own passionate creativity.

A guided imagery story of art and healing: The legend of the old woman of the springs

Stories have always been used by healers. We are taught most profoundly by symbols, morals, and archetypes whose meanings sink in without our always understanding them at first. This is why fairy tales were told to children, why stories from the Bible, the Koran, or the Vedas were told to help people feel the presence of a greater power, why even older myths and legends, have always been used to help people grasp the ineffable, the sacred.

Guided imagery as a mind body therapy is also deeply relaxing and experiential. It is a basic tool in medicine used for many illnesses. It is used in cancer clinics worldwide to help cancer patients relax and heal. Guided imagery is as simple as picturing an event or memory in your imagination. If you relax and close your eyes and picture your bedroom, you can look around in your imagination and "see" your bed, your dresser, the windows, and the color of the walls. When you use guided imagery for healing, you can picture an illness and your body's healing mechanisms. For example, you can picture cancer cells and your white blood cells eating them. We did this in the first imagery exercise above. Michael has used guided imagery with cancer patients for twenty five years, and the artists in Mary's program all use guided imagery whether they dance, draw, or tell stories.

The legend of the old woman of the springs that we are about to tell is an ancient myth , that links art and healing. It talks about how art and healing were one in a mythical time of spirits and how we are still connected to our ancestors through deep memories and our own physiology. The legend itself is as old as any story and aspects of it appear in Native American legends, Jewish lore, Sufi myths and African stories. The legend of the

old woman of the springs is about the wellspring of creativity that is within each of us. It is about creation, connections, and our birth.

It is also a story about you being loved perfectly for who you are right now. In the legend, the old woman of the springs who created you, loves you, even if you are ill, in crisis, depressed, or lost. She loves you into the very center of your sadness, the deepest heart of your pain, the core of your anger. In a real sense, the old woman of the springs is our ancient mother. And we all have the memories of being inside her body in the soft whooshing, the moving, the dimmed colors, the lub dub of her heartbeat, the flowing sounds of her breathing. This is the first healing art, music, and dance that we recall. This ancient legend brings us there as softly as she sings. Do you hear her voice? Healing art is about going back into the place where we were loved perfectly, and where we were embraced by sound, colors, and movement. It is about you loving yourself for who you are right now and being seen and honored for who you are right now. In the legend, the old woman is the one who nurtures us in that way. For you, the old woman can be anyone; it can even be an old man- gender is not important here. In this book the love starts from inside of you.

All through this book we take the story of the old woman of the springs and expand it and use it to help you understand how art heals. Whenever we tell the story, you can rest. You don't have to think, analyze, understand, or learn anything. Each time the story is told let it take hold of you as if it were a lullaby. Relax, have fun, be entertained. Let yourself heal.

I will tell you a story. It is a story that is older than any other. This story is deep in our memories, this story is deep in your soul. It is the story of the creation of art and healing. It always begins with the story of the old woman of the springs. She has always been seen as the weaver of our dreams, as the mother of creativity and art, as the one who could heal. Close your eyes, relax, let your breathing slow down. We will start from the ordinary, from your kitchen table, from a drive in your car, or a hospital room from wherever you are. And we will take you deeper. We will go into our imagination on a journey. Let us go into a mystical forest. It is a secret place, it is the place that only you can see, it is a place in your imagination. You can find it in any moment. You will find it by becoming ill, by being in a life crisis, by seeing death, by falling in love, by becoming an artist. First, imagine that you are on a path. It is a narrow path, the ground is dirt, it is hard enough so it is comfortable to walk on. It is the path of the creative healer. As your feet find it, you can imagine that you start to walk. Feel the hard ground, hear your footsteps fall, feel the grass on the sides of the path touch your legs. Smell the air, feel the warm soft breeze on your face. As you walk you begin to feel differently, the air itself changes, it opens and fill's with light., it expands and as it expands, you expand too. Your eyes open wider. your ears can hear more clearly. Your body moves by itself and your breath is not only yours anymore.

As you go down the path, your way darkens and narrows slightly. The leaves touch your skin and the soft earth caresses your feet. The warm moist air glistens on the leaves like dew drops and the energy within you flows outward. As you look ahead, you can see an emerald pool down a short hill. It is round and beautiful and it shines in the afternoon

sun. It is on the bottom of a glade of small trees.. The pool is deep blue and perfectly round and in its center is a spring that flows upwards from the earth as pure clear water. You can see the bubbles coming to the surface in whirlpools, you can almost hear the bubbling as it goes on forever. Now look upwards on the ground next to the spring. Above the spring, she sits, in perfect and eternal peace. She is the most beautiful creature you have ever seen, she is a woman of pure spirit. As you look at her, you can see that she changes as you see her. One moment she is the virgin Mary looking down on you with perfect love. One moment she is your lover, looking at you with eternal desire, and in the next moment she is an old woman with a loom who weaves the silver and golden threads that make the springs and the earth itself. And then, in another moment she is a turtle who has sat forever on the side of the spring watching all of it being born. As she sits and changes like the light you can see that she has been there forever and has created the world. She weaves the fibers of her most beautiful dream. She weaves art and healing as one. She weaves each of us into the vision as artists, as healers. She weaves the very spirals that we travel on, on the energy that makes us fall in love. She is weaving this story as I am telling you. She is weaving this book as her song on earth. She is singing to us.

Now look more closely. She sits on the edge of the spring and as she looks down inside the spring, she can see the eternal wellspring of creativity and she can see your life. She has meditated here for a million years and she can see the water spring up from the very center of her own heart. She sees how beautiful she is, was, and will be. She sees how it always flows, and how it will flow for a million lifetimes. For each lifetime, each of our ancestors before us from the first one, she has sat there. She has been there for all of eternity.

You can see that out of the spring comes a turquoise light. It shines on her face and on yours. You can see that she is very ancient. If you look closely you can see that a part of her is young and youthful, and a part of her is very old. Look at her hands. As she sits, and you look at her hands, it is almost as if she holds a magic wand, from which she is weaving a magic web. You can see that she looks deep into the springs, and from the center of the spring you can see the energy go up into her hands. She weaves a magic web for you. She catches the springs energy and power, and weaves it into the earth. She sees it and her hands can feel it. When you look at her hands closely, you can see that she is weaving a spiral of light, and if you look very closely at what her hands are weaving, you can see that it is the light from exploding nebula that come from the deepest inner depths. This is the moment and source that is the creation of images. As she takes the dream of art and healing from the spring, she takes it to each one of us and weaves it into our hearts. There is a string inside of each strand of woven web. These strings go from her hand and fly up as one, to each one of us, to you, up into the center of your heart. You are in the place where time and space are not limited and these threads come up like spirals and you can see them go into infinity and they go up and down in the past, present, and the future. She holds the interlocking connections together at the side of this eternal spring. She can see us always, she sees us always. And now, we can see her. She is weaving the web and holding the connections together. We can see that we are connected to many others. We are connected to everyone who is healing themselves with art from the beginning of time to the end of time. As we see her, we realize that we

too are part of her dream. It is the ancient dream of art and healing as one. She sings to us in her eternal chant. "Each of you is an artist. Each of you is a healer".

Reclaiming your inner artist

The guided imagery of the legend of the old woman of the springs is the first story of art and healing. In a real sense, the book *Creative Healing*, is her song. The path to her spring is the path to creative healing. This book brings each of us to the spring where she sings, for she sings about the creativity within us. We are all artists, whether we paint, sculpt, write poetry, tell stories or dance, garden, cook, make a home, or are a caregiver. You can simply begin by journeying back to the point in which your life was the most creative. Take a few moments and close your eyes and remember these moments. Relax and you will remember your moments of creativity. You left them behind, all of us did as children, we will go back to where you were the artist. We will go back to where you left that cherished part of yourself. We will guide you to return to that moment, to reclaim yourself as artist. You may have forgotten. So we have set up pathways of creative healing that will guide you to reunite with your most creative self. You can choose whatever medium that resonates with you the most. Follow us. It is the way to spiral to your own creative source. This medium will reunite with you with your artist within. It will feel natural. It will be who your are.

Art as a way of healing, our own personal stories

We believe that at the core of the personal story, told as lived experience, is the truth. All through this book we tell the personal stories of patients, artists, and healers. We will tell the stories of people who healed themselves with art. Within the personal story is the actual way it happened, not the theory. Like guided imagery, a personal story is something to be felt and experienced. For us, art and healing is a passion, art is a way of healing, a way of caring, and a way of knowing. How did we get here, how did we become involved in art and healing? Mary is a nurse, a wife, and a mother with three children. How did she find herself the co-founder of The Arts In Medicine Program at the University of Florida? Michael was a physician, a father, a husband, and photographer. How did he come to believe that art is a powerful healing tool for cancer patients and why did he found Art As a Healing Force? Here are their stories from the beginning. Here is how they started to become healing artists.

Mary's story:

Several years ago I was extremely ill. I was going through a very difficult divorce. I was in a rage, depressed, and extremely out of control. All the resources in my life had collapsed and I was drowning. I was not able to deal constructively with my life, with my children, or with my friends. I was in therapy, but I wasn't making any movement forward. I was surrounded by my grief and I couldn't see past it. I was in a place of darkness and despair. I remember the therapist saying to me, "It's time to do something different with your rage and your grief."

In a lucid moment, I decided to abandon my fears of being a painter, something I had always dreamed of being, and had never given myself permission to be, because I never felt good enough. Finally I did not put so much pressure on myself to be "good enough."

I just remembered I had always wanted to be an artist. At that time, I felt so devastated that the fear of inadequacy was minute compared to the painful loss I was experiencing. In my memory, I remember the way everything happened like it was a slow motion movie. . I walked out of the therapist's office. I was at the end of my rope. It was a drizzling-rainy kind of day, it seemed like life was going on without me. I was deeply depressed. My body was in such pain that I wanted to fall down and die. I remember walking up to a large muddy puddle. I could see my reflection in the mud. I thought about just of falling down in it. I glanced up and there was a slow moving car hesitantly driving towards me. As I looked at it, I flashed on the face of a woman I recognized. It was my friend Lee Ann. She was a painter. She came up and rolled down the car window, 'Why don't I take you to breakfast and I'll take you to my studio and you can start painting.' " I took out a large canvas and did not even know how to hold a brush. I looked through magazines and saw a picture of a woman who was broken and distorted. That was how I felt. I started painting. I got excited about the colors of the paint, how the shapes appeared on the paper. My painting was large and it started to look like something, most importantly it looked like my pain and it looked like how I felt. I forgot about how I felt and instead looked at how I felt. I got excited about the making of the painting. Then I got another canvas and started a series of paintings of woman. They were all distorted in the beginning. I painted garish backgrounds. I took photographs of myself and I started painting myself. I become absorbed in the process and painted how I felt, instead of thinking of how I felt. I began to realize I was painting my life.

"Next, I created a studio space for myself and simply began painting. I painted feverishly. In the beginning, I made no attempt to define myself or my process. I painted from pure feeling states. I became absorbed in the pure expression and gesture of painting. I could completely release my energy passionately on the canvas. The series turned out to be self portraits. The first painting I called "Cut Out My Heart." It was my pain, a deeply intense and dying pain. The figure was broken, distorted, diffuse, crumpled, crying, and bleeding. I painted "her." This figure had been my despair, my uncensored and purely emotional energy. And in the moment I had released this image, I stepped back and looked. Gasp. What I saw was an aspect of myself that I couldn't face, it was so ugly. Yet I felt calm and detached. I had let go, on an intense emotional and physical level. Painting is physical for me, I embody my pain as I paint it. For the first time I was experiencing my pain in a strange and new way. As a painter I stood in front of the canvas and was for the first time in control. I painted my emotions, I painted my body. I could feel that I was the creator of myself. I backed away, left the studio, and went home. When I returned, I saw that the image had captured and contained a moment that was now past. Then, I had an incredible insight. The painting remained an object that contained an image created in genuine and immediately felt expression, and I now had moved past it. I realized that there was movement and I was witnessing my own transformation.

"As I painted this series of self-portraits, in each painting I struggled with form and perspective. Metaphorically I was recreating and reconstructing my inner form and inner perspective. The external creative process mirrored my inner world. I realized the manifestation of movement and change was powerful and it was a process of knowing myself. As I immersed myself in the painting, I not only became well, but clearly became the artist I had always wanted to be, a part of myself I had neither acknowledged

nor honored. It was from this personal experience that I realized that art could be used as a vehicle for healing.

"Art became a way to know myself through the experience of the personal pain that I painted. In seeing it, I could step away. I became the artist, and the series of paintings remained as the physical creation of pain. They were now my art, completely separate from me. It was a tangible experience of growing away from the place I had been when the images were painted. In essence I became free. Then I spent time in my studio with my girlfriends painting my life. I spent two years as an artist in my studio. I painted my children playing on the beach. I painted the surrounding landscapes that I saw. I would set up still lifes on the kitchen table and I would paint the things that I loved."

Michael's story:

"I was a physician on the Hopi Indian reservation that was in the center of the Navaho land. I had been sent there by the Public Health Service when my position at the National Institute of Health was eliminated. Up to then I had been an research imunogeneticist, studying antibodies. Now suddenly I was in an emergency medicine situation that was very sad. I saw hundreds of Navhos and Hopis a day. Each patient visit was mandated to last no more than four minutes and many of the mid- reservation Navahos did not speak English. Most of the patients were babies dying of dehydration from diarrhea and we did not have a laboratory to do electrolytes. This was amazing to me, it was so dark I really could not believe it. Going to work each day I was more unhappy than I had ever been in my whole life. The way I was forced to practice medicine felt entirely wrong to me. Even when I could speak to my patients in English, like I could with the Hopis, I was excluded from their lives. All I could do was ask them how long they had been ill, what hurt, what they had been given before?. All I could do was give them a prescription for medicine or refill the prescription for medicine they were taking. The first night I was on call, two babies died of conditions that never would have killed them in the city hospital I had just come from. I felt like we were killing the people with poor care but each of us did the best we could under what were essentially third world mountain conditions. Each day that I went through the motions I became more depressed, so I left the reservation. This was very difficult for me since had I never left anything, but I was at the end of my rope and did not want to go on doing things I did not want to do any longer. I also realized that medicine using only drugs and surgery was not what I wanted to do so I simply stopped doing it. I realized this had been building up for a long time, that I wanted desperately to do something in my life that allowed me to be who I was, yet after years of medical training and research it was very hard to leave medicine and find out who I was.

"So I went back to where I had done my residency. I drove up the California coast and looked for a place to live. I knew I wanted to be in the country and be on the land. I found a seaside village that called to me. Somehow it seemed like home. I walked into the real estate office and sat down and found myself telling the story of who I was. When the real estate broker heard I was a physician who was interested in the spirit he gave me a place to live. He was Christian Scientist and wanted a doctor around him who could treat him without using drugs when he became ill each winter. I was it. So I moved into a house overlooking the ocean and the sunset, and each day I walked on the beach and day dreamed. What would I do with my life? How could I heal the visions of the

dying babies and the victims of auto accidents and the endless patients in plastic chairs moving one by one into my office where I could only see them for two minutes. How could I heal the years of doing something I did not love and the years of abusive medical training where I had been taught not to feel what was going on around me in people's lives.

"So I daydreamed back to the last time I had been truly happy. I had been a teenager, before medicine or even medical research had taken over my life. I was walking in the new fallen snow at dusk. The light was soft and purple and I felt I could touch the light and move my fingers through it like thick air. It was completely still. The silence was open and I was absorbed in total peace. I was taking pictures in black and white of the stalks of grass standing upwards, falling over, and looking like dancing figures in the drifts of snow. I saw the grass dancing before me in slow motion in the last light, the cold air, space and time opened to me. That moment was the opening doorway and I went in and in the moment of taking a picture somehow I was free. I remembered this feeling of peace and freedom, of merging with nature and of almost disappearing into the world. This feeling was so different from the way I felt in the world of medicine I had been in for so many years. I decided, not knowing what I would do, or even who I was, that I would simply return to the last place I was truly happy.

" I remembered that that was when I was a photographer, an artist. So instead of applying to another residency or going back into research I become a photographer again and started to spend my days taking pictures of rocks on the beach. I actually defined myself as a photographer and even tried to earn my living selling photographs. I would walk each day in the dimming light and find a rock that spoke to me and take her portrait. I would look at reflections and shapes and in the looking would be enchanted. I would print the pictures and hang them and look at them deep into the night and feel the harmony of the earth.

"One day I took nudes of my wife. They were very beautiful to me. Her shapes were soft and welcoming and also deeply exciting and energizing. Then I juxtaposed the negatives of the rocks with the negatives of Nancy, and my wife and the earth became one. I was deeply happy with this and as I made my art I was slowly healed of medical school and the pain I saw there. I was healed of all my memories of people's sadness and abuse, and the dying babies. I was healed from the emptiness of the way doctors treated patients and how impersonal the work was in hospitals and how dark the world of being sick and only being looked at as a body was. I started to think about creating my life anew, making my life as art. Nancy and I built our home together and to finance this I started working as a physician again. But this time I was different. I used meditation techniques I had learned, I spent time with my patients listening to their stories, and I started to do relaxation and guided imagery as part of allopathic medicine. I had changed. My medicine had changed. My way of seeing and my way of being had changed. Looking back on this story, it seems to me that my artist within came and got me in my darkest moment and healed me. And when it happened, it just happened. I did not heal myself, I was healed by my photography.

"Years later as my wife was having a bone marrow transplant for breast cancer I wrote a journal about the experience and that probably saved my life again. I was staying in her room in the hospital for the five weeks the procedure took. Watching her undergo this

difficult procedure and worrying about its complications was as hard as anything I had ever done. And again my inner artist emerged. For reasons I didn't know I decided to bring a laptop into her room and write each day. And each day I awakened to the world of my story and the world of her transplant. What I found was that each day I would see what was happening to her and me, I would also see it out of the eyes of myself as the writer- artist. I would also see her spirit and somehow each day I would give thanks for seeing it. Instead of being sad or being a crises report, my journal became deeply spiritual. It became a story of bravery and of Nancy as my teacher. The artist within had changed my eyes. Each time I wrote I could see her differently and see what was happening to us in a way that was sustaining for me and not depressing. Somehow my vision was of her beauty, not of her suffering and that is the vision I hold even to this day."

How does the "art of healing" relate to healing art?

Creative Healing brings forth an illuminated aspect of ourselves in everything that we do. This book is an activity. It is about becoming illuminated and coming out of concealment. For everyone who wants to be healed there a moment in their lives where they can see themselves anew. There is a moment when you drive along the road and see the sun- dappled leaves, their green richness, and see yourself in it. Creative healing brings on a shift in experience. For each person there is the vision that stands out in our lives. It can be a memory of a spiritual vision, a time with our families, or the making of art. In this book we will take you to that vision and slow it down so you can see it more clearly. That is what art does. We will look more closely and slower, in between the moments, in between our breaths.

Creative Healing is about returning to the source of healing, and regeneration. It is programmed from the spirit to the to mind to the body. This book will help you tap into the creative source of healing in a spiritual way. This book will be like a seed given birth. You have this deep capacity for transformation. You spiral inward to make contact with your healing energy. Any intentional act to heal yourself will access it. We will use the force of your passionate creativity and in this manner we will intentionally use art to manifest forms that express healing. We will use art to express light, anger, joy and change. We will use art to express yourself.

An imagery exercise to contact your inner healer: The journey on the sacred spiral

This next guided imagery takes you deep inside yourself to the place where images come from, to the place where you make art, and to the place where you heal. This imagery is different than the imagery of old woman of the springs. It does not tell a story, it takes you into a visual place of being inside your body. It takes you into your own healing physiology. It takes you into the meditative space where time and space are changed and where art and healing are one.

Close your eyes, let your breathing get slower and deeper, relax. All you have to do now is let yourself go into your imagination, into your mind's eye. Let yourself read these words and just be with them and everything will happen by itself. There is nothing to do, your mind will take you where you need to be with your imagination. All you need to do

is rest. Let's picture in our mind's eye, going inward on a journey on a sacred spiral. The spiral is very ancient. It comes from ancient memories of our birth and our rebirth. The spiral is how we emerged in the birth canal. As we were born, we all turned and rotated and went downwards towards the light. As we die, we all spiral and turn and go upwards towards the light. It is all the same, all deep within our remembrances, deep within our souls. In mythology the spiral is the movement of going into the center all energy. In nature spirals are the basic forms of space and time, they are in stars, light, in nebula and galaxies, and seashells.

Now see and feel your body as made of energy and movement. Inside it you can see colors and flow, you can see channels and fluids moving. Now look inside your body and see the spirals of motion that are within you. There are small ones in the cells, larger ones in the organs, and a larger one within your whole body. They do not necessarily correspond to anatomical body parts, they are just the beauty within us. See and feel the spirals within your body merging with each other. See and feel your spirals and those of your loved ones. See how your spirals touch your children, your loved ones. See and feel the spirals merge when you make love. The vortexes within all of us are constantly in movement, constantly interacting with the environment and each other. We are all born on the sacred spiral. and we spiral forever in time and space, like the planet earth spirals around the sun. We spiral in orbits of space and time. The universal movement is within us and outside us, it is contracting and expanding, breathing in and breathing out. The spiral goes beyond ordinary time and space and within the spiral you can connect to ancient healing spirits that will be your helpers and will be your guides. As you spiral inward to a deeper place inside of yourself, you will pass through a membrane to the center of your own heart and you will feel the pulsating of the universe from the very center of yourself and you will realize that you are interconnected with everything.

In the center of your heart, is the source of love, of passion and desire. There are no forms there and all forms emerge from it. It is the way the ancient ones knew the earth. It is the place that is shared with all others where there is no thought or emotions. It is the place that is sacred. It is the source of your life and the place where you are one with your creator. This is the place within you that is the source from which everything emerges. You are now inside of the membrane. The membrane holds the space between the inner and outer world, it always separates the space of the two sides. The membrane is a metaphor for going from the outer world to the inner world. It is chosen as the metaphor because in the outer world, the membrane always separates two sides. In our bodies, the membrane is the sac around the amniotic fluid before birth. All cells have it, all birth is through it. It is like a veil. At any given moment on the membrane it emerges, the source of life comes from the other inside of the membrane. Outside is the outer world, of your body, your family, your environment, all the thing that you know, you are now across the membrane, inside your heart in the inner world, which is spirit, formless, your source, your source of creativity. . In the membrane is something in-between the inner and outer worlds. You can always access the place inside you, through your art. In the act of your passion and your creativity, you can spiral to this place that is your inner source. You can always return to this place though the tangible world. This moment or place resonates and spirals throughout your experience of who you are,

and goes through all the experiences in your life. You are inside the membrane in a place where you are totally free. When you return from this imagery you will go to your living experience, to the place of tangibles. This is the point from where you will start to get well. Your illness may be the place where you feel that all your resources may have ended and all is gone. It is the place to return to your desire to live, to be fully alive, and to be happy. The point is to get well, this is the choice. To heal yourself. The artist is a way of healing.

Now rest a moment and let yourself become aware of your breathing. Notice that there is a moment between breaths, there is a pause, a moment of suspended animation. There is a moment where you are not actually breathing, you just are. Move into this space with the intention to heal. Say to yourself "I am starting from this place with the intention to do what I have always wanted to do in my life". This is a prayer. In this moment you shift into being one with your creator, one with your source, and then you begin to breathe in and out. You breathe in and out to move into any other dimension. The process is the pathway. Now you are on the pathway. Art is the way. All that was unconscious is now conscious and you can see deeply that there is a wisdom and a truth of what you are doing in your creation. You can see the glimpse of it in your heart. You heal instantly by the glimpse of what is the miracle of your life, and what you are in this moment emerges as the purest and most beautiful of forms, You are now the artist, you are beautiful and passionate. You are creative. What is now important is having the faith in your own creativity. You have become one with your artist. This artist is the pathway to the healer.

In this guided imagery exercise, you have become an artist. From now on, your artist is on the pathway to your healer, the healer within. This artist will activate the pathway of continuous creation. Your objective as an artist is to make forms. You make art in forms that are fluid. You do not need to understand these forms, you only need to flow with them.. Flow with your own spiral of creativity. Inherent is constant change, constant beauty, the ability to love. You see this. Inherent in the creative is the ability to be formed.

Instead of illness teaching you about limits, your artist can take you into freedom and passionate creativity. You are powerful. You are now the creator. You go into the opposite of illness, you go into freedom, creativity, limitlessness. Then you become empowered. As the artist you stand in front of yourself. You can see who you are. You have changed as an artist. You will not stay the same, you will grow and change. Now you realize that art is the way to open the door again and again to something new and different. You realize that you harness the creative energy inside you and therefore can influence what happens to you in your life. This energy can deeply effect your personal inner world, if not necessarily the outer one. It is exhilarating to feel creativity, to experience the empowerment which comes from the ability to create. That is the source of the life change.

Next you realize that the only way to keep the flow going is to let art come through you into the outer world. Let it go out, let it flow. It comes from love. It is about cultivation and grace. You offer yourself to be connected to thoughts, you offer yourself to others, you allow yourself to love yourself and be seen and give someone the wonderful opportunity to love you back. It is not an outcome it is a continuous process.

We give from the center of our hearts to the center of another's. The first path is to heal yourself, the next path is to heal others. By knowing this path you share it with others. Know that we are on the path of the healer. This path is not dependent on traditions. It is just from the center of your own heart. Listen, honor the creative expression, with acceptance honor the fullest expression of yourself. Know that constant transformation and healing are deeper than our body, they are in the center of our heart and soul.

Chapter Three

Story time: The history of art and healing

The new field of art and healing is the oldest healing we know of

The story of art and healing is an ancient one. It tells the stories of how people have used art to heal themselves from the time of the hunter gatherer human culture to the time of the newest programs in hospitals today. This story grounds you in the flow of your past, present, and future, it connects you to your ancestors. It shows you that you are a part of a great tradition that has gone on since the beginning of both art and healing. We include this chapter on the story of art and healing to give you increased faith in using art to heal by knowing that this new field is actually the oldest healing that there is. What is the main thing we can learn from listening to the stories of the first artist healers? The main thing we can learn from this chapter is that healing with art is as old as being a mother and that the first artist and the first healer were one person and they were just like you, they had your body, your mind, and your spirit. This powerful tool for healing has been used forever. Now you can use it too.

The story of art and healing

What is the story of art and healing? To summarize it in a short story, it is a journey from the nurturing care of a mother singing a lullaby, to the hunter in the cave preparing his vision of the hunt. It moves from the woman mystic doing a ritual around childbirth, to the tribal peoples who danced together to heal. It journeys to the shaman as a healer specialist of the inner world, to the sacred artist and healer of Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and all religions. It reaches the modern artist changing space again, and finally ends up in the present day where artists and healers use art to heal themselves, others, and earth. The journey sounds far, and there are large jumps between each stage as we describe them. The separations, however, are artificial. The evolution happened in a more complicated and nuanced way, but the major points add up the same. One person makes art and goes inward and frees their inner healer. The process is ordinary and visionary at once. We are still every one of the heroes in these stories. We are parents, spiritual people, and modern day artist healers. As we make healing art we add our stories to the ongoing saga. We are the healing artists. As we make art we remember who we are.

In the beginning was the mother

At the beginning of art and healing, is the simple story of a mother. As she sat holding her baby in her arms, she sang a lullaby. We believe that the first piece of healing art was the lullaby of a mother to her baby. And that probably started before the baby was even born. Within the uterus, the unborn baby could hear his mother singing, he could see soft colors, she could feel her mother dancing, and making love. Art as healing came from mothering and loving. After the baby was born, as the mother took care of her baby, she still sang songs. She decorated the baby's cradle board, she made her beautiful clothing, she rocked him to sleep in a carved cradle. When the baby was ill, which was common in ancient times, the mother's songs became more serious, they turned into chants and prayers. We can imagine that after hours of singing, she would see spirits and hear songs from the wind or from the night. She would sing these new songs to her baby. Anthropology tells us that in ancient times women believed that there were spirits, helpers, forces, or powers, who could help heal a baby so mothers sung and chanted to

bring these spirits to their lovingly carved cradles. The fathers too naturally used art to heal. When the baby was ill, he told stories and made believe he was a great bear. Ancient stories tell us that fathers even believed that they could contact a bear spirit to help their babies heal. The mother might say a prayer and carve a doll who was a protector or an ancestor. African mothers to this day carve amulets to protect their babies and to honor ancestors and babies they have lost. So healing with art was always about love and spirituality. Each of us can still be healers in this way now.

We believe that the first healing art was as natural as mothering; it came from the deep love of a mother for her baby. This could be why most healing artists today are women and why most healing traditions using art through history have involved mystical women. Woman mystics are pioneers, delving deep into the mysteries of the inner world. You can imagine a distant time when women would get together in a circle and sing to one of their own who was grieving from a loss, or dance with a woman who was about to give birth. The traditions of childbirth were rich with art: woman midwives sung, instructed mothers to dance, and made amulets to protect mothers to- be from dangers that in ancient times were very real. Adorning their bodies, painting, tattooing, and scarification were all part of ancient healing practices and all were part of a woman's everyday life. Art was a way of caring.

The first art made of a woman was believed to be the Venus of Magellen. This magnificent sculpture portrayed a woman in her most beautiful shape. Her breasts were large and pendulous, her belly was huge and round. In the art she looked like she had given birth to the earth and was breast feeding it daily. This sculpture embodies fertility, fecundity, and the power to create life. Imagine a man or a woman making this sculpture during a ceremonial ritual. Such images were believed to be ritual objects for fertility and childbirth or simply to represent the reverence for the life force itself which was seen as Her. Amulets of these figures were carried to protect a person or help a woman create babies, to enhance her fertility and to heal the earth.

The first mothers made their healing art in private with their babies. As a woman sat singing to her sick baby she might make up a story that would explain what illness was about or what had caused the problem. This story would be the subject of the healing art, of the song, of the amulet. This art was not often made of materials that lasted and is probably lost to recorded history. Later groups of woman told these stories over and over again and they became the culture's theories of illness and the subject of rituals performed in healing groups. Men too would tell stories, dance and sing, and build theories of illness that became the basis of healing rituals or ceremonies. As the rituals grew and became more elaborate, they probably resembled theatrical performances of today. They were a mixture of elaborate costumes, stories, songs, and drama. People believed that this ritual would bring in the healing spirits and heal their loved ones. In ancient times and even now, all cultures except ours have believed that illness is caused by being out of harmony with spiritual forces. For that reason, the art used in healing tended to be spiritual in nature. It often portrayed spirits or protectors or even ancestors who had died and thus lived in the world of the sprits. Other healing art was about a person's life, about a hunt or a journey or a place they loved. But one thing is clear from

these stories. The art was transformational. It was done to accomplish something, to heal, to soothe, to love. It was done to make the hunt successful, to make the land fertile, to control the weather, and to heal. Yes, art was also decoration, but its main function was transformative: to create balance and to heal.

The cave man and woman and the animals

Most art historians consider cave paintings to be the earliest form of recorded art. On the walls of the cave in Tres Friers in southern France magnificent paintings portray a human with large circled eyes wearing a headdress with tall antlers, possibly representing a hunter or a shaman. These paintings were thought to portray magical visions to improve the hunt. This would make sense for the early hunter knew his animals deeply. To be able to hunt animals with a spear he had to get close, close enough to literally touch their bodies. To do that he had to know their habits, trails, ways of moving, what they ate, where they found water. He could almost see out of the animal's eyes and when he killed the animal he worshipped it as if it had offered him its body. The hunter honored the animal's spirit and became one with it. He knew the animal like he knew himself. When the animal died, its spirit was often believed to enter into the hunter and then he would know the animal even better. He would become an even more powerful hunter.

You can imagine the early cave man or woman dancing in a dark cave lit only by fire. You can picture him or her painting pictures of the dancers in their wild headdresses on the walls. It is theorized that the hunter believed that when he dressed as the animal he became the animal. He could speak to the spirit and ask it to come to him in the hunt. It was a spiritual union of human and animal that spoke of reverence and interdependence. After all, we share the same DNA with the animals, we have hearts like they do, breathe like they do, they are our brothers and sisters. The experience of "becoming" the animal was primary to the making of this ancient art. Hunters would paint themselves with animal blood and dung, and transform themselves into the very creatures they hunted. Through their art, they became more powerful, better able to hunt, and feed their people.

Dancing to free our boiling energy

One of the most beautiful stories of art and healing comes from the Kalihari Bushman people of the African desert. The Bushman are a people living today as hunter gatherers. Looking at them may yield exciting clues about how peoples used art and healing for millions of years. For ninety nine percent of human evolution, humans were hunter gatherer peoples. Richard Katz of the Harvard University Kalihari project visited these people and wrote about their healing rituals in his book *Boiling Energy*. He describes how the bushman would dance all night several nights a week. They believed that dance freed up the boiling energy within them and was the way to heal. During the dance ritual their bodies became incredibly hot and enormous energy came up from within them. These techniques often caused their illness to subside. Sometimes they would go into a trance after dancing for hours and people around them would touch them and help them. This community healing ritual was an ordinary part of Bushman life and was not something special or artificial. It fit in with the people's world view and probably evolved over millions of years..

The healing dancing of the Bushman has several important characteristics in the story of art and healing. First, the dance "the art" was done by everyone. There was no figure who did something to you. There were people who led the dance but the healing was done by the dancing itself. The physical movements freed the healing energy. So in a very real sense, the dancers became their own healing artists. Each person made the art that freed their inner healer. Second, in the process people did not separate out "art" and "healing". Their healing dancing was simply a "freeing" of energy, a transformation. It was not just for entertainment although it certainly was the most exciting thing that they could do. Dance and healing were one. We cannot say the dance caused healing- it simply was healing.

A guided imagery of freeing boiling energy

This imagery lets you picture in your imagination what it must have been like to be among the hunter gatherers who healed themselves with dance.

Close your eyes, relax, let your beating slow down, take several deep breaths, let your abdomen rise and fall. Now imagine that you are on an plain, a rolling prairie. Look up and you can see more stars than you have ever seen before. The whole sky is like an inverted bowl, the stars are like other worlds. The air feels soft on your skin, Your breathing feels deep. You touch your feet to the ground and feel the soft earth. You know that this is a special vision and you feel deeply like you have been in this sacred place many times before.

Let yourself be on the great plain under the stars on a beautiful clear night. The mountains shine in the distance and the grazing animals cover the plains like distant trees. All your friends and relatives are around you, in fact all the people you know and have ever known are there. You are there to dance, you do this several times a week. People around you start to dance, to move, to shake. Music starts and drums beat all around you. You know you are here to heal, to free your boiling energy. Suddenly you can feel yourself dancing, spinning, and whirling with all your people. You feel your body getting hot and you feel the energy rising within you. You feel yourself going round and round in larger and smaller circles and as you spin you feel yourself go deep into the spinning and deep into yourself. Soon the stars and the plains and the animals all are forgotten and you see yourself as if you are above you. You are just beautiful, and as you see yourself dancing you can see red lines of energy shooting up from the base of your spine and moving all throughout your body. You dance for hours and you feel looser and looser and more and more wonderful and in the crystal dawn you are free and relaxed. You feel like you are in perfect balance with the whole world and with all your people. Then you see a person you know as a lead dancer. They come up to you and you fall in their arms. And as you fall they hold you and they push on your body where it had hurt. The healing energy gets even brighter and more beautiful. You are healed, whole, alive, and full. You go back to your house and you see it is a part of the prairie. You lay down to sleep and you vibrate like the mountains, you move like the winds, you shine like the stars themselves. And you remember that you do this almost every night, it is the way you keep well and heal. It is an important part of your life. Now come back into your own room and awaken to your usual state of mind. You can see your bedroom or couch and

you can see the furniture and the things that usually surround you. You can bring this vision back with you and you can dance to heal whenever you want to. You have this memory deep within your cells. You can be your own artist healer. You can bring back these feelings of freeing your inner energy and use them whenever you want to, in imagery space or as a dancer. This is how healing with art feels, this is how it always felt.

The first artist and the first healer were one person: the shaman

The next stage in the story of art and healing comes from the birth of shamanism. Shamanism is a cultural practice where a person goes into another world, which psychologists now see as their inner world or imagination, and sees spirits, gods, or forces. The spirits are communicated with and wield influence to heal, to let a person free, to let animals come to a hunt, to control the wind or sea, to influence fertility, to change the world. It is our belief that the shaman evolved from the ordinary person making art. When you make art you concentrate deeply, you go into a creative place inside you and have ideas or visions or thoughts. From these inner meditations you create a work of art. Remember the story of the mother who after hours of singing to a sick baby sees spirits? That is all shamanism is. The creative trance takes you to the inner world where you are different. In the Bushman culture every person in the tribe danced and went into a trance and felt the boiling energy come from within them. Over time however, the ancient tribal culture changed. As the hunter gatherer cultures became more complicated people tended to specialize. Everyone did not dance three times a week because they were out hunting or building houses or gathering food for a larger group. And as the people stopped making art several times a week they lost their ability to see into their own inner world. They simply got out of practice. Something else took their attention. But there were still individuals among the people who danced and made amulets and sung and went into trances and saw spirits in the inner world. Since the main cause of illness in all the cultures in the world was believed to be spiritual, these people were valued and became experts in the act of seeing within. Mercea Eliade, the eminent University of Chicago history of religions scholar, said that a shaman was a specialist in seeing spirits, the first specialist in the soul. As such, in contemporary times, the healing artist is a medical specialist in restoring the body and soul.

The shaman received his or her calling by having a dream or vision, by inheriting the position from a relative or by healing themselves from a illness. Generally the ability to see visions or dream was the major requirement. Human culture had gone from a place where everyone was an artist healer to the place where some people who were naturally gifted at it did it for the group. But two of the main characteristics of early art and healing still remained. Art and healing were still one, they just were not being done by everyone. The shaman was thus the first artist and the first healer. And in the time of the shaman, art was still transformational. Art was made to heal or to hunt. In that sense, all of us who are healing ourselves with art are modern shaman.

Eventually, in tribal cultures, music and dance were combined with costumes and storytelling and with objects and paintings in the creation of a ritual that we would now call

theater or performance art. In ancient times this ritual was sacred and it was part of the culture's healing practices. In ancient cultures it was believed that illness was caused by spirits or forces, and the only way to contact the spirits was by a shaman going into a trance. In the trance the shaman saw the spirits, talked them into releasing the illness or the person, and came back to the tribe and told the story of the journey. The ancient shaman did not venture inward without their powerful animal spirits to guide them. Much art was made by the shaman portraying their journeys and thus art often contained images of animals, spirits, canoes, shamans, skeletons, plants, gods and goddesses. All these images were actually seen by the shaman in the inner world and were painted sculpted and danced as they were seen. In a very real sense, shamanic art was realistic. It portrayed real experiences that the shaman had and did so as a means of communication. The art was also believed to have power in itself: the images were believed to contain part of the power of the object portrayed.

Art and healing were one in the time of the shaman. Why was this so? There was no art as such, no art as an activity separate from communicating with the spirits and accessing their power.. The first healing art of the shaman was about embodiment, about becoming the spirit or animal, being it as totally as the shaman could. The second way art and healing were one was based on sharing. When the healer wanted to share their experience with the patient or the village they told the story. The way they made the story come vividly alive for people it became a kind of early theater.

Much later, native peoples would carve stone sculptures of human animal transformations. Often the pieces would portray a shaman with a bear head or a woman with owl wings or even a dancing shaman with bear claws and an owl's face. Native peoples say that the transformation pieces illustrate the stories shamans told of turning into animals, seeing out of an animal's eyes, taking on the animal spirit. The carvings enabled the people to share the experience and see what the shaman had seen. The pieces would often be carried by the shaman in his or her pocket or hung on their costume. It was believed that the pieces gave the shaman power by holding the energy of the spirit animal transformation.

As human culture changed, specialization became more and more extreme, Later in agricultural societies, certain people made art and certain people concentrated on healing. Art and healing became separated more and more and each discipline became more specialized. The person who did each action then became a different person who was then called an "artist" or a "healer". But there were always those of us who held onto the original vision of art and healing as one. Some artists painted or sculpted their sacred visions, and these visions were seen as deeply healing. But the main cultural trend was clear. Art and healing were becoming two different actions. They were done by two different people. Further specialization had arrived.

Today artist healers still heal by art from visions of healing forces. When you dance you can still free the healing energy. When you paint you can still paint healing forces. When you write you can still tell your own story of how you are healing.

The guided imagery story of the legend of the old woman of the springs: how art and healing were born.

As we told you earlier, the old woman of the springs was the mother of all forms on earth. As we tell more and more of her story she tells us more about how art and healing were born. In this chapter of her story she tells us how she gave birth to the first art, poetry, music, and dance and to the first artist healer.

Now go back in your mind to the story of the old woman of the springs. Go back to the forest, the path, the circular turquoise spring.. And as she weaves the earth from her dreams she sings to us. Close your eyes and listen to her song, "Listen to my song my children. I will tell you the story of how art and healing were born. It is the oldest story, it is a story tied to the story of who you are and where you came from. It is a story about your origins. It is a creation story, listen, listen to my tale.

From deep within my most ancient memories, from far within my deepest love, my dream emerges. Oh, I put my hands deep inside my own body, into the stars, into the night, into the seas, into the forests, and I pull out the strands of the dream, I pull out the animals of the four directions, I pull out their spirits, I pull out time and space, I pull out my peoples. And as you listen to her, she reached into herself, she who was all there was, except for the spring, and she pulled out time and space and she pulled out the four directions and she pulled out the animals spirits and she pulled out the first peoples.

And the first peoples rested and slept and they stirred and stretched and they stood up on their legs and they looked around. They saw the spring and they saw her weaving them still and they were amazed and joyful and they opened their mouths and a song came out and they moved and it was dance and they touched their fingers to the earth and it was their visions and they spoke and it was the first poem. And the first peoples made art with their first breaths and they saw her always above them dreaming them and they were at peace.

She loved them perfectly of course and she put this memory deep within them and knew that they would need this connection later when they became afraid. And then the old woman saw them grow and prosper and she saw them start to make objects and hunt and farm and she saw them stop making art, and stop seeing her. And she sat one day and went deep into her heart and pulled out a special silver thread and it was the thread of her own memory and it was the thread of art and healing as one and it was the thread that led to her heart too. She pulled out this thread and she put it into each of the first peoples hearts and it connected them to her because she could see that they were going away. And she cried and she knew it was time and she knew too that they would be coming home for that is the way the story went in each of the cycles of the world.

And there was born to these people those who always saw the silver threads and always heard her song and always saw her face. They were the dreamers and they were inside and outside at once and they were also the first artist and the first healer. Because they were on her threads they were the first artist and the first healer as one person. They were the first shaman, the first shamaness, the seer of visions, the first specialist in the soul. For as the peoples became busy they saw outwards more, inwards less and finally

could only see outwards by themselves and needed help to see inwards and the help was the shaman and the shamaness.

The power of the springs

This ancient story of the old woman and the springs is true. It is paralleled in anthropology, art history, and in the history of religions. And it is paralleled to in our own body's physiology and our memories of hearing sounds and seeing colors in utero and of birth. Every culture has a healing spring and a woman who watches over it. Native cultures tell us that the woman of the springs sits above each spring and speaks of the secrets of the earth. They tell us that all the springs are connected and the same woman speaks to everyone at each spring. They tell us that there are women in the tribe that still can understand the voice of the old woman of the springs. They say that if you listen, her voice can be heard next to any spring. Lourdes in France and Tinos in Greece are two of thousands of springs that are places of healing pilgrimages today. There are many springs that the Virgin Mary has shown to people in visions. Stone circles and Megaliths have always been associated with healing rituals. Ley lines cross the earth with the energies of healing and in England the ley lines are believed to be male and female, and where they cross they join. Sacred spots on earth have always been associated with healing energy and have been worshipped in ancient times, tribal times, and recent times. In one spot often next to a spring there will be an Indian mound, a church, and a new age pilgrimage site. She still speaks to us though the ancient woman of the springs, she does.

Egyptian and Summarian art

When agricultural societies became large and specialized the art still was transformational. In the art of the first agricultural peoples one of the main sources of imagery was the gods and goddesses. Healing gods were portrayed in human and animal forms. The images were made to show the people what the gods looked like so they could see them themselves and to have power in themselves. The huge statues of gods and goddesses were believed to influence the harvest, the weather, fertility, and healing. The making of these sculptures was from visions seen by priests and was deeply sacred. The kings were buried with these works of art and they were believed to influence the afterlife. The Sumerian and Egyptian cultures had a deep belief in mental imagery influencing outer reality. Hermetic philosophy believed that a mental image became real in the outer world if it was accompanied by prayers and the art helped make the prayers more alive and real. The visions of the gods in their animal forms was believed to reveal deeper incarnations of the gods that were extremely powerful.

Sacred art and sacred healing

As shamanism spread and became incorporated into mainstream religion, healing art also became part of religious art. As Judaism developed, it held the belief that idols were not to be made of God. Faith was to be the way of worship and imagery that portrayed the deity was considered profane. But there was much sacred art in Judaism. Torahs, temples, and shawls have the design of the star of David and also portraits of Abraham

and Moses and historical events from the bible. Again these images helped share the visions of the prophets with the people but they were not believed to have primary power by the Jewish people. In Judaism they were believed to represent the power of God in art forms.

Christian and Buddhist art was based on the principle that meditating on images or listening to certain sounds could put a person in a sacred state that would be healing. Now art and healing were two. The artist was a specialist in making art and the healer in healing. But because scientific healing had not yet been born, both art and healing remained spiritual. The next movement in art was largely spiritual. Imagery in both Christian and Buddhist art depicted sacred stories, drawn or sculpted from the visions of artist mystics. The healers still believed in a spiritual cause of illness but the model of the one figure, the shaman healer was replaced in large agricultural cultures by the separate roles of the sacred artist and the sacred healer. Today, people who are ill use art from their religion to heal. Patients in hospital rooms put up crosses, icons, stars of David, Buddhas and pray to them to heal. Spiritual healing art is used extensively around the world as a primary healing tool like it has been for centuries.

Tibetan Buddhist art

Tibetan Buddhist art gives us the most elaborate description of how art heals. Buddhist teachings are useful to us because they are the most developed explanations of how spiritual art heals. Anyone who heals themselves with art uses a similar process to a Buddhist artist who makes art. They make an image that is believed to have power and share a vision of healing. The doctrines of Buddhism are the most detailed and intricate and the art itself the most technical. For Buddhism, art was spiritual high technology of healing which takes place in a sacred spiritual geography. Art in Tibetan Buddhism is sacred and healing. In Buddhism, it is believed that a person's life itself can be an art that can communicate the vision of enlightenment and inspire others to find relief and happiness. In this view, for a fully enlightened being, the only goal for any type of art is liberating others, healing others from suffering. The seeds of art as healing are contained in the central doctrine of Buddhism itself. According to this doctrine, when one becomes a Buddha, one is transformed into three bodies. The first is the Truth Body, which is the experience of wisdom. The second is the Beatific Body, which is the experience of bliss. The third is the Emanation Body, which is the way bliss and wisdom are communicated to others. The Emanation body is divided into three bodies. The first is the Supreme Emanation Body of the Buddha's to help others. The second is the Incarnational Emanation body of teachers to help others. The third is the Artistic Emanation Body made up of anything that represents enlightenment. This is the aspect that particularly applies to us here. The Artistic Emanation Body is made up of all the sacred art and the artists who create it. Literature, visual arts, sculpture that represent the sacred life of the Buddha are all crucial in helping people attain liberation. It is believed that Buddha could not even begin his task of liberating people until their imaginations were opened up to the possibility of enlightenment by looking at art. So art is crucial to the whole structure of Buddhism. It is nothing less than the way a person can see, hear, listen, understand, and know how a new reality of

enlightenment is possible for them in their life. Art is the way wisdom and bliss are communicated to others.

In Buddhism, healing is seen as total well being and expanded creativity of enlightenment. It is much more than the absence of disease. So for Buddhism, art is the creative energy that manifests in order to heal, it is the precious window into enlightenment, into the other world. In this way, art is viewed as a gift of the enlightened ones, of the gods. It was also believed that art would make itself when done perfectly: the gods would produce "wisdom duplicates" of themselves that would merge with the sculpture. Thus Tibetans believe that a sculpture transmits a living presence and its power can be increased by prayer and ritual.

For the Tibetans, the most important healing art is the life you live. Your Artistic Emanation Body is the most powerful art form, the most powerful artistic emanation. For your life to be healing art, you must live with the intent to heal in every breath. The second most important art is literature. Songs, epics, poems, tales, and legends, are believed to be a direct path to your imagination, a way to let you picture enlightenment directly. Next in importance is music. Tibetans believe that harmony and vibration affect your heart directly. Chants are believed to open the heart, to heal and inspire. Architecture is also important. It can create sacred geography, sacred space. It designs mandalas which convey delight, security, and exaltation. Deities are seen at precise places within the architecture, the sacred building serving as their home. Of course, the most elaborate structures that can ever be built are those we create in our minds with guided imagery. They are incredible intricate and exact representations of heavenly abodes.

Sculpture is a way to embody yourself as a god. As you picture the icon, you energize the mental image until you are merged with it and become it. The Tibetan Buddhist first pictures the deity in his or her mind and then in the icon. The mind form is the most powerful. Buddhists visualize themselves being made anew, being born, as it were, as the deity. It takes the utmost discipline and practice to manifest as an enlightened being. Paintings also are seen as windows into the enlightened world. They are exact representations of the Buddha world and must be painted perfectly to be of optimal use.

In Tibetan Buddhism, art is a direct flowing out from the enlightened spaces of Buddha. It gives a person a way to be embodied as an enlightened one, and that is how healing occurs. As you are enlightened, you are healed. This did not always involve curing, since everyone dies, including Buddha and the Dalai Lama. Death in Buddhism is a doorway to enlightenment and the gateway to the next reincarnation so it is not in itself frightening or a thing to be avoided. This view is directly applicable to our own experience -even among those of us who are not Buddhists. We can look at sacred art and picture the images in our mind's eye and help heal ourselves too. Or we can hold any image that we believe will heal us and meditate on it. This is the Buddhist tradition of healing art. As healing artists, we each follow the Buddhist practice of helping others achieve well being.

Chapter Four

How art heals: the physiology of art and healing

Art from the spirit, affects the mind and body

The spirit, mind, and body are one, and an image of art that comes from the spirit, and is seen in the mind, affects the body. In that view, we are made to heal ourselves with art, our bodies have evolved to do this, this is our evolutionary neurobiology, it is that simple. When we experience art, our body's self healing mechanisms are released to work at their best. So if you are a woman with breast cancer who wants to heal herself with art you can understand that the process of making art profoundly changes your spiritual state, your mental state, and thereby helps your immune system to get rid of the cancer cells. When a person has cancer, their body's white blood cells eat the cancer cells. Otherwise no one would heal. Chemotherapy kills many cells but your body kills the rest. When you make art, your immune system is freed, its function is enhanced. Your attitude is changed, your quality of life improved, and we believe your chance of curing the cancer improved. Come with us and listen to the stories of art and healing about the physiology.

A story of healing cancer with art and imagery

Michael tells this story of a person he worked with. "A man came to see me who had metastatic liver cancer. The reason he came was to 'let the energy that he knows is in him, move from his center, to the rest of his body'. He felt he was blocked somehow and that sadness was keeping him from opening up to the world. Now this was an unusual chief complaint. That is what physicians call the answer to 'why are you here today.' All chief complaints are new and different when you actually ask people what is on their mind and not just what illness do they have. But this was not the response I would have expected from this type of person. He was a beautiful man, tall and gray-haired and dignified. He was a wealthy businessman who had had all he wanted of the finer things in life. He had excellent taste and he surrounded himself with the best and now he was very ill. His reason for coming was surprising to me considering how conservative a lifestyle he led. But it turned out he had gone to meditation classes for years and was deeply connected to his inner world.

"When I saw him, he made a sandtray of himself and his family. In a sandtray you pick objects from a huge collection of miniature figures, animals, buildings, cars and other things and arrange them in a tray of sand. The technique was pioneered by Carl Jung and it is similar to making a painting or sculpture or even telling a story. The man put the

small figures representing him and his family in the sand, and he put down a toy house as his home and up in the far right corner of the tray he put a mystical figure that looked like nothing else in the sand tray and he made a sun ring around it. I asked him if he knew who this figure represented, for he had told me about all the other objects in the sculpture- but this one he had left out. He said he didn't know what the figure was and it puzzled him deeply. I closed my eyes and looked around him. I saw and felt a presence over his right shoulder. I asked him if he felt anything around him. He stopped and meditated and tears came into his eyes. He said that he saw a light and felt a warmth above him. I asked him to slow down time and to see in between the moments. His breathing became deeper and he suddenly sat up straight. 'I see an angel, and she is so beautiful' he said. 'Do you recognize her' I asked. His eyes were filled with tears. 'She is my daughter who was killed in an accident.' 'Does she want to tell you anything?' 'She is pointing her finger at my liver and light is coming out of it and it is flowing into me. She is telling me that she is my angel and that she will help heal my cancer.'

"The next time I saw him he was deeply changed. He looked much more alive, he was full of energy and almost seemed to vibrate. He told me that the ground under his feet caressed him as he walked, the wind kissed his face, he walked at a slower pace and he was at peace. He said that the earth sent healing energy up into him and that it tingled, that his morning walk was now enchanted. I asked him to tell me what the energy of the earth felt like. He told me that it was like tiny fireflies flying up into his body and making him feel more alive. It was like the earth was sending her love up into him. When he told me this he cried. I asked him if the energy in his spine could now move all over. He told me it could. I helped him feel the flow of his energy when I moved it in his body with my hands and then with his. I often move my hands over a person's body and have them feel energy move inside them. One month later he called me to tell me that his liver scan had come back completely negative. The three large metastatic nodules that were growing and had been there for a year were now gone. Making the art in the sandtray showed us his angel. It would have been more difficult to see it with guided imagery alone, and much more difficult by any other means. Art is the best way to see a transformative spiritual vision for an ordinary person. Seeing the angel put him in the physiology of healing, where his immune system ate the cancer cells. I do not take responsibility for his healing himself of cancer. He was getting the best cancer care from an oncologist, he had changed his diet, he did his yoga, he had people praying for him, he had put together a wonderful holistic cancer care regimen that included me and healing art. I believe that what he did as a person with cancer was right for him. Everyone can put together a 'healing pie' that includes all the modalities he used or anything that feels good to them. Art can be a part of any person's healing force. It is the part that fills you with energy and changes your life.

This kind of story is why we do the kind of work that we do. I was allowed to be part of this man's intense beauty and share his light. I was allowed to see what he saw. I was allowed to be with him as he was healed. When I started out as a physician I was taught that medicine involved doing what was proven by scientific studies. I had done immunogenetic research studying the white blood cell's ability to make antibodies against foreign substances and I knew what a good research study was. But as I started seeing

patients with cancer, the world I found myself in was much different than the world I had been taught to see. If I actually listened to the stories of the people I was seeing and respected and loved them as human beings, I needed another world view. As I listened to their stories and saw them heal, I found that I had deep beliefs in a healer within that were not at that time supported by double blind studies. At first I was in a dilemma. Should I wait for studies to be done on guided imagery before I did this kind of work with my patients? I could not. I knew imagery and art would not hurt them and that I would continue giving them the best allopathic care, but I also knew that my life was changed, that I had to do what I believed in, I had to make my own inner experiences part of my external world. At that time I started to do guided imagery with patients that wanted it. Many years later studies were done that showed that imagery effected the immune system and blood flow. Finally there was patient data to support this therapy. I was glad I had used it for twenty years before the studies were done."

Art and healing is now in the same place in the progress of research that imagery used to be in twenty years ago. We know art heals and yet we do not have many good randomized studies directly proving it. The studies are being done now. Basically the research is of two types, patient outcome studies and physiological studies. As these studies show us that art heals, it may be easier to fund art and healing programs that are starting in hospitals all across the country. However there are many good studies already published that link on art to reduced pain, that show on art improves the quality of life, that describe the impact of art on different patient populations and illnesses, that relate art and symptom relief, that connect art and attitude and empowerment, and yet these studies have not changed medical practice as much as they should have. Many studies of music reducing pain have not helped put music in every hospital. If a drug were found that was shown in studies to do what art does it would be used extensively. Only the passion of a musician and a doctor working together has done that. It is only our beliefs and passions that cause change, it is only our love for this work that makes it happen.

How art affects the body: the physiology of art and healing

For the physician in the medical center, art and healing involves observing how thoughts, emotions, and images change blood flow and hormone balance in the body. As we make art, we see images. The images involve the firing of neurons in different areas of the brain. The firing neurons, the nets of cascading activity connect to the body in three simple ways.

First the right brain, the home of imagery, sends messages to the lower brain areas which connect to the hypothalamus. Images of art, music, movement and dance are first held in areas that are responsible for thought and instituting muscle movement. The discharges of neurons come from both the making of art or doing a movement, and the memory of art and movement. The way it feels to the person is that there is a thought, an idea, or an image of art, music, and moving that comes from their imagination or memory. Since art, music, and dance are so ancient and involve so many proprioceptive sensory and motor pathways, both the imagination of art, music, and movement, and the memory of it, appear very real and intense as a person gets in touch with them. The movements are reflected as discharges in areas that send messages to muscles and even if the artist or

dancer does not actually move the muscles that would be moved, they move microscopically.

The places where the images of movement are held send nerve messages to the hypothalamus that are processed and then go out to the rest of the body. Likewise the image or dance movement itself is picked up by the brain and that area sends messages to the hypothalamus too. So the artist or dancer's brain sends out messages to the whole body if there is a movement or even if there is an imagined movement. The areas of the brain that control movement have in them the memory of previous images or dance movements that are stored in memory pathways. I believe that many of these memories of images or movements are ancient flickering steadfastly within the human brain as it evolved. When these visions come to the surface of our consciousness and are released, it can be deeply healing.

When a person translates images in the mind to art made by muscle movements it produces a deep level of concentration. They take the person's whole attention and take them away from worries and concerns of the outer world. This happens automatically. The person does not need to do anything except make art to focus intensely. The ancient neural pathways of the mind take over and the person is taken "elsewhere" to a mental state of pure concentration that most resembles meditation. The physiology that results from this state is similar to the physiology of prayer and meditation and basically involves deep relaxation and healing. Dr. Herbert Benson at the Behavioral Medicine Clinic at Harvard University Medical School, wrote about this in his classic *The Relaxation Response*. He showed that meditation alone lowered blood pressure, heart rate, and breathing rate, and was a primary therapy for heart disease patients. Today, Dr. Dean Ornish uses meditation as a major part of his heart disease regimen, to reduce stress. He also uses it for its spiritual focus to reduce alienation and promote feelings of connectedness and oneness.

How does this physiology process work? Images held in the right brain activate the hypothalamus. The hypothalamus activates the autonomic nervous system and results in arousal or relaxation of a double balancing system that impacts the whole body, touching virtually every cell. The autonomic nervous system is a healing system that balances and maintains the blood flow, heartbeat, breathing rate, and hormone level needed for any activity we are doing. It is also the system that we need to heal. This system was thought to work by itself but it is now known to be profoundly influenced by thoughts in the mind. The autonomic nervous system has two branches, the sympathetic, and the parasympathetic. The sympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system is the branch that controls "fight and flight," creating the physiology necessary to run from the tiger, or to assume the defensive posture. The image in the large hemispheres of the brain of a threat alerts the hypothalamus causing sympathetic arousal and this speeds up the heartbeat, increases breathing, sends blood to the large muscles, floods the body with adrenaline and stress hormones, and thus creates a physiology of alertness. The memory of running away from a threat, escaping from a tiger or facing it and fighting and getting away, takes us through a whole cycle of experience. When you are out of danger at last, the feeling of safety relieves tension and puts you in a state of release. The cycle is called the arousal/ release cycle and it charts each person's way of reacting to any event that is exciting.

On the other hand, the stimulation of the parasympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system results in relaxation, in healing, in body repair, in preventive maintenance. The image in the brain of a peaceful scene, of making art, of creativity, of prayer, alerts the hypothalamus to trigger a parasympathetic arousal and the heartbeat slows, and blood pressure drops, breathing slows, blood goes to the intestines, the whole body changes. The dance movement of a soft caress stimulates the circuits that remember deep relaxation and creates that physiology. We now have the physiology of healing, of creativity, and of prayer. This oversimplified model gives us an idea of how the mind is connected to the body and how images and muscle movements stimulate our entire being. When a person pictures art, music or a dance movement in their mind, or makes art or dances, the area of the cerebrum that holds images of muscle movement is stimulated and it sends messages to the hypothalamus which allow us to respond to the imagery. If the image is one of deep joy or release of tension, our body is put in a healing state through the hypothalamic pathways of the parasympathetic nervous system. When the artist puts down an image of himself in pain and that vision is seen for the first time, the tension around the pain is felt and then released. Relaxation ensues and the healing physiology is started.

Second we have the hormonal flood that bathes every cell in the body as the imagery of threat or passionate creativity lights up the neural nets in the brain. As the nerve cells discharge like a loom of light flashing through our brain, the hypothalamus also sends messages to the adrenal glands to release epinephrine, adrenaline and other hormones which travel throughout the body and are picked up by receptors that cause some cells to contract, others to relax, some to act, others to rest. So our entire physiology is changed a second time by an image or dance movement held in our brain, our consciousness. The second change is chemical resulting from hormonal shifts. It is slower, but it is just as profound in that it affects almost every cell in the body.

Finally we enter the realm of the neurotransmitter. This is a third way of art changing the body's physiology. Here, images cause specific areas of the brain itself to release endorphins and other neurotransmitters which affect brain cells and cells of the immune system. The neurotransmitters relieve pain and make the immune system function more efficiently. They cause killer T cells to eat cancer cells, white blood cells to attack AIDS viruses and generally change the body's ability to respond to illness. So when a person makes art or music, or dances, or pictures an image that is freeing and joyful, the body actually changes its physiology to heal itself. The release of the endorphins when we make art is felt as deeply pleasurable. It is like a person exercising. The endorphins are like opiates or mind-altering drugs and they make a person feel expanded, connected, at one, relaxed, vibrating, tingling, at peace. In a real sense the release of endorphins during passionate creativity may be the major healing force. It is psychoneuroimmunology at its best. Psychoneuroimmunology is a term that puts together *psycho* for the mind, *neuro* for the nerve nets of the brain, and *immune* for the immune system to describe how thoughts or images in the mind affect the immune system. One artist we interviewed heard our question "How did you end off where you are?" as "how do you endorphin?" The concept of endorphin release was basic to the way she looks at art and healing.

So what do we have here? We are in the midst of a modern story or scientific theory which basically says that a thought, image, or muscle movement changes a cell which

helps us heal. It does this in three steps. 1- the thought, image, dance movement, or creation of a piece of art. 2- a message is sent to the cells, by a nerve impulse, a hormone, or a neurotransmitter. 3- the cells become activated eating a cancer cell or virus, sending blood to an area of illness, or relaxing or tensing. This is a simple model. It is biological, physical. It tries to connect the mind and body which it still sees as separate, but it at least sees them speaking to each other. It does not view the body as an automaton uninfluenced by thoughts and perceptions or the mind as irrelevant. The evolution of this model took a half a century and was a great step forward in modern science. It defied the Cartesian split of mind and body that ruled science and even psychology for a century, and prevented perceptions, emotions, and life experiences from entering medicine. When we went to medical school and nursing school in the sixties and seventies, we were still taught that the mind did not affect the body, but now thankfully, that training is outmoded. Now we know that when your mind makes an image, or your body makes art, you produce the physiology of healing in every cell of the body including the immune system.

Now let's put in the soul

So, with this oversimplified three step model in mind, let's drift gently back to the world of our experiences. How did that model make you feel? Safe, solid, bored, confused, science- ignorant, grounded, cold, convinced, secure ? It certainly is not spiritually elevating for me but it is very useful, almost necessary, to understand as a base of belief, a connection between the worlds of science and the worlds of art. So let's drift back into art, let's feel again how art opens our hearts and relate that to the three step model. Let's imagine making art with a person with cancer, seeing them come into your studio with a beautiful child, seeing them paint, seeing them look into their baby's eyes and then trace the baby's hand over theirs and get tears in their eyes and feel love all around them. Just trying this for a moment tells us that there is something incomplete about the model of mind /body alone. As we close our eyes and feel our heart opening, as we watch our patients heal and feel their love, as we hear a song of love or see a dancer enter a hospital room or view art work in our sacred space, our shrine of rebirth, the three step- model doesn't seem to tell us enough about our experience. It is not an accurate description of how much more we feel and see .

So here is another model, one that merges medicine with our spiritual beliefs, one that comes a little closer to describing how we actually feel inside. Remember, this too, is just a scaffold, a structure to try to explain the ineffable, to try to put a foundation under us as we undertake the exciting journey of trying to understand how art heals.

We see our body's spirit attracting matter around it like a cloak. The spirit is more like what we see as our soul. The idea has no independent existence, it is of the whole. From far within, from the reaches of the deepest space this idea has grown, formed, reformed and changed. If you go deep into the darkness, far back, way back, downward, downward; you reach the place of birth. From there flows our soul, our spirit, the first manifestation of light. And from the darkness, wholeness, where there is no beginning or

end, no time and little space, the soul grows, expands, and enters the mind and body for a while. And so body, mind and spirit form an aggregate, an entity, a being. And that being is you and me, , whole and one and at the same time connected.

The body's health depends on its balance, its physiology. When its systems are in order, blood flows at a certain pressure, the heart beats at a certain rate, the hormones are in a certain balance. Many of us now see this balance as coming from a dialogue of body, mind, and spirit. I see the spirit awakening, being awake, being listened to, talking to the mind and the body. It tells the mind and the body both through the body's feelings and tension levels, and through the mind's feelings, emotions, images and thoughts, how to balance. When the spirit is not listened to, imbalance results. This feels like discomfort. When the spirit is listened to, the body, mind, spirit, resonates as one, it dances and sings, and healing happens. The spirit dances itself to you, sings its song to you, paints its picture for you. And when the spirit becomes alive, the inner healer that is body and mind working as one is free. Gone is the tension and fear that blocks this healer when the spirit is asleep and the blood can flow to a cancer bringing the immune cells and natural chemicals that kill the tumor and the chemotherapy drugs too.

Spirit and the inner world

When you ask an artist about healing they talk of light, of darkness, of places in the inner world where they see the visions for their paintings. They talk of how freeing their spirit helped them heal. They don't talk about white blood cells. Gordon Onslow Ford, a surrealist painter has written about art and the inner world extensively. In his writings he calls the places of creation within us "the deep spaces". He believes that the true haunt of the pioneer painter is to go to the place of creation, the furthest inward they can go in their imagination and see creation. Only by doing that, he feels, can the artist see the truth and bring it out to share with us. We do the same process when we work with patients. Art takes them as far into their inner world as they want to go. So we have a similar experience of the inner world with patients that he has with making art.

Gordon believes that far within us, are the deep spaces, the furthest reaches of the soul. By traveling inward we can glimpse worlds, feel them , live in them. And we can bring back their memory traces, bring back their spirit, only with art. By "art" we mean all the arts: painting, sculpture, storytelling, poetry, music, and dance. We believe that the voices of the inner worlds, of the spirit, speak to us in a language that is most similar in our world, to art. It is below words, it is above silence, it is closest to poetry, music, and dance. It is God singing and dancing. It is our soul listening. It is the voice of the life force, of expansion, of love, within us. It is the connection, the real bridge, the source of all power.

And when we pray, when we travel inward and see, we can bring back traces of the pure spirit. These footprints are art. Art is the voice of the spirit. And when the spirit is freed, when the spirit is seen and heard, the inner healer is released..

Healing energy

And here we must speak of healing energy. When you talk of healing, when you experience healing, you feel energy. When we talk of a resonation of the body, mind, and spirit, we mean a freeing of energy, a buzzing, tingling, a vibration, a hovering. And the energy is felt as a sensation, a feeling, it can flow throughout the body, from body to

body, from the universe to us. It can be seen by psychics and meditators, and can be portrayed in art. What is this energy, chi, prana, kundalini, Gods' breath, acupuncture energy meridians, chakras, the life force? It has been described throughout all time. It is an integral part of the human experience. Because art acts at the level of the spirit, because art is the language of the spirit, energy is involved. Perhaps the simplest metaphor for how art heals is that it frees our body's healing energy to flow. This is the image of the Kalihari dancing in the previous chapter. The image is seen by the spirit, the spirit soars, goes home, unites with the deep source, and energy is released like a torrent, like a breakthrough, like a waterfall. The bringing home releases energy. That is all. The making of art puts you there by itself. You need not do anything except make art.

Guided imagery

What are these things called images that we have been talking about and how are they related to art? Images are thoughts that come in the form of lived experiences. They have the shape of the sensory modalities that feed them. They are part of real time in that they are touch, sound, sight, smell, muscle position, and taste, and are beyond real time in that they can glimpse realms that cannot be felt with senses.

Psychologists divide imagery into several categories which help us understand what images are. Memory images evoke events took place in the past, imagination images are not based on discrete events from the outer world- they are the result of combining memory events in new and creative ways or they come from outside us, from the world of the spirit. Dream images are experienced in sleep, hypnopompic images are the visions we see as we awaken, hypnagogic images the images we see while falling asleep. Visions are images experienced while awake or in a trance that are very vivid. Hallucinations are images experienced while awake that are poorly controllable. "Vividness" and "controllability" are terms that show us how psychologists describe the imagery experience. When the experience of imagery is intense, when the images are bright, loud, or very attention- getting, they are "vivid." When images are unbidden, cannot be gotten rid of, or cannot be changed, they are "poorly controllable."

In his book, *Seeing With The Mind's Eye*, Michael divided imagery into two basic types- receptive and programmed. Receptive imagery comes to you, it arrives on the scene, bidden or unbidden, and rests in your mind's eye. Programmed imagery is different. You choose an image and hold it in your thoughts for a reason. The choice may be deliberate or you may choose an image that came to you from the receptive space. Either way the image effects your world.

How do healers work with imagery? The most common technique involves having a patient picture their illness, their healing forces, and the healing process in their mind's eye. First, the patient imagines what the illness looks like, in as much detail as they can. Next, they imagine how the body's resources could deal with the visualized illness. This is imagined as a process over time. For example, a patient can picture cancer cells, picture them in an area of the body, picture them as a certain color, shape, smell, texture. They then can picture killer cells or white blood cells eating the cancer cells, they can picture the body's defenses advancing, multiplying, engulfing the cells whole and wiping them all out. This biological imagery is more effective if it is anatomically accurate and detailed. Researchers have found that this imagery is very specific, for example if one type of white blood cell is pictured, it alone is found to rise in blood counts. Next

patients are encouraged to allow metaphorical imagery to form. This is the stage where little men, dogs, or white light, blast, eat, or dissolve blackness, mud, or other little men. Generally this metaphorical imagery takes place spontaneously after the biological imagery. Finally, patients can hold a programmed image in mind. They can picture themselves healed, surrounded by white light, surrounded by energy, as a God, as a power animal or as strong and secure.

So, healing art, like guided imagery, can be used by a patient in two obvious ways. The images can be viewed and the balancing nature of them can be allowed to change a person's consciousness, or images can be used to help a person visualize the healing process or a healed state. In both of these types of healing, the art provides imagery seen by the artist. The imagery is healing if it relaxes, allows release of tension or fear, puts a person in an altered state, opens their heart, or moves them and gives them energy. Monet's *Water Lilies* were so relaxing that people with a wide range of illnesses would visit the museums and sit and meditate in front of the paintings for hours. From the point of view of this model, the *Water Lilies* were memory images, rendered as art, evoking in the viewer a the physiology of healing. The painting puts the viewer in a state of deep relaxation, in the place of Monet's spirit, in the place of water, light and color, in the place of intense beauty and harmony.

The third way art heals a viewer is by showing a patient images that move them emotionally. When patients with breast cancer for example, see art, music, or dance made by other breast cancer patients it opens them up to emotions they may have hidden. This allows them to discuss these emotions with family, support people, and their healers. Patients who have a particular illness are moved by art that portrays other patient's experiences with the same illness. It makes them feel connected, relieves isolation, and releases deep emotions. This type of art can be very disturbing for other people to view. The images are often gory or graphic, this imagery is not for relaxation or transcendence, it is for opening the heart.

Healing art

So, for the healing artist, there are several types of healing art: relaxing, balancing images whose presence is transformative by themselves, biological images that provide a library of images to visualize, and images of pain that are moving and result in a release of emotions. This last type of healing art provides a cathartic release, an emotional discharge. During disease or in any major life event stress builds up. The stress can accumulate and gets held in the body and lost inside hidden memories. Making art opens a Pandora's box holding deeply held secrets. The art releases the stress like a dramatic explosion. The release causes your body to re-achieve balance. All these types of healing art are powerful and effective. They all work by changing consciousness, by freeing energy, by awakening the spirit to resonate body mind spirit. This is the technology of healing art, its tools, its machines.

Images made by artists can be so powerful, so filled with energy, that even though they are not personal to the patient, they too can be transformative. Throughout recorded history, artists have believed that their images have power in themselves. Shamanic art was believed to actually have the power to change the physical world. Its shape and

color were believed to be powerful in themselves, to be able to transmit and move real energy. Just standing near a piece of healing art was believed to heal. No viewing was necessary, no understanding obligatory, just an experience that brought about molecular change. This concept is difficult for many westerners to grasp scientifically, but it is not that foreign from our lives. People carry good luck charms, relics, holy objects; people make shrines, sacred spaces, churches and meditation rooms. Patients surround themselves with power animals, religious talismans and crystals. The belief in the healing energy of objects is deep even in our rational logical world.

A guided imagery of the old woman of the springs: how she made our bodies to be healed with art

This chapter's story of the old woman of the springs relates how she made our bodies to be healed with art. She tells us that she made us with creative forces and as we make our art with creative forces, the process is the same. The old woman of the springs in this legend is the spirit mother. Many healing artists have told us that the new line they draw on a blank page feels the same to them as creating a new body to heal, making new healthy cells. It is creation, it is making something out of nothing. This is a story of how she made us of light and energy like we make healing art of light and energy.

Close your eyes, go back to the springs, see the old woman of the springs sitting above you weaving. Listen to her story, she wants to talk to you now, relax deeply, listen to her song. She sings to you, " I want to tell you how art heals, for I know that people have been taught that their bodies are made of only matter and energy. Do you see me sitting above the springs looking down at you in perfect love? Do you see me now as a painter with my paper and paints. Look deep into the center of the springs my child, see the water flowing upwards from my blue white light, see it bubbling forever up from the light into the deep blue pool and then resting for a moment and then forming the river that flows crystal clear from my heart to the whole earth. And I sit above you both as the painter and the weaver and as I paint the spirals in the spring and as I paint the world you can see the silver threads coming from my hands to the spring and the silver threads coming from my hands to the painting and the silver threads coming from above into me. I weave the tapestry of the world, of healing art. As I paint the world comes into being. As I paint, the silver threads from above that are her pure love, coming from before the beginning of time, from the place of peace, come into my body and into my eyes and into my hands. And as I put down a line or a circle or a dot my body remembers her dream as she made the earth and as I paint I again paint it all into being. The silver threads that come from her into me go outwards, and in my love and in my dream I weave them into the spring and into the waters and into you my child and into your body.

And as I am the woman of the springs, the weaver of the earth, my art is the world. Watch me carefully my child. Look at my fingertips. See the light coming from them in sacred spirals spinning outwards. See the matter forming around the light dancing to it and popping from it and coming into being. As I weave the world I weave your body. As I weave the world I weave you inner healer, I weave your immune system, I weave your self healing abilities, I weave your ability to heal. As I weave the universe I also weave your bodies. For they are of the same fabric. They work in the same way. I weave your

bones and muscles and blood vessels of the stuff of the stars. I weave your energy and your vibrations of the energy of the spheres. I weave your souls and your spirits of the dreams of the ancient ones. I weave your heart and your love of the love that created the universe, of our mother's love. See the waters forming on the silver dots that flash as I move like fireflies in the night. See it all being born, as I love you out of my love and light, do you not see it? Feel me touching you and feel your body being born anew and being born as a light body to be healed. How does art heal? As I paint the world into being and as I touch you with my dots of light that come from her heart, you are made anew in my vision, as I am the creator and the manifestor of form. How does art heal? As I paint and touch you with my fingertips I make my vision of pure love become matter, I dream the world into being and I make it as art and as matter at once. Can you do less, for you are me and I love you perfectly".

The proof that art heals

When we go to conferences and talk about art and healing people often ask us if research needs to be done to help art and healing be incorporated into healthcare. The Question, do we need scientific proof that art heals to use healing art, is very much an issue with physicians and hospitals today. For us, the answer is simple. It is provided by our own body. To feel it, close your eyes a moment and try this brief guided imagery.

Relax, take several deep breaths, let your abdomen rise and fall as you breath in and out. Now go into the space where you make healing art, the space where you heal yourself, someone else, or the planet... drift, spin, turn, whirl, ..go into the space where your imagery comes from, where your visions are born... imagine yourself listening to your favorite music or singing, watching a dancer or dancing, looking at a relaxing painting or painting. Imagine a wonderful artist is making art with you, for you. Go with the art, fly on her love.. let her carry you into her heart.. deeply.. further and further.. deeper and deeper.. feel her love all around you see his light surrounding you feel it go into your heart and feel it flow into your soul see the light come alive.. see the images and come and make your art, feel yourself fly.. feel yourself heal.

Do you need proof that you are an artist, that you are a seer? And yet we are always asked for the studies that prove that art heals, that it improves quality of life, cures illness or lengthens life. And this is very pertinent to a person who is living with a life threatening illness and is looking for ways to make themselves better or improve their life. And it plays a part in funding, implementing programs, motivating people to continue their work, and moving art and healing forward as a field, both for artists and for healers.

Art as a complementary therapy is currently being studied in randomized research that is being done showing its effect on many physical and mental illnesses. There are many studies showing how art, music, and dance can improve quality of life, decrease pain, help attitude, relieve depression, and help symptoms disappear. But this is not the whole story. Mind-body interventions in general are difficult and expensive to study and are fairly new in modern medicine. These studies are not funded by drug companies,

companies making surgical apparatus, or electronic apparatuses that generate large profits for the companies or health care facilities. The research is also difficult to do because art is different for everyone and individual ways of working are different. Research on inner states of consciousness is always harder to do in the traditional way of collecting data.. Relaxation and imagery were not studied for years after they were widely used and even now guided imagery has not been proven to cure cancer or lengthen life yet is a major complementary therapy used in almost every cancer center. Currently there are no definitive studies that show that art by itself cures cancer or lengthens a persons life. But like imagery it is so obviously beneficial to people that it is used widely.

There is also an ongoing discussion in body, mind, spirit, medicine about the difference between healing and curing. Sometimes it is not possible to cure an illness and prevent death, but it is possible to heal the person's whole life so they can be fulfilled and connected to life until they die. This healing of a life is extremely beautiful and meaningful to the person who is ill and their family and friends. Art has been shown to increase quality of life so markedly that it heals, even if it does not always cure. After all, no one can cure everyone. There is a time to die that is part of nature. Sometimes we have to accept that healing is as important as curing, although the patient always want to be illness free and survive.

Fortunately there are studies in parallel fields whose results are applicable to both imagery and art and healing. Guided imagery in fact is closely related to art and healing in that its basic mechanism is mind-body and its way of acting is related to freeing imagery from the inner self and which balances the mind-body interface and resonates the soul. Do we need proof the soul exists to use that word or that God exists to pray?

The two studies that have been most influential in this regard are David Spiegel's study at Stanford showing that women with metastatic breast cancer lived twice as long when they were in support groups than women without support and Fawzy Fawzy's study from UCLA that showed that people with melanoma lived longer and had fewer recurrences with ten hours of structured support and education. These two dramatic studies of life extension with relatively minimal mind-body interventions lead us to postulate that an involved intervention like an artist making art with a patient could be very beneficial. Art and healing uses the core concepts of support, release of fear, attitude change, and feeling connected. Art and support groups in fact have much in common. One way to look at art as healing is that it is a way of caring, a way of loving, a way of honoring.

About time and space and healing

The physicist Irving Stein from University of San Francisco has a new and somewhat unique theory of time and space. Because he is a quantum physicist, he does not believe in the older vision of matter and energy, or time and space, being separate. For quantum physicists everything is interconnected. And like other quantum physicists he believes that the observer effects the results of all experiments. When you are there to watch, you change the results. Like other quantum physicists he also believes that the interconnection of all things goes from one end of the universe to the other. When a particle moves on one side of the universe, it moves one on the other. When a butterfly flaps its wings in Thailand, something changes in New York. Now you can see that this

world view is different from the one held by an ordinary person. Most of us still hold Cartesian reality principles that basically state that cause and effect are independent of the observer and that matter, energy, time, and space do not effect each other and that when one thing moves, it has nothing to do with anything else. Now this old world view works most of the time when objects are large and move slowly, but it does not work when they are the size of subatomic particles or when they move the close to the speed of light. In these situations the old view breaks down and no longer predicts what actually happens in the world. In the world of quantum physics, light bends as the observer moves, matter turns into energy, time changes as we move close to the speed of light, and particles effect every other particle.

For healing, Cartesian reality is an unfortunate paradigm to hold as our major world view. Healing, like physics, simply does not always work in slow or large systems. In fact nonordinary reality exists in the same place the quantum physics exists and in the world of nonordinary reality, probability is very different. A miracle is simply an occurrence that has a low probability of occurring in ordinary reality and a higher probably of occurring in nonordinary reality. For one of Cartesian realities main tenets is that the mind and body are separate, and spirit is a different thing completely. Now Descarte had to make this theory to avoid persecution by the church in the dawn of science, but separateness is an outdated paradigm for modern physics and also for modern healing.

Back to the theory of Irving Stein. As a quantum physicist he has postulated that time and space are like little particles. They have a beginning and an end, a length as it were, and then stop. And there is a break. And they start again. Now if you think that is strange, he has also postulated that they are the same. A particle of time is the same as a particle of space. They are interchangeable. And, if you think about it, which he certainly did, if time and space are the same and if they start and stop, there is no time and no space between the particles.

So modern quantum physics has found nonordinary reality. Shamans have always said that there is a place where there is no time and space, where its laws don't apply in the usual way. And that is the place of shamanic healing. That is the place of miracles. Now Irving Stein stops before that point. He does not theorize that you can get into, or use the breaks between time and space. They are there according to his theory, but that is as far as he goes. The shamans go much further. They say that if you stop the world you can slip between the particles of time and space and fall into non time and non space, and that is precisely the nonordinary world of healing. And what is the best way to fall in between time and space? Make art. For that is precisely what making art does. As any child who makes art will tell you, time seems to disappear, and space is all confused, and when they make art they feel like they are "elsewhere". And elsewhere for a person who is ill, means diminished pain, fear, symptoms, and concentration on creativity. So maybe part of the physiology of art and healing is the physics of non time and non space. Making art puts a person in between time and space in a place where its laws don't apply in the same way, where you as the observer create reality and influence outcomes, and where all is interconnected. Just as prayer is a way of changing time, space, and matter,

so is the making of a piece of art the creation of a new space- time continuum where miracles have a larger probability of taking place.

Section Two

How You Can Use Art, Music, and Dance to Heal Yourself

Chapter Five

You are already an artist

We will be your artist in residence

This is the "how to" section of Creative Healing. Again, it is for anyone who is ill or in a life crisis and for any artist or healer who wants to heal others with art. The chapters in this section are meant to be practical and immediately useful. Say you are a woman recently diagnosed with breast cancer who has always wanted to paint. You have found this book on healing yourself with art, or someone who loves you has found it and given it to you. And there is no art and medicine program in the hospital you are going to for your treatment. Or say you are a man with AIDS who has always wanted to write poetry and there is no poet in residence in the outpatient clinic you go to. Or say you are an artist or healer and want to use your talents to heal others now and there is no art as healing program for you to participate in nearby. For all of you, this section of *Creative Healing* will try to substitute for your art and healing program. This section of the book will facilitate your making art just as an artist would when they came into your room and helped you heal yourself with art.

We will be your artist in residence in several ways. First we will talk to you in the words of the artist in residence. We have interviewed painters, storytellers, poets, dancers, and musicians, and we will pass their advice and love on to you. We believe that the best way to heal yourself with art is to make art, and to do it now. Whether you want to heal yourself, to heal another person, or heal the earth, the first step is the same, start making healing art. The way to heal with paint is to become a painter, to paint every day. The way to heal with poetry is to become a poet, to write a poem every day. This section will empower you to do just that.

Making healing art is easy. Anyone can heal themselves with art. Through the work of our artists in residence we have found that there are four simple steps to begin. The first is to reclaim your inner artist. The second is to make a studio to create the space and time for yourself to heal. The third is to choose a media that is natural for you to begin with. The fourth is to begin to make art with the subject that is the most meaningful and compelling in your own life. We believe that a book like this one is a tool. Like a hammer, it does work in the physical world. It makes changes. With art, like with a wall you build in a new house, there is something there to see at the end of each day. Your art is real, tangible, and can be seen, felt, or heard. Your healing will follow. Come. We invite you, blessings fellow artist healer, welcome.

This section is not about teaching you how to make professional art. It is not an art lesson on how to draw or how to dance. It is instead an invitation to you to do whatever you want to do to explore what you are attracted to. In art and healing, the singing of one note can be as healing as singing a choral work. The writing of a paragraph as healing as writing a novel. The painting of a T-shirt for your child as healing as painting a masterpiece. We want to make the process of making art, dance, storytelling and music as simple as possible so you can do it every day. All you need to do is give yourself a half hour a day to do it. Whatever you choose to do needs to be as simple as possible so you can do it easily. Paint a half hour a day, write on a laptop a half hour a day, play the guitar a half hour a day. Maintain your creative work in a way that is easy and fun. That is what healing yourself with art is about. The how to section is not meant to be followed as a teaching of one method of making art. The road to get there will be your own. Any way you paint, write, dance, or make music is fine. In fact to start out, the simplest way is probably the best. It will grow from there.

We have found that there is advice we can give you that works for all the media and is general enough not to hold you back. First, it is essential to be as flexible as possible. All the artists in residence always talk about being able to bend to the situation they find themselves in. If you are in bed and want to dance, you can still do it, you just have to move differently than if you were on a dance floor. Second, consistence is important in the beginning. Try to have enough consistency to make art every day. Know that this work is your gift to you to, to be healthy. You give yourself this time for you to be healthy, to feel alive, full, and the most creative that you can. Value yourself enough to do it. Believe that this is simple and as important as anything else that you do in life. In our

culture where most of us work long hours, this is about being free. We need a place in our lives and in ourselves to be truly free, to be who we are and to be ourselves.

The gifts

One day there was a woman who got sick healed herself with art and set up an art program in a hospital. She had her best friend who taught her to paint become the first artist to work with patients and called her an "artist in residence". Since the program started there have been many artists in residence using all media. We will have the artists tell you their story of how they have learned to make healing art. They are real people in a real program. The artists in residence that will speak to you in this section of the book are artists who believe deeply that art is a way of healing. They more than believe this, they live this with their whole lives. They are part of a community of artists all over the world that share this vision of art and healing as one. In fact each artist has a gift to share with you. Once we went around a circle of artist healers and asked them what gifts they would give you, the reader of this book. This is what they said to you.

"My gift is that you delight in your own essence and embrace the light of your spirit as it is reflected back to you from your own heart." Another artist says "I am a gift giver, offering an escape into the creative world and its positive power of healing." Another says "I will give you the pearl, the pearl of wisdom. Encourage your own self expression, let yourself shine, let yourself be the star." Another artist says "as an artist I give the knowledge of what I know, and I am your servant. As an artist I serve you, by being kind and genuine. Although you will do art for yourself, you will only gain if you put others before you." Another says, "my gift is to allow the children I work with to still be children, to allow them to play, maintain the spirit of their child, while dealing with the illness." Another artist says "the true gift as an artist is the good will and intention of bringing my gift to you, as we keep this in mind all apprehension and anxiety will disappear." Open your heart and take your gift from the artist in residence. Pick one gift or more than one and take it for you. You deserve it. It is about loving you, it is.

Step one: reclaiming your inner artist

Reclaiming your inner artist is one of the most important shifts you will ever make in your life. This process is about realizing that inherent in your life, inside of your life, is you as an artist. You have always been an artist, but you may not have seen it or valued it as much as you will now. This process is about illuminating the beauty within you. Our goal is for you to be able to say, "I am an artist.", or even better to say, "I am a healing artist". To internalize this concept, know that in everything that you do each day, there are opportunities to be creative. An artist is a way of being, a way of seeing. An artist looks deeply at light, at shadows, an artist looks deeply into each moment. The essential step is realizing that you want to be an artist. In most people's lives, there have been barriers and obstacles, that have prevented them from doing it. Often, this was due to a career choice or due to criticism. Realize that all of us have had obstacles to passionate creativity. The obstacles will not hold you back anymore. Now in this situation, whatever it may be, it is worth the risk to become your inner artist now. Let go of any insecurities. The risk of your illness, depression or lack of meaning in your life is more than what you feared in being an artist. This is an opportunity to let go of your fear. What was threatening before is no longer important now. When Mary started

painting she felt she was up against the wall, there was nothing else she could do. The risk of not painting had become worse than the risk of painting. It was her time.

First reclaim the "yes I am an artist" that we all have within us. In the broadest sense the definition of artists is much wider than most of us think. We usually think that an artist is a painter, musician, dancer, or poet. But for healing art, an artist is in any and every way you can think of. We have separated ourselves from what we have done in our lives. We say we are not an artist as a mother, a physician, a gardener, whatever. We want to broaden artistry to include our whole lives. You can become clear that you are an artist in your work and in your whole life. It is a shift of who you think you are. Once a physician came to our workshops and felt awkward making clay figures. We told him he was an artist nevertheless. When we saw him next, he told us he realized what we meant. The same feeling we talk about in making art, he realized he had in his practice. He realized that he saw each of his patients with beauty. He saw them as interesting and their lives as precious. He treated them with care and even reverence. He knew he was an artist in the art of healing. When you reclaim your inner artist, you realize that there is an aspect of yourself that you illuminate like an artist. You reclaim a way of being that has been reserved for artists.

A guided imagery: reclaiming your inner artist

We believe that reclaiming the inner artist is the same natural process as the trees opening up each spring. Here is an imagery exercise that lets you feel how the tree feels as its new leaves emerge on that first warm day. As naturally as the leaves pop out of the branches, you will emerge from yourself as your inner artist. This guided imagery is to let you feel how natural making healing art is.

Close your eyes and relax and let your breathing slow and imagine yourself in the physical form of the tree. Imagine yourself as a tree, a tree growing from the earth. Imagine that the tree is the form of your being, it is your body, it is your physical experience. This is where your self resides. Imagine that as the tree, you have sensations, thoughts, and emotions. The tree is your ability to sense the world and your being within it. The tree is your being grounded in your life. Imagine that you are deeply rooted in the earth, that you are one with the earth and you are the earth at once. You are deeply aware of how you are connected to the earth and your environment. Imagine that you rest and grow and that the rain comes up inside you as the food. You are connected to the body of the earth like a tree is connected to the ground. Rest a moment and become aware of how you are deeply connected to the earth and your environment.

Now imagine that it is a first warm day of spring. The gentle wind blows through your branches, the sun warms your body. Be aware that you are from the earth and in the center of your body is a sap flowing, the sap is the sweetness of your own creativity. Feel the sap rising, feel it moving in a spiral up your body. See that inside your body is a sacred spiral that spins you into the being of your life. In this sacred spiral inside you is the central life force that spirals you into expansion and contraction along the space time continuum of your life. Imagine that this eternal energy that spirals within you is a

snake. This snake is a life force, it is part of you, it is not a snake from outside, it will not bite you, you are perfectly safe with it. Imagine that the snake spirals up from the earth that you are rooted in, up the trunk of the tree in your own body. Now imagine that in the very center of this spiral you can feel your heart. And now see that in the very center of your heart there is an eye that is closed like your eyes are when you are sleeping. The heart is the center of yourself. It is the way you go inside the place inside yourself of pure love. The most important step you need to take is to open the eye in the center of your heart. When you open this heart's eye, you will see the world with love. You can see that you exist in the world, you wake up, you begin sense yourself and witness your own life. Imagine now that the eye in the center of your heart opens, and as you open up your eye, you can see for yourself.

Now let your arms be like branches on the tree and let them reach up towards the sky. The branches of the tree, as they reach up to the sky, follow your desire to reach up to the light. Your branches are the passage ways of your energy up from within to the outside. Now imagine that there are tiny new leaves within each branch of your body. These beautiful new leaves are curled up under your skin or bark, they rest waiting to come out into the light. You can't see your leaves from the outside until they open out but each leaf is alive inside your branches. You know that at the right time, they are born and at the right time they fall to the ground. You know, there is a creative process in each new light green leaf. Now imagine that each of your leaves comes out the tree to the world. They are physical manifestations of what is inside. They are manifestations of your being and the open eye within you. Now imagine that the leaves pop open into the light. One moment your arms are bare, the next they are covered with beautiful light green leaves. And each leaf is a story of the life of the tree, a story of your life now. Each leaf is a poem, a drawing, a dance, each leaf moves in the wind, each life is like a conversation with the world. Each leaf is your presence, a gesture, a creative act. Each leaf is a reflection of what has emerged from within you. Each leaf is your hand reaching up to the sky. See the new leaves as staggering beautiful. They are tiny, curled, almost wet in their newborn essence. But they are open and they can see the sun.

Now open your heart, open your eyes, open your leaves,. Move with the tree, open your inner eye in the center of your heart, be an artist. let your leaves open as your art, You know the fist bud that comes out of your body on the first warm day of spring as you begin to blossom and reach up to the sun? That same energy of renewal and rebirth is there for you as you become your artist. For you have seasons and cycles too. In the most difficult of times there is the moment of your recovery, the moment your leaves open, the moment you are an artist for the first time. Open your leaves now. Open your leaves now.

Step two: making your own studio

One of the most essential parts of the process of healing yourself with art is to allow yourself to create space to make art in your busy life. One of the ways you do this is by making a studio. Your studio can be a pad of paper, a laptop computer, a corner of the kitchen, a whole room at home, or a room out of your house. To make healing art, you

make a commitment. You decide that your art is as important as anything else that you do in your life. It is as important as your children, your job, your lists and shopping, it is as important as the most important thing in you do. For making art is what will heal you, your studio will be the space that you will go to survive and heal. It is about finding an opportunity for yourself to do exactly what you want and need for yourself.

For many people, taking care of themselves is a crucial step. This is especially true for woman who care for everyone around them. The decision to make yourself the focus of your healing process is critical. It is about you, making healing art is about you healing your life. When you do this your family, children, and friends will be taken care of because you will be whole. You deserve it, you do. One woman who was a healer felt that she was selfish when she made her art, she was so used to taking care of others, that when she gave some pure time to herself, she felt guilty. Then she realized that she had breast cancer and she deserved to be taken care of by others now and more importantly to finally take care of herself. So she made a piece of art with a healing artist that showed all the hands of all the people who were taking care of her with a message of love in each palm to her to get well. It made her cry every time she read the messages and realized she needed and deserved the wonderful care her friends, family and caregivers were giving her. A crucial part of her art was accepting that she as the caregiver needed and wanted the care.

Making the studio beautiful and yours

The studio is the place where you will enter your passionate creativity. It is your doorway, your entryway. So make it the space where you will be the most comfortable. Put in personal things, find things you love and associate memories with, sacred things, beautiful things. Own it, it is deeply yours. Pick a place with the light that you love, with music, favorite pens, photos, paintings, objects that you are attracted to. You create these spaces, these conveniences so that the artistic process is accessible, so you have inner privacy. Mary tells us more of her own experience, "When I made my space, my friend Lee Ann helped me. I did not know what to do, I had never made a studio before. I had made houses for my family but never a place for me to be creative, a personal place. We brought in an old favorite rug, I put paintings I had done on the walls, to remind me I could paint. I carved out a personal place, something I could move in to. We went to an art supply store and we just bought things, we bought paints, brushes, we both had never done oils, and we did not know what to buy. We just grabbed things off the shelves that seemed to make sense." You need to create structure you can go into. You need a place to start from. An easel, blank paper, water paints, have to be right there so you can start to work. The empty blankness is an invitation to fill it up. Have enough room psychically and emotionally so you can daydream. Remember it is about getting touch with yourself, being in your own body, thoughts, and emotions. You take yourself out of the formal structure of your life. You make a void in the middle of it so you can use your own life as your palate. You need to put your life aside enough to look at it so you can participate in your imagery. You get a distance away to see yourself as who you are".

Creating a time to make art

Every day create a routine. Work so many hours a day, or so many hours a week. But most important, create sacred time, a time that is undiluted by time as you ordinarily know it. Time is the most precious resource you have. When you give yourself time, it is the most useful gift for healing art that you can give yourself. You give yourself attention, you listen to yourself. In the studio you can share with others, but you need your own space. You create a boundary around yourself, walls or rugs or bookcases, you go into that place and work. At home, TV and your ordinary life keeps you from it. This is an opportunity to go into your own world. You take a deep breath, you go into a different flow of time and consciousness, it is a suspension of time. It is an experience of time that is different than everyday time. It has to do with being totally focused. You have to go in to be focused, for images to emerge. It is like giving birth, you pay total attention to what you are doing. In ordinary life you never are focused enough to be still, to go inward enough to be truly creative. The distractions are not healing, we go to a therapist to focus on ourselves, this does it better. The focus and concentration create the physiology of healing and help the immune system function at its best.

Building a studio is like a bird building a nest in the spring. When the bird builds the nest there are no babies, no eggs, there is only an anticipation of something to be born. Build your studio like the nest in anticipation of the birth of yourself as a healing artist. The eggs will grow and mature and one day there will be baby bird. An artist makes or rents the studio, then starts painting, writing, dancing, or making music. The first attempts may be not much to look at, but they are important. One day the first healing painting will be born, one day the first healing poem or song or dance. For some people they can create a process before the space. Everyone is different. In another vision, a woman with a busy life does it at home. She built the studio in her life as a moment of time. She is creating a space in a different way. She goes in the kitchen for a half hour to write before everyone wakes up or before she goes to bed after everyone is asleep. In the same way the space is being created for yourself. Some people need a studio away from home, some people can work at home. It is organic, each person is different.

It is really about creating moments that are your own. Create a space right now in the moment. It is a conscious act that is deliberate, that has a space and a time. The space is sacred because it is the work of your heart, the work of who you really are. Dream space that is secret, like our wish for a lover to take us into a place in ourselves where our hearts are free. Make art with letters you never mail. Steal a moment to sing a lullaby to yourself, to another. Activate the artist within.

Creating sacred space

Sacred space is really as simple as making meaning. A rock in the road does not mean much by itself, it is seen as something to sweep away. If you collected rocks it could be precious, if you needed it for your collection, or if it was rare. If it was the rock that someone you loved had touched, its meaning would go up more. If it was the rock that a holy person you revered had touched it could be seen as deeply sacred. If it was the rock that Jesus or Buddha had touched before their death, or as they were enlightened, it would be seen as sacred to a whole culture. Sacredness comes from the meaning in your

life story. If you want to make art with intent to heal, you make a space and a time that is full of meaning to you. The space that you carve out of your life is the place where magic will happen, the place where you will be healed, grow, and change. It is as sacred as a church or mountain top where you would receive a vision, for after all that is exactly what will happen. And the time too is sacred. This is a time that is only for you to do what you want to heal. It is a time of life and rebirth. It is sacred in its healing intent.

Many artists and healers make the space they work in sacred, with intent. They stop for a moment before entering the space and say to themselves that the work they are about to do is sacred, full of meaning, full of life, holy, about life and death, about the spirits, about forces, about service, whatever way of looking at it that is their own story. One woman oncologist stops before entering each patient's room and prays, and imagines that the doorway is an arch like a church, and imagines that she is entering a holy place full of luminosity. And then she goes in, centered, and is a physician. Many artists who work with patients, or make healing art in a studio, say a prayer or do a guided imagery before starting work. The prayer is to make their work holy or full or rich, whatever they wish, and to make the space full of energy to allow the work to happen. Many people call in imaginary helpers or spirits or ancestors or teachers to help them. They do this in an imagery exercise or an intentional prayer. Many artists we work with have a whole ritual they do each time they make healing art or work with patients. They center themselves, quiet themselves down, pray to the helpers around them, whoever they are, and only then make art. So many healing artists do this, that we look at it now as a part of the process of making healing art. That is the way it was done in ancient times, or with Buddhist artists. That is in fact, the tradition we work from as healing artists. So before you make healing art yourself, consider stopping, pausing, centering yourself, and saying a prayer of healing intent to heal yourself, others, or the earth.

Step three: choosing a medium

When we have a physical illness, a depression, or a life crisis, or when we need to grow, we start to heal ourselves with art by opening ourselves up to our inner voices of change and creativity. We allow ourselves to listen to those voices and to let their messages to us emerge. In this process, choosing a medium is the next priority. Resonating with the medium is resonating with the creative process. Resonating means doing a type of artistic process that will flow with your energy. What is it that you do, that flows with your body's energy? Everyone has different affinities for different types of art and different processes. You do not need worry much about which medium you will choose, because when creativity flows it becomes multi-media, but you need to start with something as the doorway, something that will allow you to have the sense of being an artist, so you could say "I am a painter". Then the world will expand to other mediums. When you use art as healing, you don't package the experience in one media, because it is not about making art to make art. It is more about making art to free yourself, making art to heal. When we talk about resonating with a material, the process is unique and personal for each person. Explore materials in the next chapters, read them and see what appeals to you. We will talk about many mediums, for example in the chapter about painting we will discuss the difference between water colors and oils. As you read, let yourself imagine doing it and see what you like, imagine how you would feel. Listen to

the stories of the artist and how they work and see if one of the stories feels like yours. There are two ways you see yourself as an inner artist. In the spirit world and in the real world. One is a dream the other more practical. In the spirit world Mary saw herself as a dancer, but in the real world she saw herself as a painter. Sometimes the real one is just easier, and your spirit one will follow as you become learn to use many mediums. Or you may have chosen your medium already. You may have made art or played music before or seen yourself as making art in your daydreams. Or you may have to ask yourselves what you want to do. Am I a painter, a sculptor, a musician, a poet, a storyteller, a dancer? Have I ever wanted to create something and have been afraid or too busy to do it? The artist is all of these people, the artist uses all media as healing.

To choose your medium, be open to the choices ahead. As you read the next chapters don't be held to one, don't worry about which one to choose. Be confident that you will choose the right one; for now don't close off any medium. To start to make a choice, go back in your life to where you were the most happy, or go back to a time in your life when you were doing something where you were most at peace. Go back in your life and examine that moment deeply. What surrounded you, what were you doing, seeing, smelling. Or go back in your life to where you were the darkest. What did you do to recover on your own? For example, if you were a runaway teenager and you found you always went to the art school, and worked on a dance project, that is a good place to start. When you were a child, did you write, draw, dance? As a child, you are more playful in problem solving, so go back and remember the circumstances and bring it up to your consciousness. Also when you were a child, what did you always want to do? Did you want to be an artist, a movie star, a dancer, what did you want to do when you grew up? What did you want when you had no inhibitions, when you thought you could do anything and not fail, before you were hindered by life, when it was still a dream.

When you close your eyes, what one medium emerges for you? There are two times in your life when you were most likely to have been an artist. First as a very young child, next as a teenager. As a young child you may have had art lessons or done art in school. As a teenager when you started to separate from your parents, to form your own identity, there were things you did naturally to become yourself. There is something from that place of individuation that can help you now. Go to what were you before you became an adult. before you became formed and more defined in roles.. We will do an imagery to go back to both of those places and be there and see what medium resonates with us. But we will see more than that, we will see ourselves as artists again, you can.

Mary tells her story, "I remember a moment in an art project when I knew I wanted to be an artist. I was an adolescent in a crises. I was depressed and a runaway. At school, I went to the art room, not to other classes. The teacher would stare at me because I would never leave. I would add red color to the plaster to make the plaster pink I was the only one doing that. I loved it, my teacher said it was wild, but in that moment where I was trying to be who I was, art was one of the only places I could rebel and not hurt myself or others." Michael tells his story, "for me it was painting an airplane mural in class. It was second grade, I had just moved. I had no friends and I stood and painted for days, it was the clearest space for me with the least worry and fear.."

An imagery exercise for choosing a media

Close your eyes, rest, let your breathing get deeper, let your abdomen rise and fall as you breathe, let your body take over and take you deeper. Now go back to the moment in your life where you were a child making art. Go back in time through the past, go back many years to a point in your childhood where you remember a moment of making art that was full of happiness, a moment of making art where you were the most free. Go back to that moment in your life where you actually lived making art, where you allowed yourself to be truly creative and satisfied. Go back to that moment and go into your body. Remember how it felt, remember the world around you, remember the way you experienced the situation you were in, and spend some time in your child's body and be with that child. Be in the situation where you were making art as a child and watch your hands. Remember your thoughts, what did it feel like, and look at what materials you were using, and feel how they felt, and how you felt, and totally be with it. Spend some time being with the activities you were doing, feel your hands, feel your body as you were doing it, be there and rest in its beauty.

Then go back to a moment in your life when you were in trouble, where you were sad or lonely or lost or upset. Maybe it was a time when you were a teenager newly exploring who you were to separate from your parents. Go back to a time when you were discovering who you were. Go back to a moment where you were in conflict and pain, where you experienced despair. Go back to the darkness there, experience your full range of emotions and remember what you reached out for when you reached into yourself. Remember who you were then, what you were thinking what you were seeing with your eyes. Remember what you talked about, what you wanted to achieve, was it writing poetry, making sculpture, painting? How did you explore the possibilities in your life, what did you do to get away from the problems, to go deep into your privacy, into yourself. Go to that moment, see what you were striving for, what were your desires.

Now remember a time in your youth when you were still uninhibited, What was that dream, what was the dream before life became so formed, when you thought anything was still possible, without any concept of failing, what was it, what was your dream and desires, what was the glimmer of what you might resonate with, what did you do to go elsewhere and find out who you were. When you see yourself in a time of trouble,, before you return, come back into the brightest place you know now in your life. Come back into the most beautiful vision that you can remember, a moment of love and joy. Let that moment of happiness wash over the moments of sadness from your past. Let them be cleaned, let yourself come out into the light and rest there now. Don't stay in the sadness after seeing it, come back now into your joy.

Next you will pick a medium, but the opportunity to integrate all the media in the process is important. We don't want to segregate the arts, to compartmentalize them into painting, music and dance, and poetry and storytelling when in our experience it is a more integrated process. We have found that being a healing artist is about being open to all the modalities. We separate them in the beginning because it's usually one medium you

choose, but we have found it is an integration that actually occurs. The dancer for example uses all of the arts. In many programs we've watched healing artists as they have evolved into renaissance artists. They walk into patient's rooms and can draw, dance, and even play music. They may be best at their own media, but the rest come forth and make them more alive.

Step four: making art starting from where you are in your life right now

Finally, we make art. Next is the process itself, to draw, to move, to write, or start a song. It is really simple. As simple as breathing or being in love. The experience of art and healing can be visualized as taking place on four spirals: the spiral of lived experience, the spiral of transformation, the spiral of empowerment, and the spiral of love. This description of how art and healing takes place is not theoretical, it is real. It comes from the experiences of people who have healed themselves with art, music, and dance, and it is taken from the actual stories they have told us. It starts from right where you are now. The first spiral of lived experience starts from your illness, your depression, your problems, your joy. The four spirals of art and healing are about you starting out from your life, about making the first piece of art simply from who you are now. We think the four spirals are useful for you because this way of seeing art and healing divides the process into four parts that you can look at separately. Its framework helps you to understand that the process is easy and automatic and yet powerful and profound.

The entire healing process can be pictured in your mind's eye in metaphorical form as a journey on a sacred spiral. The spiral down can be imagined as a concentric pathway of creativity. Spirals are concentric forces that bring a person down into their own inner creative energy. When we reach the center of these spirals we will reach the center of our heart where we are deeply connected to the world. Within the center of the heart, an inner eye opens up, the eye of awareness and witness. From the center of our spirit, we experience our inner connectedness. As the art comes out, you see that everything comes out, and you are like everything. This is about birth. The art is what you are giving birth to. The art in this sense is an offering that heals you, an offering directly from your heart.

The spiral of lived experience

The first spiral is the spiral of lived experience. The first art you make takes its subject from your life as it is now. You do not need to change to start, to be someone else, to pretend. You start from who you are now, from where you are now. This spiral is the spiral of your life. Where you come from, who you are. This spiral comes from each of your stories of living, both beautiful and painful. It is the first meeting, where your eyes meet, when you see yourself, when you feel the events of your life. It informs you. It is about the experience of your life, your divorce, your children, your illness, cancer. It is what life has given you to work with, the material of your process. It is not an accident, it is the embodiment of your life, your thoughts, emotions, your body, the embodiment of

the experience of living. The actual pain and suffering is the palette, what you will use to make art, how you will discover who you are. The reality of living informs you in every living moment of your love.

When you deal with art with the intention to heal, you deal with your own life. It doesn't come from books, from art school, it comes from who you are. In the beginning you go into your life, you look at who you are. In the act of creating there is movement and change, a technique, a process. The movement is inherent in the process, you become, absorb, you go beyond your life into an other space, into another world. Your intuitive nature, who you are, comes out. It is as if something else writes the story. There is confidence in an essential experience, it is tangible. There is the act of creation.

So as you make your first piece of art, come into the first spiral, into your feelings, dreams, into how your body feels, your ordinary memories, your emotions, body memories, how you are embodied in the world. It can be deep joy, deep pain, your cancer, depression, go into the place where your tumor lies. Don't be afraid, for the spiral starts going in a circle, then goes inwards towards your center, then starts again to spiral you into your light. You go into the place where you are love again and it fills with fire. The event becomes alive again, not a memory of the past. You go into that space, you make a choice to take that energy that is inside of you, to take that energy and go deeper in the spiral. You do not have to think of a subject. In healing art it is there, it is you.

The spiral of transformation

The spiral of transformation is about art changing you. On this second spiral you are making something, creating something. As you immerse yourself in your art, your consciousness expands and you may move to a deeper where you begin to glimpse yourself as beautiful and the wise person within you comes out. If you don't judge yourself, the beauty in yourself unfolds. You just let it come out when you go into other world. And you see that your art is where you are, and where you were. You are now changing. The you that sees your art unfold is different from the you that was living in fear and unable to act. You look at the painting, or read the journal, and you see that you were like that, and now you are different. You are a person looking at a person who was. You are now changing. And you can see that the art is changing too. The person and their world view is new. You are transformed.

The spiral of empowerment

The third spiral is the spiral of empowerment. The spiral of empowerment is about immersing yourself in the process. This is when you paint or make poetry in a passion. This is when you are deep in the artistic process. In this space you get to go elsewhere, you go into places where you may not be able to be in your life especially if you are ill. You get to be who you want to be there. The process deepens by allowing you to experience your journey, to go from one place to another. The process is very tangible. It involves a mobilization of inner resources. This is where you tap into the passionate creative fire, a point of departure occurs, you immerse yourself into the creative process

and there is an experience of generation. Your inner strength and innate wisdom emerge. With no judgment the person can play and be who they are.

Then you go into technique, into process. You can paint, make music, do movement, With your feelings, you create a process to channel the love energy into a work of art. You go into the studio, you journal, you set aside time so that you fill it with that experience. You make a space in the world. You capture the experience into the present moment and make art from your body, thoughts, feelings. Something unexpected will emerge when you spontaneously let your body be what it wants to be, when you let the artist /medicine man/ healer free. It can be painful. You can connect to your despair and your passion. In the hand of the artist you have given it to her, the artist heals by transformation itself.

The spiral of love

In the final spiral you are in love. It is about the art flowing from you like a spring, about giving your art away. You go to the place where you know who you are and accept who you are. You know yourself better. You know what your problems are and you accept them and yourself. You can deal with your life and create it as art in your life. This state of openness to the universe, to other people, to your own crises becomes your teacher..

Chapter Six

Healing yourself with the visual arts: painting, sculpture, photography and crafts

Introducing your painter in residence

"Welcome to my studio, my name is Mary Lisa, I am the painter in residence with the art program here. I am here to make art with you. If you are sick, or a family member of someone who is ill, or an artist who wants to learn how to make healing art with another person, I am here to show you how to do it. I am a visual artist, a fabric painter, a painter. I have been an artist since I have been a small child. I have worked with patients in the hospital since 1993 and I will share this experience with you. I am your artist in residence today. what do you want to do? Lets put out a big piece of paper to make a body tracing, let's put out a t- shirt with a pattern on it, let's put out a piece of puzzle jewelry you can paint, let's make a mandala circle painting of imagery you have had, let's start making art".

Mary Lisa Kitakis is the painter in residence at Shands Arts in Medicine at The University of Florida. When you meet Mary Lisa her eyes are always sparkling. She usually giggles as she is talking. At first she seems chatty, but when you watch her she hesitates to give you a chance to wonder what she is up to. Actually it is like a tease. She is holding out the art supplies, getting everyone to play with her. Her brown hair softly caresses her face and is held up with a jeweled comb. She is always wearing something delightful with animals on it and many jeweled stars or rainbows. You know that what she will do will always be fun. She often sings as she moves and says " Does anybody want to play?"

How visual arts heal

Visual arts have an immediacy of imagery that make them the first doorway for many people who want to use art to heal. The first artists at the bedside in most hospital programs were visual artists. That may be because images of healing that come from deep in inner space often come up as visual images. Or it may be because there are more visual artists than poets or dancers who do this work. Visual images are more concrete than movement or sound and for many people easier to connect with to start out. We constantly experience visual imagery in our lives, from movies and television to photographs, paintings and sculpture. The concept of being an artist is tied to one who makes visual images, the first art most people think of is painting, and the first recorded art are the ancient cave paintings. There is a powerful cultural tradition of the artist as the painter. The figure of the painter as an artist who can be who they are, who is free, is rooted deep in our cultural traditions. Being an artist explains eccentric behavior, it allows you creative freedom. For a person who is ill, seeing themselves as a painter frees them to be themselves.

The visual image is a compelling link to guided imagery. When most people think of imagery, they think of visual imagery. The term "visualization" that is still used for guided imagery, refers to visual images, because they are the most accessible images to start with for most people. Visual images transport you into another place. When you look at a painting it is no longer habitual seeing, it is something from within you brought to life. When we close our eyes and imagine a scene, we see inwards. We are in a place

that we can look around in, feel, and move in. It is really a total experience, but the visual modality is the one that most of us are most aware of. It is not visual imagery like the outer world, or like a movie, it is softer, more transitory, faster moving, more like a dream. And that is the place from which we make visual art, the place of softly glimpsed images, the place where images come from. When we start to paint or sculpt, we bring an image outward, whether the image is consciousness or unconscious. The image becomes real and we can then see it in the outer world.

When you ask visual artists who work with patients, how art heals, they all have different answers. One day we went around a circle and asked all the artists how art heals. One artist says art heals by distraction. It gets people's minds off their illness, and then unconscious healing happens. Another says it is different for each person, no two people use visual arts to heal in the same way. Another artist says that making healing art is a meditation. A physiological shift occurs when meditation takes place. You concentrate deeply, you go inwards. Another artist says that making art is real magic, that a new line on a page where there was nothing before puts the person in the world of creation. Many artists say that making a painting takes you inside. They use the term "elsewhere" it is a feeling of going somewhere else. People call it different things but everyone knows what it feels like. Another artist says art heals by connecting you to something, to something larger, to your greater self. Most artists in residence agree that people can go to a different place with art, people can make art and not be distracted. They can be with themselves differently. They can tap into their healer within. In an objective way art can help a person witness themselves. Art can take a person from the inner world outward to the community. Artists also say that art heals because it is like play, it brings you back to your childhood space.

Many artists talk about control. Even when you are ill you can still control your art. Art is your own, you have control of all its aspects. You can erase a line, take a whole shape off, change a color. You can manipulate it, you can even tell the artist that you refuse to make art and not do it. Art shifts the person to what psychologists call an internal locus of control. When a person becomes the artist, they have mastery, they lead it. A woman with a lung transplant who was recovering, told the artists working with her "When I make art, I am in control of my body and mind, I have power to reduce fear, I feel my old power come back. Doctors and nurses have told me what to do for months, now as a painter I tell myself what to do. This is the part of my life that is completely mine," Art is a vehicle to create focused intention. It helps you regain power, it is a tool to concentrate on any aspect of healing you want to. This is very different from the medical model. The choice to do art is part of the empowerment, the person can make the artist do what they want to, they can make anything they want to instead of being told what to do.

Starting out : Mary's story of reclaiming her inner artist

Both the authors of this book started in healing art as visual artists, Mary as a painter, and Michael as a photographer. We will tell you more of Mary's story as a detailed example of someone who healed themselves with painting. Her experience happened by itself, she had no one to help her become a healing artist. There was no program in art and healing,

an no healing artist nearby. She had never heard of art and healing. It just happened. She only had her friends who were painters to help her start to paint. Her story has many of the aspects we hear from people who start out using visual arts to heal. If she can heal herself with art, you can too. She was just an ordinary housewife without an healing artist. She did it herself.

"I was always drawn to the visual arts, I loved to look at paintings. When I looked at them, I could go elsewhere. There was a spatial experience in a visionary world, a window into a free state of consciousness. As it engaged my eyes, it engaged my interest and took me inwards. So when I became deeply depressed and overwhelmed by my own despair I knew my medium was paint. There was an agony of despair that ripped my body and I cried for months. At that point in my life when I was experiencing such pain I wondered what I could do to survive. The first time I painted I got help from a friend who was a painter. Lee Ann took me to her studio the first time, and handed me paper and crandache crayons, water color crayons, and watercolors. I made my choice of crandache because they were brightly colored, I liked the way they looked. There were lots of them, they are in a box like crayons. I had no idea which materials to choose, I just grabbed the ones that appealed to something in me, to my sensuality. Then I started making marks, lines, shapes, and colors. My first picture turned out to be a still life of the studio. It was clearly what was in front of me that grabbed my eye. It was the lived experience before me. I looked at my life for my point of reference. I did not know what to do, so I just looked around the room. Lee Ann would say 'that was beautiful, what a nice shape, those colors are great, you are a natural, oh Mary you are an artist.' I was confused, I did not know what was happening. The more I painted, the more I was surprised that I could create forms. It was so gestural, somehow the lines were connected to how I felt. I was surprised by how the medium responded to my emotions better than words. It seemed so pre-verbal, the medium responded to my sense of creation. It expressed deep feelings that words can't.

Then I looked around and found an image of a distorted women in a book. I looked at images in my life that resonated with me, that I wanted to look at, that had meaning for me where I was then. I took the woman image as a point of departure. I just took something that I responded to, something that was around me, that came from my experience. I took whatever I recognized, what related to me. I knew somehow I needed to start with images that were immediately available to me, images that I could create a dialogue with. I then recreated an image in the painting and needed to relate to the image. I saw the woman in pain. It was how I felt, it was a true rendering of the pain. of the brokenness, almost as if it was talking back to me. I couldn't sort out the images, the painting did that for me. I brought something that was deep inside of me out, and released it. There was a huge experience of being released, the image released me from what the image is. I externalized the form, I created a page I could look at and think about. Before, it was inside and could not be seen. The images come from a place before thought, when I allowed them to come through me, they came from before consciousness. Then when they came out I could make sense of it.

So my process was a shift from the still life that started me out, to the picture of the woman. First she looked like a stranger, then I recognized myself in her, I realized she was me, so I decide to do self portraits. I got the idea to take pictures of myself in postures that reflected how I felt. I used pictures to render the figures. Then there was another shift. I became totally involved in constructing the forms. When I began to paint myself as the figure, I became absorbed in lines, shapes, the folds of her dress, the fingers receding into the shadows, the lines going into the cloth. Now I was involved not only in the emotions but in the figure in space. This was exciting because I was using the image to reconstruct my life. I did not know it then, but as I reconstructed the image, I was reconstructing myself. To make the image readable, I remade myself. I went from being bent over, torn, open, to being expanding, to raising my head, to bathing in pure waters. As the images changed in content, my body changed to. In the space of working things out, the process is unconscious. The process that emerged by itself took me from despair and fear, to bathing in water and laying back in my body, and looking forwards".

The steps of healing yourself as a painter can be seen from Mary's story. First she choose painting because she knew from her whole life that she was attracted to it and a part of her had always wanted to be a painter. Next she set up a studio and choose which materials appealed to her. She bravely made the first lines and watched as they turned in something. She saw her illness as her despair and she followed the process to allow it to heal her. She saw the healing take place as she was reconstructed and realized that the art was healing her. During the process she did not analyze or try to figure it out, she just trusted it and continued to make art. She also felt herself heal and saw herself heal. The steps of choosing a medium, making a studio, choosing materials, making the first line, and watching the healing process emerge and heal you, are what we will talk about in this chapter. They are the ways painting heals. Where does intent come in? Start with intent to heal with art, that is all you need. Trust in the process. It will do itself. Honor who you are and what you want to no, hold no value judgments. Let the art heal you.

Where is art coming from, what is the source of desire? All you need is intention to create space, choose materials, make something. All you need to do is to give yourself the space to allow what emerges from you to be seen and to heal. Finally, keep on doing the task, persevere. For the healing artist, creating intention is first. The painting studio is an intentional space where you can release the critic. The goal is to go inside yourself to make art as the doorway to your own health, to your own soul. The path is to go inward in your outer and inner life at once. It is not about approval, about paintings that mean something to someone else. Make healing art with the spirit of befriending yourself. Take pride and joy in your own life. Enter healing by your own generosity of spirit. Make art to help yourself change your life. Honor that you are doing something you need to do to live more fully, to move from one place to another. Healing art is not about material success, it is about you healing from within .

Making a studio for the visual arts

One of the most important things you can do is start in an accessible way with a sketchbook. That is a good way to begin drawing. You can choose pencil or pens, and a blank book. Take the opportunity to connect to something visually, to draw it. You can

take your paints and you can caress the image with your hand. You take the shapes, render forms, become familiar with the way you gesture. You can do this because it develops confidence in doing images and it takes any moment and takes you elsewhere. You take something and look at how the light plays on it, how the wind moves it, you play. Right in the heart of the ordinary day, you take advantage of opportunity that presents themselves to see deeply.

Take time among your busy moments to yourself create an artist's tote bag. Make one that has the materials you want to use and is easy to carry. You can put in watercolors, gouache, a jar with water and a lid, colored pencils, or washable crayons. It is only important that the materials are accessible to you. You can work anywhere you are comfortable. You can set up in your home, on kitchen table, go to springs, go out in nature, go by yourself, set up still life. It is like exercise, you have to do it consistently to enjoy the process. It seduces you into it if it takes up space in your life. The experience will draw you back to it, you cultivate desires to want to do this.

If you want to setup a studio, a room of your own, a space of your own, spend time in your process. You are making a place to spend time with yourself. You can do this on a lunch hour, or whenever you are free for a while. It is also helpful to seek out relationships with artists or other people who are painting. Get in community. People are sources of inspiration in making art, Watch people painting along side you, this is a reminder and a refuge. You can share a studio, rent a studio with another artist, rent a studio in a group space where other artists rent too.

You can also cultivate a friendship with an artist. In that way you can enjoy a relationship, the artist can become a support person in your process. You talk to them as you go on. This is not therapy, it is community. Be with yourself, be your own healer, your own therapist. You share with yourself. What is critical is that you are giving yourself time to be with yourself. Take the one hundred dollars you would give to a therapist and make an appointment with yourself to paint. When I started to paint, I did not have a healing artist, I only had a friend who was a painter. She encouraged me to paint and the healing came by itself. That is why I think it is most important to be with artists. They need not be healing artists. A healing artist is not necessary in this process. It is most important for you to paint. You are with people who facilitate your creativity. The environment, time, and space, are what helps you make art. Be in a community that will empower you as an artist

For sculpture, the studio is similar but it needs the tools you will use for whatever type of sculpture you are making. The most basic sculpture studio has materials from nature like feathers, bones, sticks, wood, rocks and other objects. Beyond that, all you will need is glue, a saw, a hammer and tape measure, a chisel, sanders, and nails or screws. A workshop can be in a basement, a storeroom, a garage, or a corner of the living room. One ninety-year-old man with prostate cancer made a studio in the corner of his room in an old age home so he could make sculpture. He cut the wood in the basement and brought it up to his room to glue and paint. He made life-size sculptures of beautiful

woman goddesses that were inspiring to everyone around him and deeply healing for himself.

If you are photographer all you need is a camera. The type does not matter. Polaroid cameras, point and shoot, or expensive cameras will all work. Each has strengths and weaknesses in the process. A Polaroid camera gives you instant gratification. Many hospital artists use it with patients right in their rooms. You can color the prints, mount them, put them in collages or hang them as they are. You can put them in a journal with stories, or hang them in spirals on the wall. A point and shoot takes pictures of excellent quality, has the advantage of portability, and is inexpensive. The prints can be worked with easily since they are not mounted like Polaroids. A complicated camera takes a variety of lenses and is more flexible in exposure and composition. You can have the film developed professionally or do it yourself and you can use either color or black and white film. With color film you can shoot slides or prints. The darkroom and other elaborate photo materials are optional. You can make yourself a darkroom in an extra bedroom, a laundry room, or a large closet. You can carry water from a bathroom sink. You can block off the windows with cardboard and soft cloth on the edges to keep out the light. All you really need is an enlarger, an easel, a timer, trays, a safelight, a tank, a thermometer, and chemicals. You can even print color yourself or use digital photography with computers.

For crafts, you need to fit your studio to the craft you are working- clay, glass, jewelry, metal, or fiber all are healing. Weaving and quilt- making are also deeply healing and have been since women started to make art. Currently some of the most famous quilt makers and weavers are men. To find out how to make a studio, go to an artist in that medium that you know or take a beginners course anywhere. Again, your intent is to heal, not make museum art so do not worry about being perfect. Just get started. The fascination with your art- making process and your materials will take over and drive you to learn more. The concentration and interest will take your mind off your illness and you will be transported to a different world. The studio is the place where that world lives. Your vehicle may be a pad and paints or a point and shoot, but when you pick it up you are a healing artist in your own nonordinary world.

Sacred time and the visual arts

When you approach the canvas, each minute is full. This is different than rushing to work or driving a carpool. When you make art, time vanishes. If we suspend our distractions, we can go into a moment where we are deeply connected to the place our visions come from, from the past, the present, and the future. You open the doorway for it to come in. If you are totally present, you are in a moment that is connected to all of time. Images deep in your spiritual consciousness emerge in a way that resonates with other people. Somehow inside of yourself is a place like dreams, a void inside of time where images begin. The slowing down of time occurs in between your consciousness moments.. Seizing the moments and experiencing them fully. Go into a moment and stretch it out. Within a sacred moment, go to the point where you are present in your breathing. In that moment, is a moment that is so open, it is illuminated. All energy, all

images are there before you know it, before you speak, in the dream space within. That is the place where you begin your healing.

Letting your healing images emerge.

When you paint, you start from the spiral of lived experience. You go to the place in your life where you are living what needs to be healed. You go to the physical experience of illness, despair, anger, rage. When you approach the process, you start from place of pain or fear and paint it. The material you would work with is the experience. You paint figures that reflect your own emotions. You use the painting as a way to paint yourself, your lived experience, your world. That is your subject matter, the subject is your life even if the image is symbolic.

When Mary saw the figure of herself facing forwards instead of hiding, she was healed, she then didn't need to paint any other subjects. She could then paint other things. When you paint your healing experience, you realize it. You realize how afraid and broken you are. A painting stands still for a moment. You capture something you can be with, a space you can go into, a place to share. A painting is honest. You look at yourself and see what you need and then you give it to yourself. You see the need to take care of you, you see yourself love yourself, you see your pain and see that you need to be loved. It is an act of love that you give yourself. It is a act of self love, but as you paint you move past self love to give to others. You cultivate a vision of looking at the world that is deep, that is given to others. The paintings are offerings of an authentic vision of yourself to the world. You almost cannot speak, it is deeper than words. The painting captures an experience that allows others to be there, to look at themselves. You share a way of seeing, you give of yourself as an artist and that becomes your gift. When you are really healed is when you love yourself perfectly. Then, you can perfectly love the world, then the only thing you can do is to give your art to the world for the sake of love. Sharing your art is your act of love, that is how you heal yourself and others and the world. This view of art is totally different from the view of galleries selling art to collectors. It is about healing. Your art is a way to access yourself.

If you look at the process in slow motion, there are characteristics that emerge. It is about watching the images appear and letting them grow naturally. It is about honoring what emerges and being open to change. The most powerful images are those that come from deep inside you, that are meaningful to you, that are part of your story or myth. It is about you taking on your life, trusting your images, trusting them for your art. If you can't think of anything, go with what you see. Take a place in the image your paint and let it go forwards to the next one. Then the series grows.

Archetypal images emerge often as you make healing art. In visual portraiture, metaphor emerges. In figurative painting, symbols appear in the landscapes and still lifes and in the figures you paint. People respond to what they can see. Figures bring you in contact with humanness, they show you yourself and the others around you. They show you family members, relationships, your placement in your environment. You always want resonance, but there are many different types of images that resonate with your life as

you live it now. Symbols often appear in healing art unconsciously. Birds, stars, rainbows, houses, hands, trees, hearts, are typical of healing art. The image's content is not important in itself. It is meaningful to the person who paints it. What is more important than the image, is the emotional experience of the image. The gesture of the line and the emotional contents are more significant than the painting looking like the person. Rendering accurately is not the point, rendering imagery that is meaningful is what is important.

Surrealist artists portrayed moving into creative space and time as popping through the membrane. They described their experience as going into the body of their lover, going through her body, seeing it as transparent, and then moving inside. Many healing artists say that the most significant thing they do is go through a membrane, go elsewhere to a place of beauty inside themselves. They said that only then does she sing to them of the birth of time and space. By her beauty, they are drawn into her and through her, and then they hear her voice. This journey is portrayed as three drops, each deeper and deeper. The first is leaving ordinary experience, the second finding the energy of the physical manifestation of forms, and finally the third, is something coming out of nothingness effortlessly. This process sounds abstract and difficult but it takes place by itself when you go elsewhere.

When Mary paints, she takes something from her lived experience that is interesting. She says, "what comes out emerges without thought, what I hope comes out is a gestural movement that I can't conceptualize. I allow the unseen to become seen, you get filled, merge, the seed becomes born. It is like giving birth, your body takes control, you don't do anything. In the kitchen your child brings you a flower, you see it is beautiful, you want to paint it. Making a painting is like making a salad. It is really ordinary on the surface. But in painting, you see the ordinary way of being, as the greatest joy. You magnify the light in the simple to illuminate the sacred in a new way of seeing. The ordinary mother within the extraordinary artist is. They exist at once. You look at it, you stop time, you create time and space, you are with it and present, beautiful, peaceful, and healing. You go into something visually. The spiral is a soft drop into the place where images come to you like your breath".

Another way of working is to meditate and see the vision and then render it as art. Visionary artists like the painter Alex Grey often work in this way. James Surls, a Texas wood sculptor who inspired Michael to conceive his first vision of art and healing, worked with images by seeing them in a relaxed visionary state. He would manipulate the image in inner space, rotate it and look at it. And then he would bring it out from his personal space of imagery to make art. Both ways of seeing involve an abstract absorption of power. It is not important which way you use. For Mary, making healing art is closer to making a salad than to intentionally creating a meditative visionary experience. For James, it is an intentional meditative visionary experience. For you, it can be either way. It can be a totally ordinary or consciously visionary. You start now with the simplest act and move forwards. The most important thing is holding your space, maintaining your relationship to creation.

Giving birth to the earth, patient stories

When Michael works with cancer patients he is always amazed by the art they bring to their sessions. A woman with bone cancer who had been experiencing only pain and depression started to draw. She brought in drawings of herself which changed from week to week. All Michael did was honor them and help her to look at them with love. If he knew about a symbol, he might tell a story, but he did not interpret her art. At first she drew herself as separated from everything, she was alone, in a box. The drawings were crude, ugly, jarring. She was always trapped, always curled up in darkness. But even then, she loved her drawings. They were surprisingly ugly to her but she felt right at home in the imagery she drew. As she drew more, she took the walls away and she became more beautiful. At this point in the process she became intensely interested in her drawing and spent more and more time doing it at home between sessions for pure enjoyment. The drawing became a preoccupation, it became the most important thing for her to do. As she drew she almost became wild. She was so full of energy, she could hardly sleep. She woke up and started drawing immediately and sometimes drew late into the night. Suddenly the drawings changed. Imagery started to be surprising and wonderful. She drew herself flying, in space, with crystals, with animals. She saw herself surrounded by rainbow like colors, swirling around her painting her. She saw herself merging with things, blending into light. Finally the drawings portrayed her giving birth to the earth, an image of union and connectedness that showed who she had become. The drawings were now in astonishing colors, they were shaded and three dimensional, and they even became illuminated with gold ink. They were graphic representations of the transformation that was occurring. They showed her as healing even before she knew what was happening. They took her animals, her friends, her cat, and most importantly the earth itself, and made them all hers. She was now connected to them, part of them, one with them.

Out of her cocoon

Both as a patient and an artist, a young woman used her creative resources and empowered herself to become deeply involved in her own recovery from chronic pain. Diagnosed with fibromyalgia, a chronically painful condition which had severely disabled her to the point that she became wheelchair-bound and severely depressed, she began a series of seventy-two drawings which she refers to as The Journey. The first painting was called simply "Pain." After she became engaged in the drawing process, the colors, patterns, and symbols took on significance to her, and her drawings began to guide her in new directions.

She had become extremely sick. She had dropped to ninety eight pounds and could not work and she thought that she was dying. She could not communicate with her doctors or nurses and was extremely depressed. She started meticulously drawing her images. She began to draw the pain. She could not communicate it verbally to the staff. They did not seem to understand her constant complaints. She would draw her pain purple and yellow, with spiked balls. She would show electric current jolts going through her. Her art made her intimate with her pain and her sensations. She drew herself in a cocoon where she was wrapped and in pain. Then she began to do landscapes. She would become a tiny woman in the landscape in the cocoon, you could not see her well. She began to develop a visual way to deal with her pain, to deal with the hospital. Purple and orange colors represented her experience of pain, heart flowers in the landscapes represented self-love, and a frequently recurring drawing of a path represented her journey. She began to see people, to talk about the pictures rather than talk about her pain. She did this for several months. She would paint little flowers in wild pink colors and then they would grow. Then she had insights of what they meant to her. She did this on her own, she talked about her images but did this on her own. She realized that she had to love herself. She realized this from her flowers. The flowers were self love. It was like something was talking to her, the images were telling her stories. She saw them evolving over time. Then her intent was to make images to help her in the healing process. One day she burst out of her cocoon, the butterfly was free. She was then an actively involved artist. She had become more deliberate, not just intuitive. She was now more empowered, she could actually do this, and she drew herself well. From then on, the paintings were a monitor of her pain, and she was outside it enough to be able to express it.

For her, the visual world had become a potent and direct form of communication: She talks about the process, "My realization was that if I really wanted to help myself with the pain I

would have to change my whole life. It was in my drawings that I began my search for the person I was born to be." Her drawings reflected her experiences, her relationship with her caregivers, and her relationship with her pain. She shares her drawings with her caregivers as a vital part of her therapy and healing process. When they can see her pain, they believe it and can treat it better. When they see her images of healing, they know medications are effective. Finally, she has become involved with sharing her experience of art in her own recovery process.

I take pictures so I can never forget

A series of pieces by a woman photographer documents her friend's experience of breast cancer and its treatment. The photographs confront with creativity the experience of a woman living with this disease. The patient shared her response to this documentation: "I want to be able to remember what has happened to me the last few months. Unlike some women I have read about who don't want to remember, I can never forget. The photographs and my journal will always be a link for me. The words provide an immediate and urgent release for what I'm feeling and the images document what I'm experiencing." She explains that, while exploring the uncharted territory both of having breast cancer and of documenting her healing journey, she feels she is coming out of the closet of social taboo and fear. She shares her humanity and her personal experience boldly. This is a powerful visual narrative through her friend who has photographed her throughout her treatment.

Mary Lisa tells how she started as a artist in residence

"My friend who was a nurse at the hospital called me to please come down to the hospital. So I brought T-shirts with me and some paints and things. And she said, 'We have a little girl here who has been waiting to see you. I told her you were coming.' She was 7 years old and I had never been on a bone marrow transplant unit and I looked through the window and she was so excited. This little girl was all tied up to her intravenous lines. She was jumping up and down-straight up and down-that I was there, and clapping her hands when I walked in. The nurse told me that she had been standing at the window and looking out and waiting for me to come all day. And she was just like, are you gonna play with me, are you gonna do this with me, are you gonna-can we paint? And she was the cutest little girl. I created all these little characters for her like little friends. I drew little animals that she had in mind. When she said draw her kitty I would do the kitty and I would put her pajamas on the kitty that I drew for her. Then she'd paint herself as a kitty with her little bunny slippers on and with her little hair barrettes and with her little hats on. She would giggle and draw poodles with little dresses on. This child, who had spent a long time here, at one point would not speak with anybody. She had totally shut down and the only way that she would communicate was by making animal noises and drawing with me. They would call me and say 'can you please come and work with her because she won't talk.' Until I got there she was having a horrible time with the bone marrow transplant. She would be vomiting and then I would come and she would paint and she wouldn't want me to go, you know. There's such tremendous loneliness.

"As soon as I walked in the room I knew that this was where I belonged. It was a knowledge that what I do, the person that I am, could provide a service that would be important here. I knew that it was very important work. It was joy. I didn't get

intimidated until I got home because then I'd think about it. It really upsets you because of the love you develop for your friends and your family there and their families and the pain that they go through. But I knew that I could do this job; I knew that what I had to offer was very important in this situation. I feel like I'm life. I think I have a sense of their abandonment and I want to listen to them. I want to hear what their story is and I want to make them feel better if I can."

Your artist in residence Mary Lisa's advice about how to heal yourself with visual arts:

"The first thing that I do when people tell me that they can't draw a straight line is tell them, 'excellent, now I don't have to tell you not to do that.' Then one of the other things that I like to do with them, is to throw a brush filled with paint onto the paper. I like to work with water colors, I think water colors are very easy for people to start out with. Water colors are water soluble paints. I use the ones in a tray, any brand will do. With the water colors, I sometimes have them get a lot of paint on their brush and then I have them throw the brush at the paper. I have them throw it far if they are resistant. It depends on how resistant they are, They say, 'I can't do that, I can't do that' and then I get paint all over the place and they don't care about not being able to do it anymore.

"Just the fact that people have to have perfection, that they have the sense that they need to have a photographic image completed or otherwise it's not considered artwork is something I deal with. I start showing them things right away. I'll start showing them that flowers are very simple. If we make a series of circles, then we have created a flower. Now we add a stem. If we roll our brush with the pigment on it, maybe we put another color on the other tip of it and we roll it, we start creating flowers. I'll teach them how to do scribbles with a crayon and then put water color washes on there. This is good for all ages. We do scribbling with the crayons and I tell kids they can send someone secret messages this way. Then they can paint on it and then they can write with white crayons and I have the adults paint a watercolor border around their letters. Maybe they're writing poetry or maybe they're writing notes to their friends. They can draw all these little things in white and then put washes and rainbows of color around it. Another way is to use T-shirts. The T-shirts are very non-intimidating and so I offer my services as someone who will draw for them and then usually their focus is right there on painting that T-shirt. I can get men to paint T-shirts for their children, their grandchildren, their wives, their girlfriends. They'll paint them for somebody. I can get teen-age boys to paint T-shirts for their girlfriends. A T-shirt seems very ordinary and not too emotional or spiritual but I'll tell you a story.

"One day I came into the unit and a man came up to me and said 'you are the one'. I immediately thought 'what have I done?', I felt guilty. He told me that I had changed his life and he thanked me and hugged me. I had worked with his wife who was very ill. She wanted to paint a T-shirt for her young son. She knew her little boy loved vacuum cleaners so she started to paint a vacuum cleaner. I helped her. As she worked she became more and more absorbed in the process. As she painted, she could hear her son running up and down in the hall outside her room making the sounds of a vacuum cleaner and it would make her smile and cry at once. And she became sicker and sicker. She concentrated as hard as she could on the colors, the shapes, the background. And one day I came to work and I heard

she had died. The next day, her husband showed me what he had done. He had framed the T-shirt so lovingly and beautifully. He told me it was the last thing she had done for her little boy. It was her last gift to him and they would treasure it always. It was her love to him expressed as art. It was only a T-shirt, only a vacuum cleaner but it was as deep as this work gets."

In general, when painting on paper, start with water colors or acrylics because they're both water-based. Use pencils, crayons, and water-color pencils because you can re-mark them and add wash and experiment with them with a little more control. You can change the shape of the paper into a circle or other shape, you can make a mandala. Sometimes just changing the shape of the area and adding colors will help. Experiment with paper wet or dry, lots of paint, a little paint, a little dot, a big dot, experiment with where the colors fall and how they blend together and just be fascinated with what happens. Later on you can start putting things in, really focusing more and tuning in to your feelings. Just allow yourself the opportunity to play with that a little and get to know your media. Let yourself go and ask "what could happen here?" And then you'd be surprised how quickly your accidents and things you fell into, things you had no intention of displaying become art. You get impressions from the way your colors have shown up on the page. The story you create inside yourselves is very important, it's your story.

Lee Ann tells about starting out as an artist in residence

Lee Ann Stacpoole is a multi-talented artist whose media changes with the changes in her life. Lee Ann was the very first artist in residence at Shands Hospital, University of Florida, who conquered her fear of going into an environment she was unsure of. She was the first to work with people who were not artists. She taught us that everyone is an artist. With her soft encouragement and empowerment she allowed each person to find their own area of creativity. When you would paint with her she would say "That is the most beautiful painting I have ever seen". And you would say, "Really?" and she would say, "Yes, I wish I could paint like that, look at the way you make this mark". Instead of you saying, "I wish I could paint like her" she said it first. As she sat next to you with her long blond hair, her dress that flowed like silk of a bright wild green that shimmers like light, her Native American earrings and necklace, she made you feel like an artist. Her arms were always soft and gentle. In her voice you could sense she knew you could make art. She would tell you that she was a self-taught artist and that she believed if she could do it, you could do it too. Lee Ann was also the artist who set up the tile project to have children with cancer and their families paint tiles to go up on a tile wall. Her son Daniel was born with Downs syndrome, and she is working on a photography project to empower people working with developmentally handicapped children to see these children as beautiful.

Lee Ann Stacpoole tells this story about seeing the first patient, Michelle, in the Arts In Medicine Program. "When we started in AIM we bought tons of art supplies, we bought crandache paints, black hardback journals, water paints, Fimo clay. Everything was beautiful, brightly colored and rich. We walked into a patient's room and we were starting out on a journey so beautiful we could not imagine where it would lead. The first

patient was fourteen years old. She was bald from chemotherapy, she had a bone sarcoma, she had been an artist in school, it just seemed like a wonderful opening. And as we walked in the room, we said to ourselves, 'we will be an artist and make art,' and she was sweet and receptive. We left her materials to paint with and the next day we saw that the art box we had left her was right where we left it.

Imagine it was you going into the room, picture yourself as the artist in residence just starting out in unknown territory. Maybe poetry would work, you think, as you seek for forms. And as the patient sits in a chair in the tiny dark room with the curtains drawn around her, it seems somber and quiet and she looks at you with eyes so old they seem ancient and quiet. She is always in different moods, she is consumed by sadness, by anger, by frustration- like many teenagers but more so, here in this dark place. But she doesn't engage you at all, although you are with her, you are confused. Then you realize you cannot make her draw, you cannot make her write. You deal with who you are as a person, with your big ideas and passion, you sit on the bed with her, you start to talk to her mother, you do the best you can. Then you realize that the only thing you can do is draw her. You draw her in all her changed moods, you see her as so beautiful. Now she is open. As you spend time with her, you realize that painting her brings you two together. With these prolonged encounters where you sit and draw there is room for conversation to come out of nothingness. Your agenda is dropped, you are doing what you are doing as an artist. You are doing what you know how to do. You bring beauty into the dark compressed space, where before there has only been sickness. You have a relationship with her now that is significant and the relationship you have is deep and intense. You have seen her, she has seen you. It is different from every other relationship you have ever had. You want nothing other than to help her.

And then Michelle goes home. You get a letter from her mother that she is going back to school. You get a letter from Michelle herself. Inside the letter is a small painting made with the cotton swabs she used when she had the mouth sores. She had to use these swabs three times a day during the most painful part of the bone marrow transplant to care for her mouth which was eroding with the chemotherapy. You knew the mouth swabs were the most painful part of her hospital stay. And she painted a bouquet of flowers with these swabs for you. She painted this for you to have. It was like an incredible gift. You don't know what effect you made, but you realize it was monumental. It was so meaningful to her as her artist. And you take her little painting and positioned it in the center of each of her portraits you had made as she changed her moods and you see her as beautiful, and you create a piece called *Michelle's Flowers*. The piece takes form and is a monument to this first experience of art and healing. It is about simply being with her. It is about having no expectations and simply having the intention to heal. It is about art as a way of caring, a way of reaching out and being connected to somebody in a more meaningful way than we have the opportunity to be in our ordinary lives. It is an experience where you get goose bumps and are actually touched as you touch someone else."

Lee Ann Stacpoole's advice:

"Keeping a journal and painting on a piece of paper or cutting out pictures and pasting them on is a good way to begin. Listening to tapes of music while you paint works well to relax you. There are lots of different materials and maybe one material isn't the right way for you so try different media. I like gouache better than watercolors. They're both water based mediums but gouache has more of a gutsiness to it, a richness and saturation to the color. You can go from light to dark and dark to light with gouache. With watercolor you can only work from light to dark. I think gouache is much more forgiving and easier for people. I like the water-soluble sticks and pencils that they can draw with. Just make drawing marks either with a stick or with a pointed pencil and then use a water brush to soften it or make it all kind of blur. Well, I always encourage people to use the best kind of materials they can afford to get. But other than that, use anything, typewriter paper, even the back of a grocery sack.

"There is no right or wrong., there's no bad art. Everything, every mark that you make is a potential part of a creative process that I believe helps you, helps your inner self. It's a freeing, it's opening a door for you. Just go ahead and make that mark, and give yourself permission to make the next one. The more you do it, the more easily it will flow. When you say, 'I never can learn how to draw', I say, 'can you write the ABCs', and you say, 'yeah, of course', and I say, 'well then you can learn to draw, it just takes time'. You have to learn how to see what you're looking at.

"Try to find out what it was in your past that had caused the limitations. Because usually when people tell me that they want to be an artist, something had stopped them at some point from doing it. I'd say play with your materials. Just explore. Do you want to paint flowers? landscapes? do you want to paint designs? Pick something out from a magazine, a little something that you like and try to look at it. Do it, do it, and do it. Again and again. In the doing of it, you will get better. You will feel better about your work the more you do it. Do not to worry about criticism. This is about healing, not perfection.

"Well, the first major experience I have with healing art was working with Mary. Mary came to me and was so interested and she wanted to watch me draw and to watch me in my process. It wasn't that I minded her watching, and I was glad to have her there. But I really sensed that she needed to be making art. She said, 'Oh, but I can't do it, I've tried, I've taken classes, I just can't do it.' And I said, 'well, what kind of classes have you taken?' And I found out she had taken classes from a woman who does very detailed, beautiful watercolor paintings. Well, here was Mary. Anyone who knows Mary five minutes knows she is not the kind of person who is going to sit there with a tiny little brush and do these delicate little watercolor paintings. She just was using the wrong medium. So I gave her these sticks, kind of like oil pastel or actually water soluble color sticks. They don't have points or anything and I said, 'just go for it. Just start playing.' I said, 'just do it'. And I was blown away. Not only did she just do it but she did it like it was a high speed train going by the studio. I was really blown away. I thought this woman has so much art in her. She is just bottled up. I think it was like a genie trying to get out of a bottle where there's only a pinhole and he can't squeeze through. Mary needed a little bit more space. Mary always was an artist. She just needed to know that for herself. She needed to give herself the permission and recognition that her inner self was beautiful. She needed to know that what

she made with her inner self in that process was wonderful and there was no right or wrong attached to it. It was what it was and it was radiant. That was my first experience.

"I knew that it would be good for her. There was one day I made her cry because I kept saying, 'Say I am an artist' and she said, 'I can't, I can't.' I've been through therapy. It wasn't that we were doing therapy with each other. But I did see Mary get better, healed, we didn't use the word healed, but we thought it. There are no mistakes, only opportunities to explore the infinite possibilities of painting."

Lee Ann tells stories about the tile wall

"I created a project that allowed children with cancer, their families, and the medical staff who took care of them to paint ceramic tiles. They worked together in a studio set up in the waiting room of the cancer center. One day, this family came in, a large extended family. It seems like there were 6 or 7 people who came into the studio together. The child who was ill in the family had on a mask, it was hard for him to hold a brush or a pencil because his hand was shaking so much because he was so weak. I watched his father take the son's hand, place it on the tile, and draw the outline around his son's fingers. He then assisted his son in starting to paint his hand on the tile. He painted the dark brown color of his skin, with the father's assistance. The father was also painting his own tile as well as helping his son. I remember watching this father hold his son's hand and observe his son's fingernails so that he could draw fingernails on the hands on the tile. It was such a beautiful act of love that I was privileged to see that day. This whole family surrounded this boy with love and you really felt that this love and what they were going through transcended his illness. That seemed real clear from all the tiles that each member of that family did. It was a beautiful moment to watch and to see. In normal everyday life lots of parents never have the chance or the time to sit down and do something like painting together or doing a project together. What was real nice about the tile project was that it gave the families a few moments to do that together, in the midst of all their scheduled doctor's appointments and treatments. This took them away for a while. I really think that's what I saw that year with most of the people who walked through the door.

"We began, at a certain point, to ask the participants if they were willing to answer a couple of questions and one was "what does your tile mean to you?" And the second one was "Did you feel any differently while you were painting your tile?" The reason we asked that second question was because of one woman. This woman came in and she was happily painting this wonderful picture of a happy lady with an Egyptian hairdo and these wild earrings and she just was just the most bubbly woman in the world. We asked her if she was sick and she said, 'oh yes, I've had so much pain-I've just had this really, really horrible pain with this illness and it's just been the worst thing.' We were sitting there looking at her and she didn't look she was in pain at all at that moment and I said, 'I hope you don't mind my asking but do you notice when you are painting that maybe you feel a little better?' She looked startled and she thought to herself and she said, 'well you know, I didn't notice my pain. I did feel better while I was painting. While she was verbalizing about all her terrible pain, she was happily painting away on her tile like she's out on a picnic!

"When I did the tile wall, I gave the people some very basic simple steps. We would show them how to use the materials. We would explain to them that the colors would change somewhat when they were fired, although most of them stayed the same. A blue would be a blue and what you saw as green would be green. Some changed radically, but we had a sample tile showing the fired colors. They could choose which colors they wanted to use, they could choose what kind of brush they wanted to use, whether a big one or a little one. We told them that they could draw their image first with a pencil or pen and that anything they drew would burn off in the firing process so there was no way to make mistakes. We had to constantly tell people, "It's OK, this isn't a mistake.". One of the things I did frequently to help people loosen up was to say, 'see, you can have fun going like this' and I'd paint a little swirl and dab on little blobs. I'd say Dr. Graham-Pole, the pediatric oncologist physician who co-founded the art in medicine program comes in here and puts all these little blobs of color on the tile and they're really pretty when they're fired. They'd see one of his tiles figure that if a doctor could play with color they could too. I'm sure they were saying this to themselves and feeling better. "

Cecelia Thorner on breast cancer and transcendence

Cecelia Thorner is a breast cancer survivor who makes sculpture warrior shields. Before she started making her fabric art she had been a mother and run a clothing business. She had never made art or been an artist.. Since she has had breast cancer her life has changed. She is now an artist. She has made a series of shields over many years that are powerful and transformative to her and others who see them. She is a wonderful example of a person who started as an ordinary woman and became an artist healer. She made art to heal herself and through the process became a powerful woman and an artist. When you see Cecelia you are struck by both her beauty and her sense of self. She holds her head high like a warrior and her eyes look directly at you. She looks at everything around her with intensity, she is so alive. Her shields take your breath away. Women with breast cancer look at her shields and their hair stands on end.

"I have to say that I didn't plan what the pieces were; they just came from my unconscious. There were times when I would try to manipulate what I was going to do. It did not feel right and I couldn't allow myself to do it. I discovered that if I just let go and let my unconscious mind- the spiritual part of me- come out, these wonderful pieces were created. I wasn't quite sure with each one what they really were about as I made them, but by the time I finished the piece, it really became clear what it was--what aspect it represented. I spent a lot of time walking by myself. Not going on the walk with the intention of coming up with answers but just going on a walk and kind of freeing my mind of clutter. It was amazing that these revelations would just come up, and I would write them down. I kept a journal but it was very informal. At the end of 3 years I had made 11 pieces and after I had finished the 11 pieces, another revelation occurred. I saw that in the beginning all my pieces were very large and it was kind of looking at the whole philosophical aspect of breast cancer and the parts that were really not very scary. But then as time went on, at the very end, all my pieces became smaller and smaller and those were the pieces that were really about the difficult part--that I might die--and all of these very, very scary things. It had

been 18 years and I was just so emotionally drained. But it was at that point that I really felt that I was healed. I had gotten over the trauma and I could just let go of that part that I had dealt with for so long. It was kind of like starting all over again. I mean I felt really free. The other way of looking at it is that in the beginning, the large pieces represented this huge enormous hole in me and as I began to make the pieces, the hole kept getting smaller and smaller and smaller until it finally just closed up and healed.

"My series was called *Warrior Woman* and it was about becoming a warrior to be able to fight breast cancer. One of the last pieces that I did, I called *Warrior Woman--Wings of Transcendence*. It was very wing-like and there was a body and it was very feminine. I had completed the piece and I had sent the slide off to be included in an exhibit for women who had had breast cancer. It was accepted but I was not happy with the piece--there was something wrong with it so I completely took it apart. I was really frustrated and I thought that I had really not transcended--it just had not happened. I tried a lot of different things and a month or so went by, quite a long time, and I went on a walk and I just decided that I was going to let go of it. When it came together, it would be together and it could be today or it could be next year. So I came home from my walk and I had all the pieces disassembled on my deck and I looked -and the answer was there.

"It was the most awesome experience. I'm not sure that I really believe in God but that day I really felt like there really is something more. I was allowing myself to see that and I think that was probably one of the most thrilling moments of my life. It was also about trusting myself to listen to what my inner voice was telling me and maybe not understanding at the moment but just following my instinct. I just kind of felt like I'm the vehicle and there is something greater in me. I've tapped into that and I'm making these things that hopefully other people will see and they will be transformed too.

"Well, even now when I speak of that experience, I have to take this deep breath. I grew up as a Methodist and you go to church and you hear all these incredible stories about a God-like experience. I have to say that that, for me, it was for me. The incident was about discovering that there is something greater within your own self. You don't really need to go outside of yourself to be whole.

" I think I just felt that if there is a God, that he was telling me that there was a message I was supposed to be getting. I just remember feeling it was the most awesome kind of experience. I think doing these pieces, all of them, has probably been one of the most meaningful things that I've ever done in my life.

" To me, the piece is about a woman. She's transcending. She's going into a place where she's never been before and it's symbolic of my allowing myself to go within. Inside here is this vibrant, creative, passionate woman that I don't think I ever allowed myself to see. It's very frightening and scary to see her, particularly after breast cancer. Breast cancer takes away from the feeling of passion and creativity. There is another thing that occurred in regards to this piece. I finished it and I knew it was perfect and fabulous and I put it together in not a very long time, just a few hours. I have a wall set up with the correct lighting and I hung it on the wall and I turned on the light and I looked at it and the inside part of the shield was glowing red--I mean it was like the most frightening, exciting,

exhilarating experience. That was absolutely unplanned. It was just wonderful because it truly was alive--it represented life."

Cecelia's advice on starting to heal yourself with visual art

"I advise women who have breast cancer or anyone who wants to heal themselves with art to start by tapping into the possibilities of what really is within you. I suggest writing, or talking into a tape recorder, meditation, making sure that you spend some time alone. Try not having music on, but really being quiet. It doesn't mean sitting in a lotus position meditating, it could be walking, or just sitting. This allows you to hear all of these voices inside you; it allows you to tap into your gut feelings, into your intuition. You start to believe in your intuition, and realize that that really is your true life.

Releasing your inner critic

For most people one of the first things they face is a voice inside of them that says, "You can't do this, you are not good enough, this is silly, you are not an artist". So one of the first major goals is to tell yourself "It is all right." Release yourself from your inner critic. Don't censor yourself, be free to make art in a state of exhilaration. Have no judgment, tell your self critic to go into another room and rest a while. Make art like a child would. Hopefully as a child your critic was not born yet. You created art for the experience of doing it. You allowed it to happen.. Let go of "I can't do it." Think "yes I can". This will take you from where you are inhibited to where you are free. When you start to make art tell yourself you will make art no matter what. Tell yourself that your life depends on this, this is one choice you will make to heal, this is one choice you will make to save your life.

When you get ill or depressed or have a life crises, you adjust your priorities. When a person gets a diagnosis of cancer or is so depressed they can't go on, everything changes in one moment. The inner critic drops off suddenly and is replaced by "what I have to do is primary, no matter what I think I need to do this now." "When I make art with an intention to heal, no one can ever take it away from me". The feedback of success is so powerful it takes over everything. You know you are an artist no matter what anyone thinks, you are full inside, there is no longer room for criticism. It is also important in releasing the inner critic to realize that healing art is not about success, aesthetics, or making art that another person likes. It is about healing. No art you make is bad, or wrong. It is what you are doing to heal yourself, others, or the earth. It is that simple. Repeat this to yourself if your critic pipes up.

Gina talks about compassion, body feelings, and healing

Gina Halpern is a ceramic artist and painter who has been using art to heal for twenty five years. She is one of the most innovative people in this field. She has made Mandalas with cancer patients where she paints what the person sees. She worked with clay in hospital lobbies, she danced and made music with children and she taught workshops on art and healing at many conferences nationwide. She is the artist who made the mandala

with Michael's wife Nancy when Nancy had breast cancer. She healed herself of a critical illness with art and after that experience set up *Healing Through Arts*, one of the first organizations in art and healing. Gina often dresses in bright colors like a figure in one of her paintings. She sometimes dresses like a clown because she has been a clown with children who were ill. She stretches out her hands while she talks like she is dancing. Her eyes are bright and she cares deeply for the people she works with.

"I was in my mid-twenties and I had a major illness. I had had a Dalkon Shield and I developed pelvic inflammatory disease and they didn't know what it was. I spent the first months dealing with that in a little hospital in Maine, scared out of my mind. They put me on medication and on my 25th birthday I had a drug reaction that almost killed me. I think I was a lot closer to death than I realized. I was sick beyond belief and I remember for my birthday somebody brought me a large Italian bowl. It was the only visual reference I had in the whole room and so it became the focal point. When I was just afraid and in pain I would find myself staring into this bowl. I realized later that it was my first experience of a mandala--the use of an image as a focusing device-- and that became a really important discovery for me. Then I began to photograph the objects on the bedside table. I had a close friend bring my camera and I would photograph the shelves and the flowers. I realized that when I was looking through the camera, I was not afraid, I was not in pain. I would go into the beauty of an object and lose myself in it for a small period of time. That was an extraordinary discovery and as long as I was involved in the art and the beauty, I was not in the suffering and in the fear. I thought, 'what if I could consciously make art with that intention for other people?' The illness became the doorway for me into the spiritual. I got so close to death that I had to start asking some big questions. I knew that for me the way to understand this whole phenomenon of illness was through art. The art was the only way that I could articulate what I was experiencing, what my fear was, what my longing was, what the spiritual encounters that I was having that I didn't have words for--what they were; I could express that all through the art.

When working to heal others, I would first say, there is a window--you know there's this place where you leave the ego outside. There is this window of clarity that happens, a presence that happens. When I was studying psychology, we used to talk about the power of presence, a healing presence. When I started studying Buddhism, there was a meditation which I found, The Buddha of Compassion. The meditation starts off with --he or she- however you want to look at this deity, gazing at you with compassionate eyes and seeing you completely with love. They see you inside and outside. Just letting yourself be seen compassionately is an enormous thing.

"The three main components of working with others for me are: attention, intention, and compassion. You have to start the practice with yourself which is the hardest thing. The first time I tried it, I couldn't sit and be gazed upon with those compassionate eyes. If I was going to teach any doctor, any nurse, this would be the meditation I would start with because it's like the quintessential piece of healing, whether it's healing with medicine or healing with art or healing as a chaplain. In the visualization you let yourself be seen compassionately by the Buddha, the compassionate one and then you imagine them entering your body and filling you up to the very capacity, the very edges

of your skin and you see the world through their eyes. You see through the eyes of compassion. You are yourself but you're also seeing through the eyes of compassion so if you are basically a judgmental person, or you have expectations, you need to give yourself over to the one who fills you and gives you the ability to have compassion. When you are present with another person and see them without judgment, but only with love and acceptance, what you see is their beauty and their uniqueness. When I go to work with someone, that's what happens. I'm still there but that presence is more there than I am.

"This morning when I was working with a man with cancer I could feel it happening. It has a physiological feeling to me. Things start to hum and I feel a sense of energy which is very palpable. I feel it most when I'm working with others. When I sing, the singing is vibration, right? When I sing the goal is to get a kind of resonance. When you sing and you start to resonate, the body feels like it is humming. It's in the front of your nose but it goes up into your head and it also goes down into the whole chest cavity and the abdomen and everything starts to hum. You're also breathing differently and that is a very traditional kind of yoga quality. When I get going into this state its almost as if the quality of light were shifting.

"It brightens and you know, it's very interesting. I had one vision in which I could see that everything is really energy. What we think of as solid, your body, my body, the table, the chairs, is really just molecules of atoms vibrating at different frequencies and densities and what we see as the illusion of reality, is really just all vibration of energy. The other night I actually dreamt of going to make art on an ice cap, like a polar ice cap, and it was all translucent but when the light came through it, I saw the fractile crystalline patterns illuminated in turquoise and magenta and I could almost again see the molecular structure vibrating.

"This morning I worked with a man who's dealing with metastasized prostate cancer. In this work, I'm a scribe and I set my ego aside and I become the eyes and the hands of the person I'm working for. I make an empty space for their visions to come in and fill me and be translated through my talent or gift or whatever you want to call it. It's actually sometimes easier to do it for others than it is to do it for myself. When I was sitting with this man this morning talking, and he was telling me his dreams and visions, everything started to vibrate and I realized it was happening and I had to put my feet on the ground and kind of bring myself back because it's almost like too easy to get into an altered state. Its especially necessary to be centered when I'm working with someone else because the whole goal is to be present for them."

Gina's advice on letting go of judgment and making healing art

"The first thing I would say is that you have to make a space of not judging yourself as an artist or a non artist. I think that the practice of the Buddha of compassion is helpful. You can call it Christ or Christ consciousness but be with someone who is compassionate. If your grandmother is the most compassionate person that you have ever known imagine that you are sitting across from your grandmother, and she is

looking at you with total love and acceptance. Just sit there and be with them and allow yourself to be seen and ask them to help you not be judgmental of yourself as you enter into the process. That to me is a really big starting place. Because the first thing that stops anyone from doing anything creative is 'I can't draw, I can't paint, I can't sing, I am too fat to move' and all the negative judgment. And then you can't go anywhere. But if you feel you can let yourself be seen compassionately, that is a place to begin. If you can't do the meditation, say or write on the first page of your sketchbook 'I give myself permission to enter this creative experience for my own healing and my own joy and my own peace of mind.' Say it, state it, as a beginning statement. That is where I would begin. I might even begin by writing it and coloring around it over and over again with all my favorite colors and just see what happens.

The questions I ask my students are: What is your wound? What is your suffering? What is your joy? What do you need in this minute? What is your healing? And when you think of these questions create a symbol. I think it is important for people to make the invisible, visible. So I think that developing a symbolic language that speaks to you of your experience is very important. Symbols are very powerful and whether it is a religious icon or a 'no smoking' sign or a stop sign, they convey much more than words will. So you want to create a symbol for yourself of your healing. Sit and close your eyes and see yourself being seen with love and compassion and non judgment. Give yourself the permission to make art, to make a symbol. It can be very simple. Picture there is a blank movie screen behind your eyes and onto that project a symbol of your illness, or what you need right now. For example, I need to be held, so I ask myself, 'what do I need.' I might take my hand and put it on the paper and color inside of it with all my favorite colors. When you begin to sit, check in with your body, ask yourself what is hurting right now? Then as you are drawing hold the awareness of how you feel now, or if you disappear into it, when you are finished drawing say how do you feel now. A tool is to take your own pulse, count how many beats as you count to ten. As you draw check it and see if there is any change. As you give attention to who you are working with also give attention to yourself.

"When I work with symbols, I ask people to define it as a shape or movement in the air in front of them so that you get it in their body. And they hold that in their body. Now that I work with music I have people write down phrases for the symbol that they can sing. If you are by yourself practice a chant or a mantra. Experience it with your body and your mind and see how many modalities as you discover.

"For materials I suggest using whatever you are not going to feel intimidated by. Give yourself permission to have an extraordinary experience. So if you are afraid, go for whatever is least scary. It can mean using Xerox paper and a box of crayons or felt tipped -markers from the five and ten.. I used to say get yourself the big box of 64 colors and tell people to try them, see what you like, what you hate. Watercolors are very evocative as a material but they are hard to control. People get frustrated by them. Lots of people love felt -tipped markers because the colors are more primary and very direct."

What are healing paintings, going to museums, viewing art to heal yourself

It is very beautiful and meaningful to hang the art you make on the walls so you can live with it. You can do this in your studio, your bedroom, your hospital room or even your kitchen. There is an important process that goes on when you live with your images as they tell a healing story in time. Sometimes your images don't speak to you as you are making them, because they come from a place that is far below where words are formed. Your healing art comes from a place where images are formed and that is pre-verbal. There is no criticism, you have let the forms or shapes begin to emerge without thinking or even making up a story about them. There may exist in the unconscious, in unknowingness. Then there is an opportunity to allow you to let your images be in your life, to let them tell you stories. As time goes on, you can keep the images as a personal diary. You can hang them around you, put them in a place you can go back to. You can put them away, and bring them back out six months or a year later. Then you may see that they tell a story. You can understand yourself in time, sometimes in the future. It is an expressive mode. The healing is the pure mode, the healing is in the release, it is not definable. When you go back and look at it, there is distance, a space. You can tell a story about yesterday better than about the life you are living now. Create space for that kind of dialogue to emerge. When you look at the art you have made, eventually you see who you are. As you look at the images that have emerged, you see what you have been doing, you hear the story of what happened as you healed yourself.

The art that you hang to heal you does not have to be art that you made. You can collect art and buy art that is alive. The art you put up around you can be filled with power or peace. You can choose art you recognize, that speaks to you. When Mary was an art collector, she would find powerful pieces to help her heal. Hanging those paintings that have special significance to you makes your home a healing environment. Whenever you look at the paintings, they are reflection of where you are. They tell your story. You are able to evoke a personal experience when you look at a painting. Mary describes this: "When I bought a painting of a horse flying over a rainbow, my innate imagery space expanded. I could understand myself better when I bought a painting. When I looked at a painting, I could go between worlds. I could share the images with the artist. I could integrate my life without doing the painting myself. It was about going elsewhere. By going into the painting there is an opportunity to create new spaces in my world."

You can make a healing art collection for yourself and surround yourself with the images. You can find goddess art and make the goddess live with you. You can find art of animals you love, flowers you love, places you love. You do not need to know why you buy it, but you will know how it effects your life. You can surround yourself with art that embellishes your world. You can populate your world with imagery that is meaningful to your life. Viewing art itself is without distraction. It takes you deeper inside yourself to a place that is meditative and healing.

Going to a museum or to art galleries gives you the opportunity to have an array of experiences. The art can be wild, exuberant, exciting. It depends on what type of imagery you view. If you need energy, you can look at wild painting, if you need to

relax, you can look at soft imagery. A wide variety of art can heal- images of the beach, of animals, of nature, of seeds, of water lilies. Anything that resonates with you in the center of your body, that stimulates your imagination, creates movement can be healing. Viewing visual art creates healing by moving you, by making shifts, awakening meaning, deepening understanding, relaxing you and taking you elsewhere.

Chapter Seven

Healing yourself with the word: Writing, Poetry, Storytelling and theater as healing

Introducing your writer in residence

Her red hair flows in the wind as she runs. Her cape and scarves blow in a spiral. When she comes into the room her energy is wild, she speaks in a whirlwind of words. Her enthusiasm and energy overflows. She is always the first to share with other artists and staff in clinical artists rounds at the hospital, she says "Hi there. I had an exciting week. Listen to my poem, look at my journal with its brightly colored pictures of beautiful songs. I will bring you astonishing life and surprises. I will write you a story you will love, I will put it in a journal for you with wonderful pictures. I am Jan, the writer in residence and I fly in with the wind". And as her books fly open, her pages of pictures show what her patients have been thinking. She makes handouts of their printed poems and passes them around like the spring flowers.

Jan Swanson was the first writer in residence in the Arts In Medicine Program at University Of Florida Gainesville. She established the accidental poets society there and Zine magazine, a journal for children in the hospital who had cancer, giving them a place to have own writing published.

How words heal

When you write to heal, let the words flow out from within you. Let the words resonate with your spirit. They will bring with them deep memories of words you have heard. It is like letter writing from your heart. Allow the letters to be received. Allow yourself to have the spaciousness so that whatever you write is received as an offering. Words are created from deep within and released into the world. We can shift and change and transfer to a reality that is healing. The words take us deep into our visions or memories, away from worry or pain. They show us new ways of seeing. When you write the story emerges in front of your eyes. The beauty of poetry cloaks your life in beauty. The poetry takes you to the essence of what you are looking at. The words are a dialogue reflected back to us. We hear ourselves think. We look at ourselves differently. We create characters that personify aspects of ourselves we do not otherwise face or see, bright and dark sides. We create aspects of ourselves as guides and converse with them. When we tell a story, figures emerge who speak to us from deep within us or from far away. But it is not the voice of our personality. It is the voice of our soul. We have simple instructions that are easy to follow. It is easy to create stories in your life that are like living myths. It is important to create meaning in your own life with your own story. You can bring in your own symbols and discover your own places of magic.

Writing fills the need to be alone, the need to take time to be with yourself. Let the words flow out of you. Don't edit or censor them, let them flow out of your body. Tap into your own soul's most powerful imagery. You translate your own imagery and put it to words. Create a space to write. Place a value on your time to write. It is a lifelong process. So make it easy. You can use a laptop, a computer in a room, a spiral notebook, a journal, anything. You can do it in the evening before going to bed to shed yourself of worries and thoughts of the day. Or you can write early in morning as you rise to ready yourself for the day. Writing organizes you, it helps you put down thoughts that can change your way of looking at the world. The words can help you make things happen. The writing is a bridge, the first step is seeing and taking action.

From our experience with patients who create healing writing we can tell you not to be afraid of poetry. Poetry is easy, short, intense. It does not have to rhyme or have any form. It can be like a free form journal entry. Patients with cancer in the Commonwealth Cancer Retreats in Bolinas California, write poetry on one of the evenings of the five day retreat and it is always deeply moving for them and the staff. If you find you like poetry you can write down lines as you think of them in a notebook you carry in your pocket or on scraps of paper. First lines are precious and often will make the rest of the poem. They come to you as you drive, as you walk, as you

think of chores, or are triggered by emotions. You can give yourself assignments, like writing about the most beautiful vision you have ever had or the saddest. Or you can write about what is happening to you that day, what you are afraid of, what you find totally beautiful. I always have my patients look for the light in their life and write about it. I have them write about visions, transcendent experiences, religious emotions, and peace. You can always write about body feelings, pain, buzzing, energy, expansion, or about what you see in guided imagery. As the Buddhists say, literature is the way to the mind, the way to see visions of beauty on earth.

A story of a man with cancer learning guided imagery

The stories patients tell are so beautiful that they become alive. Stories like this almost eclipse novels or even myths in their power and extraordinarily unique ability to touch us and heal. Michael tells this story: "One day an oncologist who I had worked with for years called me. He told me he had referred a patient to me and he thought we would be a good match. The man was about sixty and he was a successful physician in the community. He had a good marriage and grown children and a beautiful home. He had had cancer of the colon several years before, had undergone surgery and in the past week he had liver metastasis diagnosed. When I visited him at home he and his wife were both there. He was recovering from a biopsy and was beginning to get his energy back. He wanted me to teach him how to use guided imagery. He had heard of it but he had never done any inner work.

"I asked him to tell me his story, and when he was telling me about finding out that the cancer had returned, his wife turned towards me and told me this story. She said that when he told her that he was sick again, she had a vision. She saw herself in heaven or in a place that was not here. It was gray and had its own light coming from everywhere. She was there with her husband. She knew then that they would be together forever, that they would not be apart no matter what happened. As she told me this she started to cry and his eyes become wet. I asked him if he felt some of this feeling too. He told me that he saw himself with her forever, that they were like stars that were next to each other or like stars merging into one light. I asked him if he had had any other images like this and he told me that at the beach that weekend he had seen his wife as a dolphin shining at him from the ocean. I told them that the experiences each of them had was imagery and that all they had to do was explore the places from which these thoughts came and to look at them afterwards.

"The next week he told me a wonderful story. He was at the beach again and he gave himself permission to daydream since I had told him that this was imagery. He saw his wife again as a dolphin above the ocean and this time he called to her. She turned from a dolphin spirit into a spinning disc of many colors and spun to him. As this happened he felt himself kissing her and merging and then the disc came into his liver and spun around and cleaned him out. I was amazed. They were sixty years old and were such beautiful lovers. Their imagery and story was of themselves as lovers together forever, and being able to merge into each other and heal each other. It was so magnificent a vision that I felt privileged to be allowed to share it with them. In his imagery he called her to him, she came as a spirit and they merged and became one and then she became his healing forces. Seeing this vision made them both feel so much better. It gave them something to do that was deeply creative and stimulating. It took their minds off their problems and focused them on their deep love and on healing. He asked me why people had me teach them imagery when it was this easy. I told him that he was really good at it, that some

people needed help. I told him he was my teacher, that every time he told me his imagery I learned from him."

Do you daydream, do you have images of yourself that are peaceful or radiant? If you do, we invite you to have more of them, as a way to get in touch with the part of you that gets ideas to write. Go to the places where this kind of imagery comes from. This is where your writing comes from, this is where your healing comes from. Remember that art, prayer, and healing, all come from the same source. The imagery comes from where you make art. When you write or tell a story about light, animals, and healing, you become the story and it heals you like guided imagery. It changes your physiology to help white blood cells eat cancer cells by stimulating your brain to release neurotransmitters which activate the immune system.

Michael's story of a healing journal

When Michael's wife Nancy was in the hospital having a bone marrow transplant for breast cancer, Michael wrote a journal. This is his story of healing himself by writing with the journal.

"When Nancy was having her bone marrow transplant, I lived in her room for five weeks. She did not want me to leave her. Just the thought of me leaving, triggered deep fears of being abandoned that came from her childhood when she had broken her arm and had been left in the hospital by her parents for days. I slept on a cot at her side. I called it a doggie bed and I saw myself as a watchdog, a fierce protector and loyal constant companion. Without knowing why I brought a borrowed laptop into the room and set up a writing studio. I knew I was going to be there for over a month and I did this as something to keep me occupied. I had no healing intent, after all she was the patient, and it did not occur to me that I was writing to heal myself. But I knew somehow I had to bring in the laptop and I did it.

"After we moved in the room, which was unbelievably surreal in itself because they had told us she had a real chance of not living through the procedure, I took a table and moved it to the window and made it a desk. I put things on it that were special to me and arranged it so it felt just right. At first I could only borrow a huge portable computer, this was before the new small laptops, so I was confined at first to this desk studio. Each time I would sit there it was like a sacred space, it was mine, it was where I could go by myself and be inside my work. I could look out of the window and see the Eucalyptus forest and the sky and the blowing San Francisco fog. I was an author, I had written fourteen books, so I was used to writing. But this was completely different. In all my previous books, I talked the material to Nancy, and did the research, but Nancy did the writing, on the computer. Now I would be the one who wrote. Also, the books we had written were about imagery, babies, pregnancy, or disease and were always sold to a publisher in advance and written to be published. Now I was going to write only for myself. I had no goals of publishing whatever I wrote and did not censor it or criticize it at all. It was for my eyes only and I did not care about perfection or appearing silly or happy or sad to another person.

"The first day I woke up before dawn and looked around me and at first did not know where I was. I saw the room and Nancy sleeping there and I remembered what was happening and that she could die any day and the first thing I did was start to write. And what came out completely surprised me. I described the wild strangeness of coming into a hospital room with my wife of twenty five years, and the happenings of the day in the strange world of medicine but then I started to dream. I saw the fog comforting me, the morning light as beautiful, the sunrise as astonishing. And I saw her in bed as a woman deep in a rebirth ritual.

"That shocked me but it continued each day . I would see the room and the iv. pumps but I would also see Nancy as a spirit. I would see the nurses coming in the night as spirits. I would see the ritual- like way the procedure was moving on, and the most surprising thing is that I would pray and give thanks. For me this was something new. I had done guided imagery with patients for years but I had never prayed intentionally every day for healing. And in the journal on the first day after I described what was happening, I gave thanks. I gave thanks for the beauty of the day, for the beauty of my wife, lying asleep next to me. I gave thanks for the care she was getting, and later for the journal itself, which would become my lifeline. And I prayed for my new way of seeing into sacred space.

"Each time I would start to describe what was going on, and it would take on the form of a shamanic story by itself. For example, the man who came to clean her room at first did not want to clean each of her frog sculptures on her altar. One day, she played reggae tapes for him and he stopped. He looked around and saw the twenty feet of art on the wall, and the altar, and looked at her. He picked up each froggie and cleaned it so softly, like a prayer. Each day from then on his cleaning of her altar became a crucial part of her healthcare to me. And as I wrote about it I saw him as a protector, a cleansing force, a gentle spirit from a foreign land. In my writing he seemed to drift in almost not touching the earth. And Nancy would play Bob Marley's Three Little Birds, and the refrain of, "every little ting, is gonna be all right" would roll over all of us like the early morning fog, and the room would fill with light and we would all just be in it moving in slow motion as if in a dream. And he would look directly into her eyes and time would stop and it would be so peaceful and we were gone.

"And it was the writing that let me see this illuminated reality rather than just focusing on the incredible difficulty of what was happening and its immediate real danger and darkness. That came out too in the journal, but it was always the brightness and the prayers of thanks that came out and transported me out of the room into a place a brilliance and vision that still amazes me even thinking about it now. I think if I did not write, I would only have seen the darkness. With the writing, I was able to cross a bridge into the light.

From *Only Things of Beauty Persist*, Michael's bone marrow journal

"April 1993. The Human spirit is like the dawn. It comes up from the darkness, from nothingness, and floods the world with hope and joy. It dazzles us and blinds us with its

first rays and reminds us that it is a new day. At dawn I opened the drapes and let in the joyful morning sun. The sky was light blue and the Eucalyptus trees shimmered in the breeze. They shone with light and flashed their light green of new life back at the sun as a greeting. I put a Taize chant (sacred music sung) on the tape deck and read Julian of Norwich to Nancy. 'I may make all things well, and I can make all things well, and I shall make all things well, and I will make all things well, and you will see yourself that every kind of thing will be well.' 'You have restored my life, O, God, and I wish to be in your presence.' We lay together like two children waiting for their parents on Christmas morning, excited and expectant, nervous and afraid. Our love tied us together, we were as one in God awaiting the coming.

"At eight in the morning a woman pushed a cart into the room and happily greeted Nancy. She said she was Joy and was 'here to give you back your bone marrow'. She pushed the cart across the room and started to arrange the trays and water and syringes. She poured water into the bath on top which would defrost the marrow. I plugged the heater and motor in to warm and gently shake the water. She called a nurse and took Nancy's marrow from a small ice chest and checked each of the five small flat bags to make sure that the name and number matched Nancy's wristband. She smiled and told Nancy not to worry. She said that although it was a day filled with significance, the procedure did not hurt and was no more than putting something into her IV. She said that some people videotaped it or had family there. I had showered and combed my newly cut hair and put on a dress shirt for the occasion. The sun rose and shined into the family room where I got ready. It was like suiting up for an event, preparing for a wedding or bar mitzvah. The excitement filled the air like energy or electrons and made us both nervous. My body was shaking inside with tiny vibrations like a taught rubber band. Joy said that this was the long awaited day but the procedure was not much, it was just sucking the defrosted marrow into large syringes and pushing it into Nancy's central line. ...Thank you Great Spirit for your world. Thank you for this dawn and this new day. Thank you for Nancy and her life. Thank you for the doctors and nurses who care for her and their love. Help this woman Nancy, Great Spirit, help her to live and get rid of her cancer. Give her a good life, let her be born again and be your child and be one with your world. "

In this story you can see how writing heals and see the way you can easily do it yourself. All it takes is writing daily and a routine. You need a place and a habit. You need the determination and decision to write. You need to let go of judgment and self criticism. And you just need to clear time for it and do it. The process of writing lets you see who you really are and what is important to you. All you need to do is write and the healing happens. And it grabs you and it becomes so interesting and important that you do not have to do it with effort after a while. You do it as the first choice. It does not take much time, just a half hour or so, and you do not need much equipment or space. You just need to make the decision to go into your writing place and write for a time and then live.

For the past several years Michael has been writing poetry each day. These poems started from the kinds of prayers and visions he first saw in his bone marrow journal.

The poems bring him into a space of transcendence which helps him deal with patients who are very ill and lets him share luminosity with them. He describes how it feels to write poetry for him now: "First I say a blessing or prayer to "Her". I close my eyes and I try to see her in her most magnificent aspect as she is in this moment. Then I write down whatever comes to me without censorship. It does not have to be pretty or even poetic. It just is what comes to me clearest and is totally true. I am always surprised by what comes. It can be funny, sad, wild, astonishing. And then I start to tell the story of what is happening in the outer world to ground me, to take myself from where I am now, from my lived experience. And as I write She talks me, and then She sings to me. She tells me who I am and She tells me how much She loves me. And as She sends me her visions, I go deeper into the ordinary moment, the event, the actual experience that started the poem and it turns into wonder. I fall into the moment between time and space. I can see Her dancing, I can see Her life force, I can see myself loving Her. If the poem is about shamanism, I can hear the stories of the ancient ones and the hear the voices of the spirit animals. I can see through the eyes of the ancient ones and out of the eyes of the spirit animals. And the poem circles, spirals, whirls me deeper into Her heart, into my heart. And I see even deeper and She sings to me louder. So for me, writing is a falling. A falling into. And before I write I quiet myself and say a prayer and ask for the truth to be told, and for my love to live forever. I do.

A studio for writing.

Writing requires a studio that is more in your heart than in the outer world. You can write on a pad with a pen in a break from work in one minute. The first line of a poem can come to you anywhere and you can jot it down in a notebook wherever you are. Your studio becomes that notebook. Or you can make a whole room or even a rented space that is just yours to write healing stories in. Many writers talk about cues or habits that help them write. Writing at the same time each day, writing after a walk, in the same notebook, with the same pen are all techniques that writers use to help the words flow. Michael writes on a laptop with a painting on its case. Some writers like desks with animal fetishes, art or music around them.

Most writers agree that it is useful to write each day for a certain period of time. This is necessary if you are trying to finish a piece but less necessary if you are writing to heal. In writing to heal all you need to do is let the words flow onto the paper and not censor or stop them. Let the subject be your own life as you are living it now and move from there. Don't worry about making sense or the rules of grammar or spelling, or how someone else will react to it. Write like you're making entries in a journal or composing a personal letter and let it go from there. If it turns into something you want to share or publish, great- but writing for healing is about letting your inner images be seen by you more that it is about writing a literary masterpiece.

The most basic studio is a notebook or a computer. For notebooks you can choose ones that are elaborate with beautiful covers or choose the simplest pocket pad. You can put pictures on the cover and create collages inside with colored pens. On a computer you can put graphics on the wallpaper backgrounds from the internet or from purchased software that make the computer personal. Some writers make the journal or computer

deeply personal and even sacred. They have a place for it in their home, they put altar figures around it, they care for it like a living thing. Whatever you do with your writing studio is fine. As you use it you will develop a relationship to it so that it becomes like a friend or safe place. It is the place you seek to write letters and pour out your heart. It becomes your refuge, your therapist, your lifeline.

Once upon a time

Story time has always been outside of ordinary time and space. In fact as any child will tell you, listening to stories takes them to a place where they lose track of time and where they seem to be somewhere else. Healing artists often say that writing takes them and their patients "elsewhere". Elsewhere means that the person's mind is off the illness, their pain decreases, their symptoms decrease, their attitude changes from fear to concentration. Stories occur in the break between moments of time and in the break between points of space. They occur in the opening into nonordinary reality. Stories often start with "once upon a time" which of course is not in ordinary time at all, and "in a far off land" which of course is not in any place we have ever been to in the outer world. When a story gets ancient enough it turns into a myth or legend which means it has no known author who anyone remembers, it has been around for ever, it almost seems like it comes from the earth. So one of the main advantages of story time is that it takes us out of ordinary time and space, into the space of myth and legend, and that is precisely where we need to go to heal. They actually slip in between moments of time, and are in no time and there they can live forever and they slip in between places of space, and are in no space, and there they can move things like cancer cells away from the rules that exist in ordinary space.

Guided imagery, like story time, takes place in your imagination. Clock time does not apply in guided imagery. In fact one hypnotic technique involves saying that "one minute of imagery time will be an hour of clock time." This would make a person feel deeply rested after only a few moments. That is how time feels to the person who is living in their imagination. But in story time two more things happen that are crucial to healing. First a person can be loved from before the beginning of time to after the end of time, for time disappears in the story. Second, anyone who has a life-threatening illness is not subject in their imagination to the clinical statistics that may relate to their illness.

Children live in a world that is experienced in a much different time and space, and tribal peoples live in a world where time and space are measured much differently than we measure them. The story takes us to that world and as long as we are within its boundless realms, we can create a place that is safe where we are free. The healing artist as a storyteller takes us "elsewhere" to the nonordinary world and puts us in the realm of the miracle. Healing stories take ancient myths and make them yours. They take heroes and animal spirits and make them real to you in your life now.

Jan's advice and experiences

"A crowd of people in a hospital waiting room is a difficult audience", she said. She comes up to them and says, "let's tell stories, let's make art". What she invented as a storyteller was squish art. Anyone could do it. She took a little tube of paint and handed it to someone to make a painting. She would tell them to make a dot, a squirt, anything. Everyone would do it. She passed the tube of paint around. Then she would fold the

paper and squish the color and she would ask, "what is it"? And then each person would answer with a story. They would see trees, landscapes, animals. There would be sudden emotion in the waiting room. Each person would tell a story about their own lives. Suddenly the TV was background. Jan was so brave, she was fearless.

That is how she began as a storyteller. It was her entrance. She would get people to tell stories right in the waiting room. Then Jan would pick up her journal and sit with them in their rooms. She would transcribe their stories. As they were dying, she let them tell oral stories, when they were too ill to write themselves. They would talk, and she would transcribe it for them and their families. They could call her at home. She would get involved with their lives, try to resolve their conflicts. She would be a silent witness to the stories in whatever form they would take. She followed them all the time in the hospital, from their room to their home, from admissions to discharge. For three years she actively put this healing art in practice. She would transcribe the stories of children in the hospital. The children would write, "They said it wouldn't hurt, and it did." She got them to tell their stories and she would publish them in an underground hospital newspaper. She would bring stories of other children back to them even though they did not meet each other. It was like they wrote to each other. Zine came out every six weeks networking children with their own voices.

Jan formed the Accidental Poets Society. Everyone sat and told poems on the hospital lawn, they would read their own poems often for the first time. Many different types of artists would come and practice using poetry. Jan advocated journal writing for all artists as healing. She saw "art as a way of living, art as a way of healing". This writing to heal was her life. As an artist she got all the artists to write poetry and tell stories. She created community symposiums, she invited everyone to read the poetry, to dance, and play music. She created audiences for people to read to, there was always poetry in a performance or concert. The poetry was never judged. It was just what people needed to say. She made poetry flow into the hospital like it was natural.

The most beautiful thing Jan created was herself. She created herself as a character in a novel. When she was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer she would do visualizations bringing her friends and artists she worked with together to ride a wave in their imagination. She would tell them, "You are on the beach with the raion guys, the lemon guys." She had all her friends singing Beach Boy songs and doing visualizations for her. It was imagery medicine with humor, with a twist.

She always said, "Listen to what they say, let them direct you, honor the writer in everyone." Her bag was filled with notebook paper and colors to make visual journals, books for the kids she took care of. Jan said, "You know Mary, I went to the doctor the other day, he shuffled in, he sat there and put his hands together, he said, 'the situation is very grave', you see he chose the word 'grave' carefully". She made her life into a story and it was hard to tell what was true and not true. She was persnickety, she was posed, she was dramatic. After she was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, she stopped writing in her journal. She surrounded herself with artists who would read to her, with dancers who would dance for her, with her painter who would paint for her. All while she was

dying in bed at home. She created a group of people who became characters in her life. She was the author of her life. It was rich and full with music, dance, visual imagery and most of all, her own emerging story.

She constructed this alternative reality herself like she would construct a story. Her husband wrote a book of poetry after she died about it. She was a living being who was the personification of a writer using writing to intentionally heal. Yet she was who she was always, she was down to earth, funny, spontaneous, wild. Her journal was full of her drawings, her work, her playful songs, her sensuality. The ways she used words for their sounds, their flip meanings, were never ending. She would take the truth and embellish it with imaginative details. Her descriptions made it come alive.

She had people write in a journal, in a regular notebook. In hers, she made three columns because she said it was easier to write small narrow paragraphs than larger ones. "You need only two sentences for a paragraph" she said. She wrote little pieces, she drew pictures all around the poems, she wrote in the journal every day. Sometimes she wrote paragraphs, sometimes pages. She wrote all the time. Her focus in life was to get people to write to heal.

As she died, she wrote a story of a princess who lived in a castle. She had an artist who drew the story. She told the story as a fairy tale. She would tell the story over and over again: There was a princess who lived in a castle and was sick. Jan, of course, was the princess. The castle's gardener would pick the flowers that were beautiful, purple and wild. The gardener picked them and brought them to the princess- they never could pick them all. It was bittersweet. Jan never said the flowers were her cancer, and she did not interpret the story at all.

Ellie's advice on storytelling

Ellie Sommer is the storyteller in residence at University of Florida, Gainesville. She followed in the steps of Jan Swanson and has continued her programs including the Accidental Poets and Zine magazine. She now has interns from the college English programs, and other artists who go around with her and tell stories, draw, play music, and dance.

Ellie says: "Being a storyteller in residence is about getting people to tell stories. When I work with them, they can do any type of art, but storytelling is our focus. First you create a structure, then you throw away your structure. Stories are tied to all the other art forms. The visual arts or music leads to stories, the dance leads to stories. Sometimes I start out with a good cliché and keep going. You try to get on a roll, have the story come out so it tumbles out. An exercise I use is to make a story from a simile, for example, 'a mountain is like a ----.'

"I find it useful to remove myself from belief. You need to stop worrying about what makes sense. Sounding silly is all right. Let yourself sound silly, sad, whatever. When you go into a room the parents are there and are often worried or depressed, the child is scared, sick, and away from home. I make contact with the staff, they point out the patients who need us. The staff is overworked, they appreciate you coming. They are glad when you can make a patient feel more at ease .

Much of this work is about developing relationships with patients and staff, but sometimes it takes a while. When I enter a kid's room I often use a doll or a puppet. Kids have the imagination we have lost. We make fools of ourselves to get it back. Props, dolls, puppets, all help break the ice and are subjects for stories. Some patients will do anything, some are so ill you do everything.

"You tell the story based on cues from them. Sometimes you do it all, sometimes nothing. With most of us, when we use verbal tools for our art, it is hard. There is a lot of censorship from your childhood, the teaching you have had about writing papers and grades makes you shy. Stories for healing do not need to make sense. Go into the world of the child, go away in four words. Make the story fun, let the healing power of the story come from its laughter too. The interactive story is fun. You start or they start and then the other person continues. You tell, they tell, you weave the story together or in a group. Make a story in rounds, go in a circle. Each person can make up parts of it quickly. The story takes spirals, it circles, you can see it. You can make an animal out of clay, you can then tell the story of that animal. Try to remember there are no grades in healing stories. They are healing because we allow them to be free.

The mystical path: healing stories about springs and animals

For each of us, the healing journey starts in our realization of the mystical path. There is an Indian legend, that as we go through life, there are always two paths that run along side each other. This is like two paths running parallel across a meadow. One is the smooth or rocky path of our outer lives, and the other is the mystical inner path of the artist or healer. Before our creativity, before our healing, the mystical path emerges from the darkness across the blowing grasses and calls to us. Even before the lived experience of an illness, there is the lived experience of the glimpse of the mystical path. It is the path where we glimpse the images that will become our art, and where we will find our way to our inner artist which in turn will lead us to our inner healer. For some of us this mystical path may have been an interest in religion, meditation, or travel. It may have been a retreat, a journey, or even a love. It often was deep in our past, and it made us who we are.

As you start to write to heal, the first thing that you realize is that an ancient song is being told. This is the realization of your mystical path, your remembering. Your story will come as the story of your muse, of your inspiration, of your ancestors. The sacred spring itself, from the heart of the earth, is singing to you in the language of the healer within, in the language of the earth. In the ancient stories of artists and healers there is the basic story of an ancient mother who has never forgotten us. This is the story that we have given you as guided imagery throughout this book. Although we have forgotten her, all she wants is to be loved, to be heard. She is the mother of us all. In the first days of the dreamtime she wove the threads of art and healing together. At the head spring, her spirit is seen, and this is where her spirit is strongest.

In legend, all springs on earth are connected, the waters that flow from each of them comes from the source of all the waters of the earth. The ancient woman of the springs speaks to us from each spring and- more important for writing- she speaks to us from

where all springs emerge in the center of our heart. The poet, the writer, are aspects of our dreaming the world. She dreams the world as she weaves. She dreams the world in spirals of ethereal beauty. The spirals rise out of her forehead as her creation. As we heal ourselves with writing we recreate her path by telling stories on her sacred spiral. We go inside and go deeper and deeper within ourselves in a spiral movement. The spirals grow and take us further and we see, we change, we grow and we heal. The spirals are her spirals of creation and now become our spirals of art and healing. The sacred spiral becomes a creative spiral that is all of our energies spun together to heal the earth. Part of this work is to remember the creative ways of being, to remember our own wildness, the untamed part of ourselves that we have evolved away from, the spirit of the ancient woman in the spring. She sings, do you hear her song?

For this chapter on writing and storytelling , we will tell a story from legends that talk about the springs in Native American terms. This story is about the old woman of the springs as a medicine woman. In this story she was the woman who gave birth to the spirit animals. In art and healing, almost all artist healers use animals as subjects of art. The dancer Anna Halprin has all of the people she dances with dance as an animal because she believes it brings out memories of power and strength that cancer patients need in order to heal. Patients have animals at their bedside, stuffed animals, sculptures, Zuni fetishes. Animals have a primal energy that empowers us in our healing. Here is an old story of the ancient woman of the springs creating the spirit animals.

I will tell you a story, it is the story of the old woman of the springs and the creation of the medicine wheel. One day she was deep in her dream, she was painting the earth into being, she was dreaming your joy into your soul. And she sings to you, she sings of the creation, she does. Now we are listening for the voices to be heard in the beauty of the day, in the dark of the night, in the crystal of the dawn, The oldest story of creation, of the medicine wheel itself, comes from her . It comes from the ancient culture that rests as a dream outside of us and inside of us at once. It comes out of who we are as the people of this land. It comes from the springs itself, it comes from the voices of the spirit animal sprits. They all tell us of an ancient old women who is dreaming us all, who sits on the side of a spring. She still in this moment in this very moment of this very breath weaves the threads of art and healing and they are connected to us. The silver and golden threads go right to our hearts. They are our remembrance, our dreams, our heritage.

They tell that in the beginning, in the void of silence where everything is about to be born, is the place in all of us, that is eternal spaciousness. The place where the ancient ones recede to. In our inner world it is empty, it lies in nothingness. It is the home of the lost stories, of the intangible. It is there that she is dreaming, she sits on the edge of the river right within the very source of things, before the beginning of the cycles, with the ancient turtle, the snake, the water animals, with water itself. She is a mystery, she is unending, she is connected to all things. She is the place from which we all were born, from which we were dreamed, where we were even from before the lovers. The place where they were one, where they were everything and nothing, before they were separated.

She is an eternal guardian of our dreams, our creativity, and our lives. She had been weaving the dream of art and healing as one from before eternity. She is the mother of all mothers born from that place coming to us as a silver thread in a spiral spinning forever. Somewhere along the spiral there is matter. Somehow along the spiral there is you. We are born into collective community, the medicine wheel is the earth's voice, the voice of the earth from ancient tradition where there was no separation of humans from animals. It was before separateness. It was within oneness, before you could look at another and know you are not her. We forget this separate place when illness occurs. We fall back into place, into oneness to heal. On the side of the sacred river she dreams us and connects us back to the other vision.

She weaves the two energies of art and healing, of man and woman, of light and darkness, of thinking and feeling. And the ancient woman of the medicine wheel dreams the spirit animals into being. She has woven the opposites together forever. She tells us the story of the medicine wheel. She tells us the story through the animals. The animals tell it, the art tells it, the visions tell it. The Spirit animals are the story. The owl of the East tells you of the dawn. The owl tells you about the air and about change. The lion of the south sings of the fire, of healing, about water, about where images come from. The turtle of the north tells us about grounding, about your family, job, about the earth. The ancient woman weaves the medicine wheel in silence. We are being dreamed by her as a dreamer. We bring art and healing together as one. We go towards this dream in our love spiral. Together we weave it, and spiral it out. We go into the meadow and fall into the vortex for a hundred years. The owl calls, the lions roar, the bear growls, the turtle swims, we hear it and tell its story. In her world of the deep dream, she created the spirit animals first. She gave them voices and she let them sing. They created the directions and time and space and then finally the earth.

The story of how art and healing came apart

The oldest stories and songs of the ancient healers tell us that in the beginning of time art and healing were one. They were one being, one energy, one ancient living creature. They were one way before space and time, way before matter. And then, they came apart four times. Each time they came apart they were more and more separate. First they were just not one, later they were two, later they didn't even touch, and even later couldn't see each other, but that is our story, that is what we will tell you. It comes from an ancient tribal song whose author was long ago forgotten. It has been told and retold in many traditions. It appears in folk tales, Judaism, Sufi tales, and songs.

Once deep in the before, art and healing were one. They were one like the sea of milk, they were one like God, they were one like her breath. When art and healing were one, there was nothing else, there was no time and space, no directions, no past, present, or future, no large or small, no creator or created, no nothing. There was only the one, the everything, the incomparable, the always, the rest. Some say that the one never sleeps but was meditating forever on pure love, and some say that the one has no characteristics at all and cannot even be seen, felt, or spoken about. But in any case the one was also art and healing as one, for it was everything as one. And when the one became two, art and healing also became two, for everything was the same in the first breath, and when one

became two, everything became two. So the first time art and healing came apart they separated only to see each other and make the four directions. Then time and space were born and matter was formed and the stars themselves were born. At that moment art and healing came apart again too. Then many years went by, and the animals were born and then the people were born. And the people saw art and healing as one, they saw spirits all around them and they were at one with their world. Then people started to work and started to grow crops and stopped seeing the spirits and stopped making art. And art and healing separated for the third time as the peoples stopped seeing the spirits. Then thousands of years went by and time was moving fast and space was larger and science was born and modern medicine was born and hospitals were born and we are in the present time. Now the body is seen as only molecules and art is for sale and collected and hung on walls and in museums. And art and healing separated for the fourth time as medicine stopped believing in the mind or spirit and in meditation or prayer as healing. Now art and healing could not even see each other across the room. But many people knew that there was a prophesy which told that now is the time on earth for art and healing to come together again. It had been long told that now is the time this conjunction needs to be made for each of us.. People knew that they needed to do this now. They knew that it was imperative to do this now for the healing of the health care system and their own personal lives. Now is the time for the artist and healer to rejoin as one. Now is the time for the rejoining of the two energies. And art and healing saw each other across the room. They came together as if they had been apart for a million years. They merged and vibrated as one. The one that separated into two had come back together as one again. Time and space were here and not here at once and the earth was healed.

In this story, art and healing are like incarnations of two energies. Male and female energy, light and dark, positive and negative, yin and yang, active and passive, penetrating and receiving, wisdom and compassion, the creative and the receptive, two energies that balance each other, by their very existence hold the universe together and keep it alive. Whenever we talk about art and healing becoming one we also talk about the male and the female energies and all the other energies joining and coming together to be one. So in this story art and healing find each other and live happily forever. It is a happy ending. As you use art to heal yourself, you bring the two side together inside you and you are one. That is how you change, that is how we heal, that is how the earth is healing herself.

John Graham-Pole M.D. talks about poetry, laughter, and healing.

John Graham-Pole is a pediatric oncologist, a poet, and a clown. He co-founded the Art In Medicine Program at University Of Florida, Gainesville, with Mary Rockwood Lane. Poetry helps him be himself and helps him deal with the serious illnesses of children he takes care of. It calms him, helps him see the children as beautiful and helps him continue his work without burning out. Being a clown helps him bring laughter to the kids and staff. He teaches laughter and play workshops to show nurses and physicians how to make patients laugh and how to bring laughter into their own lives. Here is a poem he wrote about a patient he was taking care of.

Cell Shed

*Our cells
mingle, shed in
spindrift of water-
air between our*

*mouths. Each
the other's tissue. You
dying, take my
part to rest.
I, living,
let, imbibe,
scatter your
see*

This is a way of looking at a patient that is profoundly different. It brings the physician into a way of seeing and relating that is the way of the artist. The physician poet sees beauty and merges with the patient. His care is changed and his way of being as a healer changed forever. John write poems anywhere. He pauses in the hospital to write after he sees a patient. He writes in a small notebook, he jots down first lines of poems in the hall. John says that the poems help him see differently and take care of patients in a more intimate Perceiving each person as uniquely human and not just as a case. He sees beauty in very dark situations and can handle it much better because of his poetry.

Chapter Eight

Healing yourself with movement: dance as healing

Introducing your dancer in residence

The dancer walks gracefully into the patient's room. She is how you imagined a dancer would be: ethereal. She enters the cool, sterile, mechanical world of an intensive care unit. On the white-sheeted bed the child stirs. He is isolated, weak, and sick; facing death, fighting for his life. She glides over to him, asks him if he would like to choose a favorite music; she'll dance with him. He pauses, hesitant about this unusual request, but he is curious, yearns for life, for lightness, for healing. He looks up at her, maybe she will dance. And she does, amidst the I.V. poles and monitors and multiple vials and tubes filled with his many medications. Within this tiny sterile hospital room, cluttered with the hospital machinery of our times, she dances. And gradually she brings the child into the movement; at first he follows her just with his eyes. Then he reaches up, his outstretched arms grasp her hands, responds to her invitation. They hold each other, begin to sway . . . begin to dance together. Welcome, she says to you, as she moves so softly, like the mists. I am Jill, I am a dancer, I will dance for you.

Jill Sonke Henderson is the dancer in residence at Shands Hospital at The University of Florida, Arts In Medicine program and is the founder and director of the Dance For Life Program at University of Florida. She is one of the premier dance healers and just watching her work is a great gift.

How dance heals

Dance for healing is about moving. With every movement you embody the creative fire. There within the dance, your body has a life of its own. Within every one of us is a dancer. The dancer within us is the seducer, the seductress, the one creates a healing spiral around us. If we are seduced enough, we move into the dance and are part of the movement of healing. If you are a nurse, a mother, a person who is ill, you start to dance from room to room. You are in the midst of tasks, and if within all of this, you close your eyes and see yourself as a dancer, you see that you live in the dance of your own life. Instead of rushing from place to place, you shift your body's perspective. All of a sudden, you see yourself dancing through your own life. You become graceful and beautiful by a deliberate conscious act, an intention.

Through this possibility of dancing at any moment in our lives, dancing in any moment, we can see ourselves in total grace and beauty. In the dancing moment there is level of spontaneity and fun. You can move in any way you want to, you dance and twirl, allow yourself to stretch, to open. Embody movement that is natural and flowing like a river. Your movements become art, they become a dance.

Dance heals by spiraling us down inside ourselves to a center where tensions are released and there is a freedom and spaciousness. To dance is to harness the fire inside your belly that moves you. You are always in movement, you go inside where you are held in

place, and then move outward. You thrill to the momentum and the movement that frees you. You feel the wind as you move, it alivens your senses. You twirl, you move, you feel your spirit's rhythm.

Dance is vehicle for emotional expression, an opportunity to embody emotion. When she teaches, Jill has people dance an image of a scene, become a forest, an animal. Each person chooses their image and dances it to another person. Then they dance together. Then Jill has people dance a moment of pain or illness. She uses the dance as a way to connect to someone. You can become sensitive to how you move, and how another person moves. You move with them and let them push on your hand. You connect with the essential energy each person has inside themselves. Each person has a specific energy, a way of moving. You connect with it and harness it for healing. You start to move, you get into your energy, you get tingly, alive. Your cells vibrate, you tap into your own energy source. As you move you feel the imagery within you become real, you feel it become alive. If you imagine you are a tree, you move your arms as branches and you feel like a tree. When you dance with someone who is ill, your very movements flow to them, lift them or caress them and send them your healing energy.

All the imagery does is take you into the dance. What is healing is the actual dance. You body and spirit become one and really free. The energy of the experience becomes palpable. Writing, painting, song, and dance are like a continuum that goes from thought to movement embodying the creative process. In dance you are truly embodied, translating thought and emotion into movement. When you get cells moving there are neurotransmitters flowing, there are endorphins flowing. You express any fluidity that you are capable of. Whatever is tense, is let go. The body itself leads you where it wants to be naturally.

How does it feel to experience creative healing, to be within the creative fire? This is one dancer's experience of being an artist healer working with patients. *"As I go deep into the sacred spiral, as I fall deeply into the center of the spiral of art and healing, through my love and through my dreams of creation itself, I fall into the center of the spiral nebula and this is what I see: There is a moment where the artist and healer are one, it may simply be the moment when they are one with their own inner artist or with the artist in the room with them. In that moment magic happens. The creative process, the same process that fuels the universe, that causes stars to be born, spiral nebula to come, babies to be born, also heals cells and changes a person forever. I get a feeling of deep peace. My body is calm and electric at once. I see everywhere. I am connected to everything. The release of the inner imagery from the creative source changes the person's life and body, it heals them."*

But what actually happens in this moment of dance as magic? What is the actual process by which prayer or mind-body connections or creativity heals? We believe it is the same process in which the universe is formed from the dream, that matter is formed from thought. Just as the universe is creative by making stars you are creative by dancing. We believe the process is the same. As you explore the artist within you'll connect to the

deepest moments in your life. It is this deeper place of being where you'll find inner peace.

Jill's advice about using dance to heal yourself: Making a dance studio

You need to create an environment that is supportive of the kind of work that you want to do. It is important that the world around you supports you and recognizes you. Making a studio creates a tangible way for you to be seen as an artist- both in your own eyes and in the eyes of others. It focuses your mind on who you are and what you are trying to become. You may be blocked now by your fear of not doing it right, but if you do it every day you will be the artist you want to be. Create the space and your form will follow you. Jill started out not knowing what to do. She rented a place where she could dance and she stood in the middle of the dance floor not knowing what she was going to do to start. First she danced a few steps then a few more, then she did workshops, then she realized that she believed the process was healing. Now she dances every day in the hospital and runs the Dance For Life program in Art in Medicine. It all started with her renting a new studio.

Jill says: "You can dance in any space. If you make a space your own, it becomes your sacred studio and the place that triggers your shift in consciousness. In the space put materials that are useful for dancing. I use silk scarves which can be bought from suppliers, second hand shops, discount stores, or found in your own attic or closet. I also use fabric of all colors and shapes. The scarves and fabric are the costumes or props. They transform you into what you are dancing. For example if you dance the waters of the spring, flowing blue scarves make you the water swirling. I also use magic feathers from craft shops and magic wands made from dowels wrapped in ribbon. The wands can have streamers and glitter on them or anything you like. Like the scarves they add to the costume and make you embody what you are dancing.

"I carry a selection of music tapes of classical, piano, new age instrumental, and children's instrumental music. I also have tapes of the environment such as ocean, rain forest, etc. I also have musical instruments such as drums, shakers, a lap harp, sticks, and bells. In addition, I carry art supplies such as crayons, paper, paints, markers, glue, scissors, ribbon, glitter, and jewelry making supplies. These are the same types of supplies used for visual arts. In the dance I use them to enhance the costume and the setting. You can make sets that become the world that the dancer dances in. Socks can be used for making puppets; face paint and jewels can also help a person be what they are dancing."

Choosing your dance: Your first steps

"To start to dance we first must find a starting place. I ask the patients about what activities they enjoy. What is their favorite thing to do? What are they experts in, what is important in their lives? What are they proud of? For patients who are ill it is very useful to ask what they would like to be doing instead of being in the hospital. What are their fondest dreams. or what images keep coming up in dreams that they remember?

What do they love or miss about home or some place special? What do you want to do when you are well?

"If the person has already been involved in art, I ask them about the process in detail. If the person is not forthcoming, I try to get them to talk while we paint. I can often tell where to start by just looking around the person's room and seeing what is hung there, what were they sent. Sometimes just moving or doing imagery helps us find significant images to dance too.

"You also can start to dance with pure movement explorations. Move as if you are in an environment, as if you are something, an animal, flower, water. Move as if you were made of clay or wax. Pretend you are doing something like catching a ball. Imagine you are in a space like a bubble. Move to define the space. Move to fill an imaginary empty vessel. Move your body to get in touch with your breath, your blood, your heart beat.

"Imagery is an important part of the healing dance process. Moving from images is an important part of dancing to heal. You can find personal images through any of the processes above or you can do guided imagery exercises to find healing images to dance."

Jill says that for her, dancing takes her into herself. There she spirals into her spirit and can use the energy to pick up a child with cancer and lift him upwards. Jill's story illustrates many of the points of healing yourself with dance. As a dancer in residence for four years, she has learned much about healing dance that is useful to us so we will tell her story in detail.

An interview with Jill Sonke Henderson

"I started dancing at seventeen. Once I discovered dancing, I danced every day. I knew I had to do it. At twenty one, I went to Interlochen Arts Academy and Florida State University, where I majored in dance, then to New York to dance professionally. Then I got sick. I came down initially with herpes and was really sick in bed for 3 weeks. I was in too much pain to move. I found myself turning on the classical radio station and just letting it play all day. I would just lay on my back and visualize myself dancing to the music. I would get way inside the music and inside my body, visualize, and dance all day. I was energetically alive, even though my body just wanted to die. I was in a lot of pain, I had about fifty lesions, and was throwing up. I didn't want to be in that body at all, but deeper inside it was really light and I could do anything I wanted with my body in imagery. I could feel the energy stirring inside me. I still see energy this way. Like when you're sleeping, your cells are moving really slowly and you wake up and your cells move a little quicker and something excites you and they move faster and faster and when you get your own physical movement in it everything just swirls and swirls and swirls. I could feel that when I was just laying there. I could feel that energy swirling and it felt really alive and wonderful. It was just a tremendous experience. It was like being out of my body and even though I was just laying there still. I was aware that the pain and the discomfort were there, but I was so far inside my body. I could feel my body in the movement and I could do

anything I wanted with it. I could bend it in ways I normally couldn't bend it. I had complete freedom. It was like feeling great inside this body that felt like shit. I loved that experience, even though I didn't think much of it in terms of its value at that time. I remember how incredibly helpful it was. I think it helped the healing in that the energy was moving inside me causing flow instead of me just feeling that nothing was moving.

" I couldn't dance for a while. It took a while for me to get my energy back- about a month and a half. That was the first experience I had of leaving dance, having an intense life experience, and then coming back to it. Every time that's happened in my life I come back and I feel like it just enhances my dance so much. I come back and I don't feel like 'Oh, my God, I'm out of shape and it's going to take me months to get back to the level I was.' I feel like I come back a better dancer every time. My structure and my value system concerning dance might be different from a ballet dancer's. If my leg only goes up to here instead of here I don't feel like I'm a worse dancer. If my emotional connection to my dance and my accessibility to my inner self is clearer and more available I feel like I'm a better dancer. It might be a little different for me than for other dancers.

"I have always had an attraction to being a health caregiver, and my whole process with dance was deepening. When I dance sometimes and I'm just riding on the music, the stuff that doesn't need to be there flies off, flings off, and it gets clearer and lighter and cleaner and you get inside and then whoosh! You find that place that is just free. Freedom, just space--no time--it's just space and it's just energy and then you ride it, just spiraling colors and lights. I knew that if I could facilitate a process like this for patients, it could be very helpful and healing.

"It was never there until I walked from the art studio into the first patient's room, there by myself. As I walked down that hall, I had no idea what to do, and somewhere between here and there I thought OK, I'm going to fly paper airplanes. So that's what we did and it worked. It bridged us beautifully into movement and of course he was wide open and he was just a perfect, perfect person to be that first patient. It was on the Bone Marrow Transplant Unit, he was five years old. Each patient on this unit is in isolation, living in a confined space, with multiple I.V. medications on poles. This process takes place in an intensive care unit usually in the hospital bed or on a blanket spread on the small floor space. He was there with his mom and dad who were wonderfully supportive. They were ready to do anything he wanted to do. His room, like all the rooms there, was very small. There's the bed, the chair, the stool, and the poles, and there's just room to maneuver around those things. If you push the furniture to the sides, which we did, and tape a blanket to the floor, it gives you maybe a 4 to 5 by 6 foot area to move in, which for him was plenty. So that first day we made paper airplanes and we decorated them and started flying. I had been oriented to the intensive care unit so I knew most of the safety things that you have to know. But I didn't know that he couldn't touch the floor, things couldn't touch the floor so his parents very kindly cued me in to that as I was guiding him to the floor at one point. We had our airplanes decorated to fly and I just said, where do you want to go? He said to the mountains. So we flew to the mountains in our airplane, going up and down. Knowing that he had been in his bed for quite a long time, I was trying to give him a range of physical movement. So we were flying over the mountains and spiraling down.

"He had just had his transplant. He was probably half a week beyond it. So as we flew, he'd start crushing the mountains and knocking them down and then suddenly he'd go and he'd run and hide. We'd just have to hide and wait quietly for a few minutes, then he'd go crush the mountains again. Then we pretended to fly to New York and we smashed buildings and knocked them down. It was real determined, aggressive stuff but we'd always stop and hide for a while. He'd be moving with me. We'd be going together. We'd be squatting down, walking in a squat across the room and then reaching up to the ceiling and then dropping down quickly and he'd be stomping on the mountains and smashing them with his hands and jumping and screaming and being really verbal. He liked drumming music so I'd bring in tapes to give us a beat. I'd just name movement elements like running, jumping, turning, shaking, stretching, reaching, whatever. There was only one rule that you couldn't do any of those like you normally do. You had to do them different. You could be crazy, you could be silly, you could be anything, but if you were going to walk you had to walk with an elbow in the air, with your head dropped over, or some different way with everything. So, it was like a stop-freeze game. I'd say freeze and make a funny shape and then we'd see how many different ways we could shake different parts of our bodies and this was all to the music. He'd connect nicely to the music. We'd walk and run and jump and turn, and although he could only turn three-quarters at a time because of his I.V. lines, his parents and I would try to give him as much physical freedom as possible, grabbing the lines around so he could move.

"The next day, I asked if he'd like to play a game, he could be anything he wanted to be, a creature, an alien, an animal, or anything real or imagined and right away he knew he wanted to be a dragon. So, I brought in a T-shirt and a hat and we started making his dragon costume and I was amazed at how clear he was. He knew his dragon had purple paws with gold toes and it had a purple diamond on its chest. Everything was really specific--he knew exactly what he wanted. We took this hat, you know one of those foldup sailor hats, and dropped the front down and cut eye holes so he could make a mask and this was like a full dragon costume. He was this dragon, again crushing mountains and fighting battles and then his mom and I became his footmen to help him. He'd show us how to hit, how to do everything and we started helping him. We all wore masks. He totally directed the story at this point. He was directing almost from the beginning. Starting with the battle stuff, he'd give us our instruments. Mine was like this, two fingers sticking out, my arm straight. His mom was holding a sword. We'd each have to punch a certain way and he'd say "OK, there are thirty seven warriors, we have to get them." He'd be the main dude, we'd get to kill a few. So we just fought battle after battle after battle.

For anybody interested in dance, we advise that you stretch, warm up, but then do improvisational things where you just move. If you are working with others, have a lot of contact. Use a lot of images, sacred images, start with a simple sequence of movements, say you're going to enter this space holding an object or holding something in your hands that's symbolic to you-it can be a golden sphere of light. It can represent something that you want to give up-something that you want to give to the universe, it can represent what you have to offer the world, it can be anything, just let it represent something for you. Take it

into this space, offer it up, and then release it. Then come down to the earth in some way just to receive the energy of the earth.

"I think there's a space that palpable. Being on this unit, I do my best to create sacred space and to be really intentional about walking a the room. You can walk into a room and the energy will feel different, you know, it just feels different. It's a different plane, a different level of being. The person in the room and their support people-they're living differently. They're not dressing, they're not doing, they're not in the world in that way at all-they're just focused on their process for the most part. Of course, sometimes you get people who don't really go there even in this situation. But this space changes. When a patient is embracing or engaging in a creative process the room changes. If I had to describe in words the quality of the space, it would be almost like the air is thicker, more like fluid. There's more vibration in my body. I'm more in the moment definitely. There's not much mind chatter-I'm more in my body. And I can feel it when I leave the room and feel the space change-I can still feel my body vibrating differently."

The story of Anna Halprin: healing her own cancer with dance

Anna Halprin is the grandmother of healing dance and one of the most stellar pioneers in the field of art and healing. At the time of this interview she was seventy- five years old and had just won a lifetime dance career award. She is a small woman with a body that looks like it can move in every way. Her pelvis is as flexible as a young dancer is and she laughs, cries, smiles, and engages you with her eyes and personality. When she talks about dance and healing you feel like you are hearing someone whose depth of knowledge is ancient and profound. Here she tells her story of how she healed herself of cancer with dance.

" As a dancer working from a holistic approach, I have always been concerned with the relationship between the mind and the body. Understanding the connection of movements with feelings is easy enough, but understanding how the mind works in relation to the body isn't that simple. I was exploring the use of imagery as a way of making that link. I found it wasn't enough to create images in the mind's eye; I wanted people to draw their own images, reflect upon them, and learn physically the language of these images. The process of connection with our internal imagery involved "dancing" the images that welled up from this unconscious as another way of connecting the mind and the body. In learning this imagistic language, it became clear I was receiving messages from an intelligence within the body, an intelligence deeper and more unpredictable than anything I could understand through rational thought.

"While I was participating in this *PsychoKinetic Visualization Process*, I drew an image of myself that I was unable to dance. This was a signal to me. Why couldn't I dance? What was blocking me? I had drawn a round ball in my pelvic area, and I intellectualized that it was pointing a way to new beginnings. But some part of me was sure that this approach to my drawing was nonsense, because I wouldn't be able to put the drawing into motion. That night when my mind was quiet, I had intimations that the image I had drawn had something to tell me, and that I was not listening.

"The next day I made an appointment with my doctor. I asked him to examine me precisely where I had drawn this round ball. He diagnosed cancer. I went through the traditional operation procedures, and radical ones at that, which altered my body for life, leaving me with a colostomy and feelings of real uncertainty about my future. Would I ever dance again? The doctor assured me I was just fine, which was funny because I didn't feel fine. He also added that if I didn't have a recurrence within five years, I would be totally out of the woods. Three years after my operation I had a recurrence. I knew then that I was going to have to make some very drastic changes in my life.

"After my recovery from the operation, I began intensive research. I wanted to understand how it was possible to receive an unconscious message about something in the body through a drawing. For a period of three years, I collected slides of drawings done by students in my classes, and I studied them, trying to find a coherent visual language I could understand. I thought perhaps certain colors or shapes meant something, or that certain symbols had a particular meaning. But if there was a system in this, I could not find it. What I did find was that none of these questions could be answered in a rational, logical, or systematic manner. It just didn't work that way. What seemed to work was the process; when people danced their images and moved back and forth between dancing and drawing, the messages would be made clear through the movement and drawings. The visual images couldn't be codified in rigid terms because each person had their own unique story, expressed in their own personal way.

"At the same time, certain symbols and principles seemed to repeat themselves. For example, in a whole classroom of self portraits, you might notice that almost everyone had a snake or a tree or a water image in their drawing. Or that the drawings indicated polarities or opposites- a dark and a light side. In conjunction with the intense individuality of the drawings, I saw certain common themes repeated over and over again. I also learned that until these images were personally experienced through dance and movement, their messages remained mysterious. I began to suspect that some of the repeating images and polarities had to do with the ways we are all connected to our common environment, the natural world, and the elements that make all our lives similar to one another.

"Let me give an example of how I was able to learn something about my own life story, the mystery of my own personal imagery and my connection to the natural world by dancing a self portrait I did at the time of my illness. When I first drew myself, I made myself look "perfect". I was young and brightly colored. My hair was blowing in the wind. I was the picture of health and vitality. When I looked at the picture after drawing it, I knew I couldn't even begin to dance it; it just didn't feel like me. I turned the paper over and furiously began to draw another image of myself. It was black and angular and angry and violent. I knew that this back-side image of me was the dance I had to do.

"I stand there and I look at it. To get started, I take the position that I've drawn. The position that I had drawn was this person with a knife in their hand and the hand was up

like this so I stood in that position with my hand poised like this. Immediately my muscles had to tighten to hold onto the knife and as my hand tightened to hold onto the knife it became a fist and that fist and that muscular contraction immediately set off a response of anger. I mean if you were holding a knife in your hand and it was pointing towards your body, it would set off anger, and it also set off rage and hysteria because it was aimed at myself so it was as if I was stabbing and killing myself. It was the worst kind of demon image that was coming into me and the moment I started, it just took over.

"Now when I danced it physically I went into a rage. I started talking in what people call "tongues". It was incoherent but I was just screaming these words. I had no idea what they meant and I was stabbing at myself and I was so angry that I don't even know what I was doing. When I looked at the video tape, I could just feel this anger bottle up. You know, usually when I dance, I know what I'm doing. I can shape my movement and I know how I can develop the movement. I'm very much of a skilled technician developing my material as it comes out, like a painter would see their painting in front of them and then develop it. Well, I can do that with movement because that's what my skill is. But when I was doing this there was no such connection, there was no ability to impose an aesthetic shape. Whatever came out was just explosive--kind of out of control. This was unusual for me so in a sense, I think of it as an exorcism rather than any kind of aesthetic dance. The sounds too just came.

" That was the starting point. The moment I took that first "explosion of sound, I embodied my own demon. Once it started, it was thoughtless, it was movement, straight movement. And that's when the release happened. I was exhausted, I was just physically exhausted. I got to a point where I didn't have any more energy. I was just exhausted. And if you see the tape, it's not an aesthetic. If I were to do this as a dance, I would have developed the material very differently.

"Oh yeah, that's what I felt. Well, you can see in the dance I just fall onto my knees. I didn't just collapse. I felt the kind of tears that were connected to a very very deep sadness. But at the same time, it was a release and that's when I fell, and that's when I felt my diaphragm just breaking. The tears were just the inner sensation of this dam of water, and the breath was like water. It started in my diaphragm and it just burst forth, and my whole body, you could see, just melted, just softened and I just sobbed and sobbed and cried. And it was a very strong physical sensation. The demon within me certainly had a long history. I felt that it came from a very ancient place. It felt very ancient. The way I drew myself, I felt like a female warrior.

"Do you know what I think happened, in retrospect? I think that when this diaphragm felt like it was a dam and it had broken and the water started rushing, I think that in retrospect that was the turning point. I think that something was released. I don't know if it was on an herb-assisted level, a chemical level, or an electrical level but I suspect something because of the intensity of the sensation--I mean, I could not have stood up at that point. It was just flowing, I could not feel anything at that moment. It was its

own movement, you couldn't see it but if you look at the video, you could just see my back.

" I felt when this thing opened up here and started flowing down I just felt that I was on earth and that it was flowing into the earth, the water that was coming through me was just flowing through me into the earth. I felt so connected to the earth. I was this demon. It was very real but it wasn't me in this world. It may have been just this intense fantasy that came from the drawing but when I let go I was no longer the human form. This water just took over and I was part of the earth and when I stood up and they turned around and I started dancing I was just dancing my breath because I had just let it out. I was just breathing and my breath was water. I felt like I was washing myself, just cleansing myself with this water and the movements were water-movements--very fluid water movements. That image of the breath and water is something that I use to this day. If something's wrong--I remember I had a lecture to give and I had laryngitis and I spent the whole day just imagining that there was this waterfall and it had mossy green stuff on it and clean water was just going through my throat and that night I was able to give the lecture but the next day it came back. So in the second dance, where it turned around, I was a human form.

" I had to have witnesses because I knew unless I did, I would never be able to go through this ordeal. My witnesses were my family, colleagues, and my students, and they kept me honest, urging me to go deeper, reinforcing my sounds, calling out parts of the picture I was to dance. I danced until I was spent, and I collapsed and I began to sob with great relief. Now I was ready to turn the picture over and dance the healing image of myself.

"As I danced this image, I imagined that my breath was water and that my movements flowed through my body just as water would flow. I imagined the water was cleansing me. I had an image of water cascading over the mountains near my home, and that water flowed through me and out to the endless vastness of the sea, taking with it my illness. I believe I was experiencing the forces of nature as they are imprinted into my body, which gave me a deep sense of the real connection between my body and the world around me. The movements of this dance started soft and small and as I continued to dance, I added sound. My witnesses again reinforced these sounds, as the movements grew and grew, until my whole body was engaged in the image of cascading waters. When I finished, I invited the witnesses to join me in a circle; I felt ready to return to my friends and family.

"Something happened to me in this dance that I can't explain. I felt I had been on a mysterious journey to an ancient world. Time and place were suspended and I was in a timeless blue void. The experience left me trembling and purified. Later, as I gained distance from the experience of my dance, I began to notice a pattern within it that seemed relevant to other healing processes. I have mapped out the touchstones of that journey.

"The first was to simply look and identify the issue, the polarity between the dark side and the light side. The second point in my journey was the actual confrontation, which was followed by a release. After the release, the third task was finding some way to

integrate the new changes in my body. That's what I did when I did the water dance. The last step in the journey was assimilation, a coming back to my community and my family and my life.

"Much later, when I was developing a theory and methods to apply to my teaching, I saw how this experience was the source of a healing process I had begun to identify. This experience gave me a new way of looking at healing, which I have used ever since as a guide to working with others. I call this process the Five-Stages of Healing, and have adapted it to working with other people with life threatening conditions, and larger community contexts, in the form of ritual and group healings. In 1981, I began to apply this process to a whole community of people. I began to create large-scale rituals that addressed the different needs of the communities with which I worked, and I always applied this process of drawing and dancing as a way to generate what I call resources.

"I am so captivated by the discoveries that happen in the visualization process and in this road map for the healing journey that I often forget to tell my friends and readers that after this dance my cancer went into a spontaneous remission. It is the healing process implicit in this journey that interests me as much as the cure, because healing is a whole process available to all of us, all the time. A cure is an event, neither predictable, nor always available. The process of healing rests within dance, an ancient practice with wonderful possibilities for us today. "

An interview with Anna Halprin about healing dance

"I have people start out with something very simple and basic and then I usually have them work with their eyes closed. I just empathize and watch and see where they take that material. I might draw out an image or I might get an idea for an image from empathizing with somebody. I trust the process so thoroughly that I really give people whatever time they need, and I trust that if they stay with their eyes closed and they stay with the sensation of the movement that it will take them somewhere. I just see where it's going by feeling it myself with them and then very often, I find that when the group can connect with other people or even one or two people that this will bring them to another level of the depth of their experience. I like to just keep making the connections broader and broader until if possible the whole group will come together in the connection. Every time a new connection is made it seems like it intensifies their own experience. Sometimes they'll dance, sometimes somebody will make a sound in one corner and somebody will echo it and in the other corner, and then even though their movements are separate, they feel the voices. Sometimes someone's movement will swirl around them and that will catapult them to another level.

"One woman had never danced before and she had been telling us how she had been struggling with cervix cancer and how it had metastasized and she just felt so hopeless and so depressed. When I saw her doing her movement, she just got swept into it, I empathized with her and I said oh, this is good, I want to support her. I said to myself, I'm going to get these cancer cells together--I'm going to get them out and I'm mad and I'm angry. You can't be depressed and do a movement like that. The anger will give you some motivation--some life force. If you get into angry feelings, just think about

the pure energy of your feelings. I just give them permission to do anything. Anything they do is going to be OK. That if they're doing it, it's because they need to do it or they wouldn't be doing it. So there's a lot of permission.

"I am so open and accepting and I'm so totally nonjudgmental. Last night when this woman was telling us about how depressed she was, everybody was trying to fix it, you know, and I let them do that and then I just started dancing it. I said you really feel shitty, yeah I feel shitty, I said what the hell, how would you, if you couldn't say it in words, how would you say it in movement? She went yeah, and we all did the same and before you know it the whole class was doing that and because she was able to express it, she started laughing, she started smiling. So I think that what happens is that the group feels that they can trust me, that I'm not going to take over, that I'm not going to fix things for them but that I'm really there to have them express how they feel in movement. Because of that, they are able to be very open to me. There's no criticism, there's no expectation.

"It is a mystery. It's as simplistic as you think that there's just red paint, blue paint, and yellow paint, but when you start mixing them together, wow, you can get all these different shades and different colors. And that's what happens in healing art. You mix them, the three primary things all together and the possibilities are endless. We do a lot of writing, poetic writing where we just use single words and then try to put them together and then all these stories come out. Unbelievable. Energy is something you can see. You can't touch it, you can just call it part of that mystery. But there is something that doesn't make any logical sense that is happening in that room-- impacting on everybody. And it is going beyond the physical boundaries. It's some sort of energetic force, like a current in the environment. If you can measure it and can't see it, it's like trying to imagine a color you've never seen.

"Every part of the body speaks a different language, every part of the body has a particular song. If I'm working with the chest, it's very heart-rending. It will bring up sadness, it will bring up joy. If I work with the feet, it will bring up grounding and strength and hanging on. If I work with the arms it brings up reaching and drawing in. If I work with the spine it brings out support. So I know that every part of the body has its own mythology and within that mythology there's a basic emotion and image within that body part. So I can use that as a guide without imposing any personal judgments or any guessing. So I can just plunge into the creative process right along with them. But there is that knowledge that if I'm going to work with the head it's going to bring up letting go of burdens and if I'm going to use the hands to guide the head, I know that the hands are going to give that burden some compassion."

Advice from Anna Halprin on healing yourself with dance

"My advice to a person who wants to heal herself with dance is to do whatever matches her calling. If she loves reading poetry, if that's something that she loves to do, read the poem, then find a way to put that poem into a dance, memorize the poem and move as you're narrating the poem. If you love music, pick out 10 different qualities of music-- something that is based on a very soft sustained, something very rhythmic, something

very strong, and go to the store and get a selection of these different pieces of music. Play the music and just dance to the music--whatever the music says to you. Another thing is take a walk in nature and as you walk, touch, smell, feel, caress, hug, --just do it by yourself or with a friend who is on the same path that you're on. Walk or if you're in better condition, run.

"I also advise everyone to draw. At the beginning your drawings may seem like nothing and you may think that you can't draw but everybody can. I advise you to draw a body picture of yourself, and then you can do drawings of whatever images come up for you when you are moving. You can also do drawings of animals and things. At the end of every session, the second week before the end, I always have people find an animal ally through a meditation. I always have them draw it and dance it. It really is crucial to do the animal dance. Animals are totally spontaneous in terms of their responses to things. If a dog is happy, it wags its tail. Birds fly. We all have dreams of flying, so birds represent liberation and freedom. I always do animal allies and they always have something important to say. You know we have four kinds of animals, we connect with movement. We have an animal under the ground, an animal on the ground, a hoofed animal and an aerial animal. If people stay with me long enough, they get four animals and I tell them they can also call on someone else's animal. Animals are totally spontaneous with their feelings and moving like them is another way for us to get at our own healing images. The other thing that is also important is to identify with a mineral and find that stillness, that unmovable strength of minerals, identifying with plants, finding this vertical growing, especially."

Chapter Nine

Healing yourself with Sound: music as healing

Introducing our musician in residence

Pure excitement and joy come into your room with Dr. Peter Halrpin. He says, "I will play you a song. Listen. I am a doctor who heals with music. This is what my whole life is about. It is where I have been. My name is Peter. I am a doctor, but I was a musician. I had to leave music to become a physician. For years there was a time when I did medicine without music. Now finally I realize I can't do that anymore. Now I am a doctor who plays music with my patients. I play music to relax them, to help them remember who they are, to remind them of the past, to help them deal with emotions. Music is the most powerful healing force. Look, music has vibrations that change every cell in your body. Look, music heals babies in hospitals. I have known that all my life and now I can live it at last. This is the future of healing. Let me play you a song about healing, close your eyes and listen."

As he plays his guitar, you can see Peter being himself at last, finding out who he is at last, bringing both sides of himself together at last. You can see his power rising, his spirit soaring, and his healer emerging. This physician is practicing the music healing of the future. This physician has awakened to the expanding and innovative possibilities of healthcare.

Peter Halrpin is a physician who practices in Cape Cod Massachusetts. He was a singer and guitarist before he went to medical school. Now in addition to his medical practice, he lectures to caregivers on the value of healing music and performs his beautiful music in front of patients and caregivers to help them heal.

How sound heals

Sounds creates vibrational shifts in the body. Sound is what our ears pick up from vibrations moving through air. There are actually air molecules moving in space. There is a motion with a rhythm and a frequency moving in space and time. Our bodies pick up the sound with our ears, and the rest of our body picks up the vibrations in every molecule of every cell. For example, sound brings the vibrations of your voice into your chest. The voice is powerful, it can shift your whole emotional state from anger to love. You can use your voice to express love and healing intention. Sound is a way to create vibrational healing and bring love into your own body. You can use your voice as the vehicle for loving yourself. Any sound can be used, humming, or chanting, singing or repeating words to rhythm. Affirmations such as "I am one with my song" are very effective when put to a melody. You can use your voice to sing lullaby to a baby, to sing to your lover, to sing childhood songs to an very old person. It transcends time, it brings us to places of feeling. It is the most physically accessible form of art. It is deeply embodied. It uses your own body as the vehicle for healing. The music is inside you vibrating and changing the patterns of molecules in your cells. The snake uncoils in your body, singing to the bones, singing from your heart.

Ancient healers used chanting and singing to evoke the spirit. They called to the spirits in chants, stories, and song. We praise God and evoke our lovers with music. We use

song to relax, feel ecstasy, raise our energy, and have fun. We listen to gospel songs to elevate our soul, love songs to put us in the mood for love. Music effects our mood instantly, it uplifts, lowers, it can facilitate emotional energy shifts powerfully and quickly. We can use music as a tool to affect change. We can use it with intent to heal and relax.

Anyone can use chanting with the intent of making music to heal. We can chant into our bodies. We can sing to each other. We can sing lullabies to our children, friends, lovers and family. We can sing to our grandmothers, we can sing to them of their childhood, and they will get up and become young again. Music can take someone into a timeless place where they can be somewhere else again. It can take someone to an ancient past. It can take them into the place where they know God. How fast do you feel joy and open your heart when you hear certain songs on the radio? You go from being depressed to being as happy as you can be in one moment. You don't do anything, you are taken there by the music.

Music is going to be one of the most powerful tools of healing in the twenty-first century. There is much literature to validate and support this belief. The practice of music healing has not caught up to the research and does not reflect the enormous amount of literature which proves the richness of this media in healing. This medium has already been applied successfully in nursing homes, hospitals, intensive care units, and even in people's own homes. Creative ways of applying the medium will be part of the future of healing.

Becoming one with tones

Eddie Hartshorne is a therapist who uses music to heal. A woman she worked with was having problems in her marriage and felt alienated from her husband. Eddie worked with her to choose sounds and tones that made her feel at one with herself. First the woman picked her instruments. She chose Tibetan bowls of different sizes and tones. First she would simply play them and meditate and listen to the sounds. She would close her eyes and daydream as the tones went through her body. Next she put the bowls on her body and toned the sounds that seemed to make her feel most at peace. She then thought of doing this with her husband and he spent time with her as she played her bowls. The tones carried them away in a meditative state that brought them closer together and made them feel one with each other. As her music deepened, so did their relationship. She felt she knew herself intimately as she went into her tones, and as she knew who she was she let herself love her husband for who he was. Art and healing is the most basic mind-body therapy.

Eddie's advice on how to use music to heal yourself

"I suggest that people get a tape. You can use all sorts of music. Now there is a whole genre of healing music. There is also music that is done live, that is acoustical, that has only pure sounds. There are some tapes of Tibetan bells and our tapes have flutes and bells.

"When my son died, I could not listen to anything except Rosa Mystica played by Terese Shreder Shaker. I think that people know what is healing for them. I suggest that people listen to music with nothing else going on. Lie down on a sofa or a bed for ten minutes, not much more than that, put the music on, turn the phones off. Say 'This is the time that I am healing my body', say 'I am giving my dear body attentive, faithful, healing.' It is amazing how refreshing that can be. And I suggest that it be music that is quite slow, and that you breathe with the music. The music that we record is all done with breath, so it is extremely easy to breathe with it. You begin to feel the beat of the music, and in that way what happens is that your heart slows down, your breath goes into your belly, and you feel refreshed. It is cheap, easy, quick. Anybody can do it anytime, anyplace.

"Playing music yourself is not necessary. But I also believe that anybody can play music, and that you can start at any age. I think that it is a wonderful thing to begin to play an instrument as an older person. And from my experience of starting to play Japanese music in my middle forties, what I found is that you have to have "beginners" mind. Japanese music is not at all like western music. When I started it was like I was a baby. I thought that a cute little five year old could play this music that I can't. It is a fabulous way to experience what it is really like to start learning like a child. You can experience what it is like to really start from the beginning. And you realize how absurd it is that we criticize ourselves. So it is a fabulous experience in self awareness. And if you do without becoming attached to the idea of being a great performer, but rather to just see what this experience is like, then you can enjoy the simplest tune. You just play a few notes and experience what it is like to make the sound. And there are people you can find who will teach you in this way. You can buy moveable xylophones where you strike the bells that sound gorgeous, and if you set it up in a pentatonic scale it is beautiful. You can't make any mistakes. You can buy a little harp that is pentatonic. I have done this with two or three- year- olds and with adults. They take a single note, and I say to them that that is your note and the person sings only that note. You can really become as interested in one single note as you can in a whole piece.

"There are lots of ways that people can experience music as an adult. And of course the human voice is wonderful. You can tone and chant with a little bell so that you are accompanying yourself. Start in the shower. You can also begin to match the sounds that you hear in the environment. For example, when a train goes by, it makes a certain pitch. You can listen to that sound and you can slide your voice so that you match that sound. You feel it in your body. In that moment you are entrained. You can use this when there is an annoying sound. When you match the sound it does not bother you. You can do this with every sound. If you turn on the hair dryer it gives a note. If you are with a friend and you put the dryer on low and then high, each sound is a note you can tone together. Toning in the bathroom is great. If you turn on the shower you don't feel as embarrassed. It is very good for your body and it feels great. You can also learn sacred chants. I chant the Buddhist lovingkindness meditation every morning with my husband. I start first myself, then we say the names of anyone who needs prayer, and we chant that person's name and at the end of the five minutes of chanting we feel refreshed. It is a different way of saying a prayer. Whenever someone is in need or ill or in danger we change their name. And people will call us to do it for them.

"I want to say something about the music of nature. I experience the sounds of nature to be as powerful as music, especially if I am away from the freeway or electricity. When I come back to the city, my body vibrates in a higher frequency, so I think that for me what is almost more powerful than music is the silence in the sound of the wind. The wind in the cottonwood trees is different, different trees have a different sound. I love no sound or the sound of fog. There is a quality of sound in fog that wraps you . I was in fog in a rain forest three years after my son died and I felt an incredible intensity. I was very hot. I heard a voice, and I felt his presence all around me. In the fog I heard 'Haven't you noticed I have been here all the time? I have been with you always.' And that moment was the moment when I was able to begin to heal.

"I think music was the golden thread that led me back to my true self. 'Listen, listen, this wonderful sound takes me back to my true self.' And that is what made the difference. For years and years I had no voice. When I was growing up, I could barely speak in class. I would shake. I could never say what I meant. I had these powerful feelings that felt so incoherent. I was a child of the fifties, I grew up standing behind the man. I looked extroverted, but it wasn't until I started playing Japanese music that I was freed. The virulent superego critics were not so noisy, and then I began to come out of myself. I came to the music as a way to find myself, of finding my voice. And having been through the journey myself, I know what it is like to feel like I have something to say, but not to know how. I know how you feel inside when you know you have the jewel and you don't know how to express it. I want to open the way so everyone can experience what it is like when you allow the jewel to be seen. It takes study and craft to give the jewel its shape but study of an art is simply doing it each day. You do it. It is nothing magical. People separate it from themselves. That is a split that is totally wrong. Everyone can sing, make art. We split our creativity and call artists something other than themselves. People feel they can't do it. That is a great sadness inside themselves because it is our nature to want to reveal this beauty that we all experience. And it is in the nature of the human species to want to share that. It is our nature to create art and to witness creative healing. That is why it is as if you are listening to the divine in me, and you let me know it. The one who listens is giving the artist the great gift. And as a musician how can I not be ecstatic when someone says, 'I see the divine joy coming from you.' It is a wonderful experience everyone should have. We witness each other, we encourage each other to speak."

Music heals in an instant

Music simply can change a situation immediately. Picture a room in a bone marrow transplant ward. It is arid, nothing is there to raise your spirits. There are machines, pumps, tubes. The child is lying there so sick, he does not even move. His eyes are fixed and half open in pain and in fear. The experience is a lot more than you can bear. The child is sick and tired of suffering, his mother is there almost on the edge of collapse. All of a sudden a young man with a guitar comes in. He shuffles in awkwardly. He is uncomfortable at first. It is a strange surrounding. His guitar is on his back, and he is always uncomfortable in these kinds of hospital rooms. He wants to say something.

The child looks at the young man not sure what he wants. He looks like he will make a request. Then the young man offers to play the child a song.

Suddenly, the man's awkwardness transforms into joy. He transforms into the musician that he is. He brings out his guitar from the case. "Hi my name is Dan, I am a musician, and I work in the hospital program." Suddenly his energy shifts. He is exuberant. The child is still not sure what he means. "I don't want a song", the child says. The young man says, "I'll play you a song, what is your favorite song? I think I know that". He sits on the edge the bed, he holds his guitar and sings the song, Suddenly there is a smile, the child is too weak to sing, but he smiles gently. The young man sings to the child every day, serenading him as he went deep into his dreams.

In another moment, a mother is with a baby who is screaming. The baby cries, arches his back. Everyone is having a hard time. The mother pats him on the back, the baby is so difficult, he is in pain, he is so uncomfortable. The mother sits down in a rocking chair and she sings the baby a lullaby. She begins to hum from her belly. She feels the sound, the vibrations from her chest. The baby is still crying. She feels the energy rising in her, her love rising in her chest with the sound. The baby starts to whimper instead of cry. The mother sways back and forth like a dancer, singing a sweet lullaby as ancient as the stars. The baby quiets, he looks up at her so softly. He drifts off the sleep, he is calm and suddenly peaceful. This is how music heals. Feel the beauty of the moment, feel the ancient piety of the moment. That is how music heals.

The Recycled Trash Queens was formed by a group of woman who were drummers. They came into the hospital and used recycled trash to make music. They used all kinds of cans, milk cartons, orange juice containers, anything that was trash and could make a sound. In the hospital, they would put all the trash on a table. Then the kids would make drums. They took pots and pans and anything that would make sounds. The kids would start drumming,. The women were drummers, after all, so they could make drumming sounds from anything. You can be as creative and have as much fun as this. This was a simple project that brought music into a pediatric ward in a large hospital. It worked. It was easy and effective. They would put on concerts in the atrium with recycled trash and have everyone play. It demystified the music making of healing music. It showed that healing music can be done by anyone with anything. The diversity and variety of musicians -from drummers to guitar players - capture the imagination like the Minstrels of the old world. These wandering musicians bring in songs and stories from another world and travel into these places of darkness where healing light must occur.

Lewis played guitar for Nancy as she died

Michael tell us this story of his younger son Lewis: "When my wife Nancy was dying of breast cancer, our younger son Lewis would serenade her for hours. She was in a liver coma from liver metastasis and was starting to lose consciousness. It was slow and gentle but totally real. Lewis was sixteen years old, and Nancy had been sick since he was twelve. One month before, her metastases in her liver and lungs had grown rapidly. Her two physicians had set up a special meeting to tell her. They met in an office across

from the hospital, so neither would be alone with this woman whom they had learned to love over the four years they had taken care of her. When she heard the news she did not cry. She looked right at them and her only reaction was to ask if she could still go to England to visit English gardens. She had planned the trip for the whole spring and it was one thing she looked forward to deeply. I could see them both roll their eyes and look away, and then her medical oncologist Sam Spivak paused. "Of course you can, Nancy," he said, so gently. Later I heard that he told a friend that if he were to die, he would just as soon die in an English garden. But she not only survived the trip but almost was not impaired on it. She ran through the gardens, sometimes two or three a day, her bald head covered with a hat, a raincoat protecting her from the damp English spring, her face radiant and at peace. In a strange way, she was deeply at home, her spirit was free. Once I saw her sitting on a bench at the end of a long path of hedges. You could see the light around her rising. It was so beautiful.

"When she returned home her body became rapidly more ill. Her liver function tests were very high and she started to fall asleep and wake up alternatively. Like usual she did not want to know how long she had to live, but she wanted to make plans so her children could be with her. She did not want Rudy, our older son, to travel from home as he was planning, so she asked me to call Sam and ask him if Rudy could go on a trip. The night before she had told me that her relationship with Lewis needed to be healed for her. He was a teenager and she had had trouble talking closely to him as she was dying and now she needed some resolution without her wanting to discuss death. Lewis was in the living room when I called Sam. He understood what I was asking Sam and why. He had been through this kind of call before. On the phone Sam told me that Rudy should not leave even for a week. I hung up and told Nancy that Sam had said that Rudy could not travel. Tears came to her eyes which was exceedingly rare. She paused and Lewis came up to her and kissed her and said, "I love you mother." That was unusual for him too. I could see her body loosen up and open and her spirit rise. It was like a weight had been taken off of her. She had her resolution.

"The next day she went upstairs into our loft overlooking the ocean and the mountains never to come down again alive. She went into our bed where both boys had been conceived, nursed with love, and read to, and sung to as babies, and started to hold a sacred beingness. Rachel Remen in her book *Kitchen Table Wisdom* called Nancy's state before her death 'sitting Dashan', the state where a guru gives gifts to her followers. When Nancy's best friend Elizabeth came she said that Nancy had turned into pure love. She had. Her personality had departed and in its place was her eternal soul. She would only say to each person who visited her, "I love you so much, you are so beautiful, I am so happy to see you." She gave each person the gift of love as they would come and pay their last respects and good byes.

Meanwhile Lewis and Rudy, both her boys, made healing art, each in their own ways. Rudy dug an enormous fish pond next to Nancy's English garden. He made her "garden art." It took his whole body and all his physical energy. It was digging in the earth, it was like a huge grave. He would dig and come upstairs and sit and tell stories and go down and dig when she was asleep. Lewis had his own rhythm. He would go downtown

and surf and then would come home and sit next to her bed whether she was asleep or awake and play his guitar. He was writing a soft slow piece for her death that was so beautiful. I think it came right from his heart or from somewhere else far deeper. He would work on the song and play to her throughout the days as she looked at him, as she had visitors, as she slept in her coma, as she dreamed. His guitar piece grew and was like an endless round; it circled and it caressed you like the wind. It came around your body like her love and carried you and made you feel taken care of, blessed, and in the hands of a greater force. He just sat and played it for hours, it seemed endless. It was acoustic guitar, soft and caring. And as she dreamt, she drifted with him, and he carried her. She floated on the music, and he cared for her perfectly in her last days on earth as his mother."

The sounds of nature heal

There is healing music in the natural sounds of the earth. There is healing in the sound of the gentle wind, there is healing in the sound of the stream, in the sound of the ocean. There is healing in the owl's call, there is healing in the sound of the waves, in the sound of the waterfall. Go to the music of the ocean, and listen to the sound of the natural world. Sit on the edge of a brook next to a waterfall and go to the place where you can hear the music of the earth's body. This sound is what we hear. It is the sound of the air, water, fire, and earth moving. It is what we hear in the vibrations going deep into every cell in our body. These are great places of healing energy. The energy vibrates and shifts into patterns and changes us. By just being inside the sound you can soothe your body. These sounds are the earth's songs. She is singing to you. This is part of healing music. And listening to the changes of the earth's body, as she moves is healing. Listen to the change as she moves in storms, listen to the change as she moves in thunder, in the strong wind blowing, these are all musical songs of the earth. They are faded in our culture. They are dimmed by television and even radio. The earth herself will heal you with sound. Places that still have the sounds of the earth are places on our planet that are greatly healing. Listen to the earth's body dance as a healing song. Sit on the edge of a stream that comes from a redwood forest and hear the earth sing to you and tell you that she loves you.

As you sit by a waterfall on the rocks, know that she has brought you to a mountain stream and put you in the center of her song. She wanted you to hear her sound. "This is the sound of the earth's body", she said. "You could listen to it forever, move to a bigger waterfall she said, that will turn up the volume." We walk past this kind of sound every day and don't realize that this is music healing.

Turn up the volume on nature's healing music in your life. Healing with music is going to the ocean every week. These natural sounds are the music of the earth. You can listen to them on tape in a hospital room but they are even more wonderful to listen to in nature. Go to these sounds with the intention to balance and become one with the sound. Allow the sound to go into your body. Feel the harmony of the sound. Let it go into your body to where you need it .

Singing to others as healing

Singing to heal can be as simple as making up songs, for yourself, if you are ill, for your children if they are sick or for your loved ones if they need you. Or it can be bringing music to Alzheimer's patients, singing them songs from their childhood. For them, the music resonates sparking the embodied memories of the time they were lucid and free. Often just singing a familiar song for an Alzheimer's patient makes them completely lucid for a moment and they can sing along and be happy. This is a perfect example of the healing power of sound in music. You do it and you can see it is powerful. Just singing brings a person out of a demented state and makes them animated and engaged and feel young again.

Music and healing is the most researched area of art and healing. There are more studies of music and healing than of any other art form. There are hundreds of studies of music as a Healthcare intervention (see references). There are studies of music and pain relief, music and attitude, music and relaxation. The question now is, how can we implement music in patient care. Why is it not a reality in each of our lives when we are ill? People are looking for easy ways to use music so it will be used now on a person's healing journey. How can it be used in the hospital room, at home, in nursing homes? The easiest way is through CD and cassette tapes and through singing to each other. It is especially important to bring music to the children who are ill. Also bringing back music into institutions such as hospitals and schools that are not healthy in themselves is crucial. Healing music needs to be in our environment. Open the windows to hear natural sounds. Protect the resources of natural healing sounds around us like trees and streams.

Michael tells this story, "One time I was at Esalen teaching a workshop, I had a massage and the woman who did it sang to me. She picked me up as she did the massage and gently rocked me in her arms. She sang a song that sounded like a lullaby, it was so soft and caring. I was amazed. I closed my eyes and drifted off with the music, I opened my eyes and looked at her above me rocking me. It was so primal. It obviously brought me back to the times I had been rocked and sung to by my mother when I was a little baby. Music is deeply healing, in the most primal ways. Using it with healing intent combined with massage is very powerful.

The community of making music

It is extremely valuable to join with others in a community making music with the intent to heal. If you are ill, put yourself in the center of a circle of chanting, or singing. In western medicine, we are just beginning to find out how sound can be used in group healing experiences, how the sound of others making music with intent to heal can be used best. Healing musicians make music to heal with people who are ill. Feel the vibrations pulsate in your own body.

We can form singing circles from our own community. We can bring people together who will sing and make music with intent to heal. Make a singing circle in your living room, bring it to a sick child's hospital bed. Bring a singing circle to nursing home.

Bring a singing circle to your aging parents. This is a way we can come together. It is a way that is very ancient, a way that we as humans have always used to touch each other's souls.

Vicki Noble is a woman healer who uses music, chanting, and drumming in large group healing circles. Her work is innovative and ground -breaking in music healing. She works with individuals with many illnesses, including brain tumors and cancers of all kinds. It is a primal ancient healing practice. In her work she gets together at least thirty and as many as one hundred women to form an intentional group healing circle. She also uses a community circle of drummers to keep a rhythm. The drumming maintains a rhythm that is constant and takes people deeper and deeper into their bodies. She has the singers sing a simple chant, such as "Purify us and heal us, heal us and free us". Everyone sings the chant with the drumming. The people who need to be healed are put in the center of the circle. The chanters chant until all thoughts and even all words are gone. Everyone then can be totally focused on healing. They then employ the technique of laying on of hands. She believes that her technique uses the body of the earth to heal. She believes it takes going into the rhythm of the earth to change the rhythm of an illness. As the rhythm changes, the person who is ill opens herself up to the energies of the earth and to the other healers. The process is very physical and Vicki believes that energetically it takes at least an hour of chanting to make the break through. She believes that the fire of the earth in your own body comes out. Huge circles of intentional healing are intense and powerful. We believe that this kind of work is futuristic and creative and exciting. It challenges us to create innovative ways to use music and art to heal. Presently she is attempting to do research to demonstrate that her group music healing can cure cancer. She has anecdotal evidence that patients have had remissions from cancer after her process. The point is that everyone is an artist. Everyone can do this kind of work. You are a healer and an artist. You can heal yourself by just bringing out the artist that you are. This work is simple and can be done by anyone.

Toning and sound as vibration.

Music and sound has a vibratory quality that actually changes the physical body. One way of looking at sound healing is that vibration affects the molecules and cells in the body. The vibration itself causes the body's fluid and particles to move and rearrange. This way of looking at sound is new for medical science and as ancient as healing. Sound healers have always believed that the vibration changed the body structure. Sacred music healing was always based on the sacred music having pure and ancient vibrations that would make a person heal by putting them into perfect harmony.

In this way of looking at music, it is the vibrational energy that actually changes physiology. Sound waves set up patterns in matter. The complexity of the sound vibrations are observable and have been demonstrated in research films. The human body as a vibrational form is always moving toward regeneration and increasing complexity. The sound vibrations break up blockages and set up new patterns. With cancer you use the sound to create harmony and balance. You use it as a conduit to find the place inside you that has innate wisdom. You use sound vibration to dislodge any rigid pattern that

has formed and needs to be transformed into something to be healed. In this model illness is seen as a dysfunctional pattern. Music is a way to deal with shifting rhythms of the body on a cellular level.

Sound healing has always been done along with intent, prayer, and affirmations. It is a type of inner transpersonal imagery healing where you use a sound instead of a visual image. What is important here is the inner chanting. Repeating the rosary is an example of this type of healing. You use the inner chant and sound rhythm to get into the place of healing. Prayer, mantras, and affirmations are all vehicles to put yourself in the healing state where your intent can come out unfettered. Inner chanting is a simple way to use sound in a repetitive method that take you out of thought and emotion and put you deep into your body. It creates a sound pattern that is removed from thought. It places the individual into a spatial vibrating form of their own consciousness or into a place of oneness with God or spirit. It is like reuniting with the sound of your own heartbeat or breathing.. You are returning to the source of life by going into its pure sound. You are returning to the place where the life-force is strongest. Sound has always been combined with the rhythm of prayer and the power of the word. This kind of healing can be used in every culture. It is understood and can be learned in every language. It is as ancient in its origins as any spiritual practice or belief. We need to return to it. Its simplicity makes it an easy way for any of us to heal ourselves or others with music.

Silence as sound healing

Inside of sound there is also an experience of silence. Silence is the sound of no sound. It is the purest form of sound. You are listening with your ears as acutely as you listen to music but there is no sound heard. Silence is the pause between beats, the space between vibrations. Silence is no vibration. Silence is something we can cultivate in our lives. This is essential in a time where you are working on your own personal healing. There are many strategies to cultivate the spaciousness of silence. Different types of meditation focus your attention on your breath. Even if you don't have a time commitment to do this you can go into the place of silence within yourself. Even in the busy moments of your life, within a moment, you can find the silence that is eternally spacious, that can connect you to your own soul.

There are moments in your life where you can remember the experience of silence. In silence there is a fullness and spaciousness of being intensely alive. It is being truly present. In the silence, you find your deepest wisdom and greatest sense of being in your body. In the silence you can see the richness of how life is alive, vibrant and colorful. In the moment of slipping into the silence, it is as if you have opened the spaces between the breath. It is like going inside of the moments. It is a way of getting in between the moments of time. This can be as simple as going into the woods and taking a walk and listening to the silence. And as simple as being with the fullness of the silence inside of yourself. In silence is a place of peace of stillness and of completion. In silence, you are perfect the way you are. Within the striving to get well, there is an experience of already being well. Inside of you is a place of balance already. You can get there with the silence. Allow your thoughts to flow. Let them go. Cultivate the experience of allowing

yourself to be in a flow. It can be as simple as focusing on the breath. Go deeper into the inner world of silence or into the pause. It may be about being with God, or one with love. It is about emerging out of the experience of compassion. There are silences inside of each and every art form. It is the pause in any process. The pause before your next breath where nothing is moving and there is only the life force manifest as desire. It is within the fluidity of movement. It is within the flow that is natural. When you are in pain, stress, or conflict, fall into silence and don't feel like you have to do anything. It is music healing without music.

The strolling musician as a healer

As an artist in residence, the musician is sometimes like a gypsy artist, a wanderer. His name is Dan and one day he was asked to see a young girl. She was sixteen and very sick. She was close to his age, just a teenager. She was unresponsive at first, very bloated, and slipping into a coma. The staff would just sit with her, and did not know what to do to help her. The musician went into her dark room, whose shades were drawn. It was a room filled with sadness. He asked her if she would like a song to be sung to her. She was much too sick to even speak back to him but she looked up with her eyes. He chose *Brown Eyed Girl*. He sang the song to her softly, he sat on her bed, and as he played tears ran down her face. She could not speak, but she mouthed the words. The art reached her on a level that was so deep, it connected her with a precious moment in her past of just living. Deep in the process of her illness she went far below her thoughts. Music created a palpable full emotional experience. There is nothing more beautiful than being serenaded at the foot of the bed. We take it for granted in the ways that it can connect people, but it is more powerful than anything else we have. The event was a little miracle that was filled with life and love.

The strolling musician has always been a romantic image. In our dreams, it was always just a handsome young man who played a guitar, serenading his lover under a window. The musician in residence at Shands Hospital would go from room to room serenading each patient. He would serenade young girls who were very ill, mothers and babies after delivery, old people who were alone. The simple act of his coming into the room and singing songs is the most beautiful art and healing form. It was, after all, as simple as a musician or lover coming in with his sensitivity and care. He is bringing love into each person's room. These young guitarists are amongst the most powerful healing artists. We invite everyone who can play the guitar and sing, to come into patient's rooms and serenade them. It is a romantic image of the young man with the guitar that can come alive again. Honor this obscure musician. Like a strolling minstrel he is unattached, he is filled with incredible beauty. We can't have a world without him. We are asking him to return.

Listening to music to heal yourself: Tapes as healing tools

Tapes of favorite music are deeply healing for anyone who is facing illness or medical procedures. A cancer patient can play music while having procedures done and while waiting. Playing tapes in the hospital room changes the whole room and the patient's

whole experience of being ill. The cassette player or CD player is a basic healing tool and a necessity for anyone who is ill or in a hospital. We believe that no one should go into a hospital without a way to listen to their favorite music. Many hospitals have cassette players available to patients who do not have their own. The boom box type players are now so inexpensive that they are wonderful gifts for anyone who is ill who does not have one. Buy one instead of flowers for someone you are going to visit, bring them your favorite healing music, whether it be the theme from *Chariots of Fire* or a Gregorian chant.

Any tape you love is what is right. Pick any tape that resonates with you, go with your favorite music, whether it is jazz, classical, or popular. Pick anything that puts you in a mood that will center you and balance you in your life. You are striving for harmony. You need to start to respond to your body's rhythms. Remember music can change your emotions to anything, so choose where you want to go. You can use it to meditate, to be calm and serene. You can use it to get energized, brave, confident, powerful. Find a time in your day that you use it consistently. You can do it easier if there is consistency. You can use music to move you towards happiness if you are depressed. Use music as a tool in your life to evoke change in the moment. Music is a tool that is accessible to you all the time. Make choices that are healthy. Have confidence in your choices. Use music to center you when you exercise, cook dinner, drive your car. Make choices about the sound and song of what you put into your body. If you are sick, turn off anything hostile and abusive. Say no to those sounds. Say no to anything in the world that will make you sicker. The sounds go into your body on a vibrational level. They go into your consciousness and can be harmful. You know what they are. Listen to sounds that make you feel healthy and healing.

What makes someone happy, energized, relaxed, spiritually uplifted, is different for each person. A teenager has a completely different way of reacting to music than an adult or a child. Obviously loud fast music does not relax most people but it may relax a teenager used to doing homework to this kind of sound. Recordings of relaxation instructions combined with music are also valuable. You can make your own recordings of friends or loved ones wishing you well or just speaking to you. You can record your family sitting around the dinner table with music in the background. So make your own list of music for the types of healing you need. Put together a tape or CD library that is relaxing, sleep producing, energizing, uplifting, humorous, prayerful, memory evoking. You can use tapes during dental work, outpatient surgery, or in situations that could be uncomfortable. They distract your attention and relax you and diminish pain and anxiety.

Michael's wife Nancy mastered the use of music to help her deal with breast cancer. She would use cassette tapes to deal with procedures, scans, surgery, getting news, relaxation, and going to sleep. She would go to concerts to raise her spirits when things were very bad. Whenever she had a procedure, whether a bone marrow aspiration, or a scan, she would bring her Walkman and extra batteries. She would carry two or three tapes with her and decide which to play when she was there and felt the energy. If she needed relaxation she would play Don Campbell's bells, if she needed joy she would play Van

Morrison, if she needed uplifting she would play her chants. Now this was not thought out rationally, it was just felt and done. No words or labels were put on the process, not even 'healing with music', it was just the natural thing to do. It worked. She used her tapes to go into surgery, come out in the recovery room, and recover in her hospital room. In her hospital room and in her bedroom at home, she had a cassette player that played the tapes out loud. She had a whole tape library of healing music that she had bought and that friends had given her as gifts. Friends would bring her music they loved, they would put tapes together of all their favorite pieces, they would give her spoken word prayers and chants. In her hospital room she would play music twenty- four hours a day. Friends and nurses would ask her what she wanted to hear and would change the tapes for her all night if she was awake.

Michael tells this story, "on the day Nancy got the news that her breast cancer had metastasized to her lungs, she decided to go to a Van Morrison concert. It was difficult, it was in an inaccessible area of the city, parking was hard, it was like a pilgrimage. When you get the first news of the spread of breast cancer, it is very upsetting. This is the big news you don't want to get, it changes your life. It is deeply shocking and destabilizing and depressing. It is something huge to deal with. We sat in the back row of the huge concert hall and listened to the loud music. She wanted to be alone and there at once. Van Morrison was far away , he looked as small as a play figure our children had had as babies. He was lit up in the brightest light. He was dancing, moving, jumping, opening up. He was singing her favorite songs, songs she had listened to after surgery and as she recovered at home. Songs she had listened to as she dealt with her first diagnosis and as she had put her life back together in her garden. She closed her eyes and flew with the music. She was so happy there, I could see her dropping into herself and becoming at home, and actually restructuring her world view. I was in tears and barely holding it together. She was concentrating on the music in the moment, completely involved, elsewhere, in the place where music comes from, in her heart. She was in her place of joy, healing, and being able to be fully alive even in this time. This music was her cue, her vehicle, and she knew it and that is why we were there."

Making songs as the stories of our lives, with rhythm and momentum, is deeply healing. To do this, you make up your own songs, and play music with them. We need to gather up the invaluable resource of musicians into our ordinary lives to make healing music. The time has come to look at the musician as a living person, not only as a stage reality. It transcends the concept of music as only for performance. Building bridges of music that is more personal will let everyone make music again. There are musicians that sing in church or school choruses. If we can extend this valuable resource into hospitals, retirement homes, into people's lives, music can return to the world. If you are a musician simply sing to the world. The world needs you now.

Section Three

How professional artists are using art to heal

Chapter Ten

The wellspring: How to become a healing artist, an artist healer

We invite you to become a healing artist

As a healing artist, you become renewed. You have a chance to live your life over again. In your rebirth, you have gone through the fire, and have emerged. It can take days, months, or years. It can take your whole life to learn how to express yourself in your creative work. It is about listening to the voice of the earth to heal; it is about listening to the voice of the earth to heal "Her".

As you change, you go to a place where you are the one who has wisdom, who is steadied by experience and has something important to share with others. Even if you have not been making healing art for long, your previous creative experiences and give you something to share with others. Being who you are in your creative form is the person who the world needs. The healing artist says to you in the depth of your despair, "You can do this. I see the artist in there. I know you are creative. I can see you will get to the other side. It is right, it is your path. you will grow and you will change." That is what you have to share, it is your knowledge of this voice.

The healing artist honors themselves and the person they work with

As a healing artist you have to be committed to be an advocate to support another person's freedom of self expression and autonomy. Support another person's vision. You can become part of another person's life. You become part of their illness experience, part of their grief, their place, even their room. You help them experience their own world in a more creative way. You support their desire to be honored and served in the moment. It is simply about being truly present. It is simply about art as a way of caring. We care by going deeper into the other individual's desire for freedom, life, and self expression. The patient as the artist owns their own art, they are free in their expression. You can engage them and make art with them. You can help them express themselves without any judgment or criticism. The person can then tap into their own healer.

At this moment in time, healing artists must provide the leadership and commitment to integrate the arts into the healing models that exist in our culture today. The healing artist is in a unique position to offer partnerships between artists and healers to incorporate the arts into care. Art offers us a new way of seeing and being. The healing artist crystallizes the beauty that is always present seeing the moment as it occurs, recognizing each healing encounter as important. It is a way of seeing, a way of making the invisible visible, hearing the unsung song, and listening to the unsung stories. We are artists holding hands, listening to spirit. In this new partnership, art is a way of caring.

Changing the world of art

Some artists find that when they become studio artists and are involved in the art world, it is not enough. What is available to you as an artist in the art world may be too restrictive. The traditional art world is about galleries, exhibitions, openings, agents, museums, selling art, promotion. That life is about art that is collected and sold. It is frustrating for many artists today, they feel alone. Their life is difficult, and limited in its social interactions to "Will you buy my paintings?, What was the review?" Many artists find

that this is not the life work for them. So there needs to be a way as a healing artist, or an artist healer, to change this. Healing art creates meaningfulness, richness, and environmental beauty.

Art is a spiritual path but to actualize that vision, the artist needs to go out and recreate meaning. So for the healing artist, there is a mission to change the world of art. There is more to art than the art gallery. Art belongs in everyone's life. Like Susie Gablik, in her book *The Re-enchantment of Art*, we ask artists to move out of their studios into the community, into hospitals, businesses, and schools. But you have to do this yourself. You cannot expect the world to come to you and get you and tell you it needs art. Healing art is an activist movement. We are asking you to go into the hospitals and the schools as artists so the world informs your work. Stop living in isolation. Healing art is about responsibility and responsiveness. A healing artist in our culture means being a facilitator to make art accessible to everyone. Just making your art accessible does that.

A call to artists

As a healing artist, the world needs you. You can go into patient's rooms when they are very ill and you will be awed by the difference you will make in someone's day. You need to do this. This is what the world needs now to be healed. The healing wall at Shands Hospital, Gainesville, Florida, is a small glimmer of what is possible. The artists thought they were only making tiles with patients and families. They almost did not know why they were there. It turned out to be a memorial, reflecting the precious moments in the lives of the people who made the tiles. A man with lung cancer put his son's hand on his own and painted them as one. He looked into his boys eyes deeply and saw him and his flow of generations and the little hand within the big one made him cry. The artist shared in this moment. Each tile was a moment of illumination, each was so much more than the artist imagined. You need to do this kind of healing even if it is only one time in your life. This chapter is a call to artists. What is your vision, what is your dream?. If you could do anything you wanted to, without failing, what would you do? If you could change the whole world with your art, what would you do? We want to empower you to do this. You can do anything you want to do. You are not alone, you are connected to a network of artists all over the world who are doing the same thing. All it takes is crossing the threshold of the place where you will make it happen and doing it.

A guided imagery to become a healing artist

This guided imagery is about meeting your healing artist. It is similar to imagery used to meet an inner guide or spirit animal. It is based on listening to the voice of an inner figure, seeing an inner figure who emerges as a helper in your life. The artist within comes from deep within your imagination, and is tied to images of the earth and of interconnectedness. When your artist is connected to nature- to an ancient tree, for example- the imagery that you make as art is deeply healing to yourself, others, and the earth.

Close your eyes, take a couple of deep breaths, let your abdomen rise and fall. Get into your imagery space as you have many times before. Now put yourself on a path. Feel your feet touch the earth, smell the fresh air, feel the warm breeze on your face. Walk

down the path. It goes downhill slightly. The ground is hard and has small stones in the soil. It is solid and secure. Feel the ground and the grass that is on each side of the path. Walk down the path. It crosses a wooden bridge across a rushing stream. The bridge has stout railings. You can hear your feet echo on the bridge like a drumbeat as you walk across. If you need to drop something in the water that you want to get rid of you can do that now.

The path now goes upwards slightly and comes over a rise. Below you is a large meadow. In the center of the meadow is a grassy circle. Sit in the circle and wait. Now ask for your inner artist to come to you. It is like a spirit figure, coming out of the air or the light. Let the figure appear and walk up to you. It can come from a distance or appear from nowhere. The figure that appears to you is your artist spirit. It is your inner artist. Let the figure come towards you. Let your artist begin to speak and move. The figure is filled with light, it is free and expansive. It can fly, dance, move, twirl, the artist is there illuminated in pure light and you recognize yourself. The artist invites you to stay in the meadow and feel connected to the earth. Your artist reaches out and touches the earth. It has tendrils that reach deep into the earth, the sky, and you, and connect it all together.

Feel one with the trees, the wind, the earth, the stars. Feel your body as the earth. Feel your own body as her body. Feel your bones as her rocks, your flesh as her soil, your muscles as her hillsides, your blood as her rivers. Now feel your blood pulse like she pulses. Feel your breath flow as she breathes, your heart beat as she beats. You are one with the elements. You pulsate inside your own life. You are the earth's body and in the body there is an awareness of time, of history, of the stories of life in this body. You are connected to the stories of the earth, to the stories of your families, your ancestors. You are part of a living flow. There is a wisdom, a capacity to age and die, to be born and live at once. There is an innate wisdom capacity that comes out from the earth. The power to be formed, to heal, to give birth, to regenerate cells. You are the constant regeneration of healing cells flowing from the earth. You become aware of it.

If you feel comfortable with it now let your artist move into your body. The artist is yours, they live within you, let them in if it feels right. Let the artist move into your body. There is a moment of elation, levity, empowerment. Now you have the power to generate energy in forms in creative ways. To take it deeper, let the artist merge with the innate healer within your body's, let it blend with your body's healing capacity. Then the artist becomes the voice for your body to speak, to teach itself. The artist takes your body to become the poet, the dancer, the painter. As your body moves into the dance, as you take yourself into the flow, the spirit and the body merge and a transformation occurs. You know who you are. You know what you need to do. You wake up and see out of your own eyes. You are a witness to your own life. You create your own life as a healing piece of work.

Now stand up and leave the meadow. The path goes out of the far side and you can walk down the path further. It leads to the edge of an ancient forest of old growth trees. Stand at the edge of the forest by a great ancient tree. Find a tree that speaks to you and tells

you to come to it. Now put your hand on the tree touch its rough back. Feel its warmth, its life. Now imagine that when you put your hand on the tree, you spiral deep into the spiral of your own being. You spiral deep inside yourself, into your heart. And inside your body, your heart opens with wings. A spirit eye opens within you and sees this experience. It witnesses you as becoming the healing artist. Now lift up your hand. Take it off the tree. As you lift up your hand you see that out of your hand come gifts. There are gifts of poems, of paintings, of dances. And you raise your hand and the gifts fly out like birds. You give the gifts away. These are your gifts of love that make you a healing artist. When you touch the tree, become the tree, you are within the body of the tree. You have roots in earth, you reach for sun, you take water from the earth, nourishment from the earth and you nourish the earth with your gifts. In the tree there are concentric circles, spirals, the essence of the beingness. It is being with life itself. When you go into this space you are deep. You are deep into the space where you fly, you grow wings you are like a Buddha opening his eyes for the first time. You see, you become aware of yourself. You see that as the tree grows it is perfect, as it reaches up into the sun and blossoms with flowers and leaves, they are the creative manifestation of the tree. Each leaf is a gift that drops to the earth like your art. These are gifts we share, they blow away from us like leaves in the wind, we let go of our art, it is a detachment.

Now walk back the way you came. Your body is now different, it is lighter, more powerful. Walk back to the meadow, then to the bridge, then to where you are now. Bring your inner artist with you. Let it still be in touch with your inner healer. Bring the connectedness with you. Bring the spirit of the tree with you. Now move your feet. Look around you. You are now a healing artist. You can make art and give it away. You can make art to heal the earth.

[Art programs in hospitals: how healers use art, music, and dance to heal their patients](#)

Physicians and nurses are discovering that art, music, dance and poetry have profound healing effects on their patients. Hospitals all over the world are incorporating music and art into patient care. The most sophisticated university medical centers are now creating art in medicine programs which invite artists and musicians to work with patients and literally change the hospital environment. These programs bring artists and musicians into the patient's rooms to make art, or have the artists perform in lobbies or atrium spaces. The patients experience the exhilaration of music or the beauty of an exhibition. They paint, play music, and dance with the artists. Art and music crack the sterile space of fear that surrounds the patients. Art opens the hospital to the joys of the human spirit. The spirit freed helps the body heal. Replacing fear with hope, darkness with light, is the essence of modern body- mind- spirit medicine.

There are hundreds of art programs in nursing homes, hospices, and community hospitals, and university medical centers, on large and small scales. There are recreational therapy programs in drug treatment centers that use art, child life programs that use art, community programs that use art everywhere. These grass roots programs are happening all over the world. All these programs are invaluable and are transforming medicine. Our intention is to illuminate these programs so that they can be recognized as the jewels that they are. It is our hope that they will be integrated as part of the primary healthcare model, and not segregated to the side as recreation or entertainment

We also want to acknowledge the caregivers that use art or music as part of their practice. If a nurse or other caregiver is singing to a patient as part of a bath, we want the singing to be seen as important as the bathing, as a primary part of health care. We invite all the people associated with such programs to see themselves as critical to healthcare and to take the making of art in a healthcare setting seriously. The artist brings spirit and hope to their hospital environment.

How hospital art programs started: art on the walls and performances

Initially hospital art programs dealt with hanging art on the hospital walls and were based on the traditional model of an art gallery. When art is hung in a long sterile hallway, or sculpture displayed in a bare lobby, the hospital is a much healthier place for everyone. These rich art programs helped transform the medical center or hospital into a place of beauty and helped relax the patients and staff. Walking down the halls past paintings of beautiful landscapes or dancing figures makes you feel completely different. You concentrate on beauty, color, and movement, you read the artist's statements, and you are taken elsewhere. Large medical centers began to have major art exhibitions, sometimes many at once- which greatly helped to humanize the center and made it feel more caring and comfortable for both patients and staff. This work was significant because it created an awareness of the hospital as an appropriate environment for art, an environment where beauty promoted healing.

Next, art was brought into the hospital more intentionally for its healing or meditative properties. Art was brought into some of the hospitals to be intentionally relaxing and healing as well as aesthetically pleasing. At the same time, the programs which had

brought in art to humanize the medical center realized that the architecture of the buildings could be healing in themselves. The centers started to incorporate gardens that included such natural elements such as water, and rocks. They also built meditation rooms, chapels, and altars. Whole centers were built to communicate a sense of beauty and healing. For example, the Bailey Boushay House in Seattle for AIDS patients had art on almost every wall and altars in each patients room.

Exhibitions in art museums like the Bolinas Museum exhibition curated by Linda Samuels of the Art As A Healing Force program and the Body and Soul exhibition in the Decordaba Museum, also made people aware of the power of art to heal . As art programs grew in hospitals, the Society of Arts in Healthcare was formed to link the programs together and help the work grow. Currently its membership includes artists, hospital art administrators, designers, physicians, nurses, and others interested in healing art. The Society of Arts in Healthcare does annual conferences, sponsors art exhibitions, and networks people in the field.

This movement of art in hospitals has been a significant doorway to change the way art is thought about by healthcare professionals. Programs which had been started to humanize the hospital environments by hanging art on the walls, evolved to sponsoring performances or concerts in atrium spaces. Here, performers would play music or dance in the hospital lobby as they would in a concert hall. The hospital community was still the viewer in these situations rather than a participant, but performances ha a deep impact on the hospital environment. When you walk through a lobby and there is a grand piano being played, your entrance to the hospital has been completely changed. The music produces a soft relaxed place where people are more meditative and open to healing.

Increasingly, artists who have experienced art as a way of healing are participating in the programs. The art hanging in the hospital setting is now more likely to be consciously related to healing than to aesthetics. Hollis Sigler, a painter who lives with breast cancer, has put together an exhibition of art dealing with breast cancer. The Society of Arts in Healthcare has sent her exhibition to hundreds of hospitals nationwide. Her work is profoundly moving to cancer patients and their families and to the staffs of the hospitals. People who have seen the show have said they the hospital seemed more sensitive to their feelings and more caring. Art makes the medical center a place with a heart.

The artists participating in these programs are now much more likely to be people with health problems or people who have an understanding and passion for art as a way of healing. For the artists are were using art to heal themselves, art becomes a way of knowing about their illness. But instead of defining thmselves in terms of their illness, they define themselves in terms of their creativity.

Art at the bedside

Concurrent with programs in hospitals that focused on art on the walls and artists in performance, there were also programs that were started to focus on art at the bedside. Arts In Medicine at University Of Florida, Gainesville, co-founded by co-author Mary Rockwood Lane, has had over 200 artists working in 15 units and puts on over 100 art and healing events a month. We will tell its story in detail below. In another program,

Art For Recovery , a painter, Cindy Perliss was asked by an oncologist to work with cancer and AIDS patients. She established Art For Recovery at University of California, San Francisco and has been a bedside artist since 1988. Her program now also involves school children, a breast cancer quilt project, local exhibitions of patient art, and an internship program. Initially she was alone but now she has a musician and other artists who have joined in her work. Her program has changed the experience of many very ill patients in a magnificent way. For many years she has worked intimately with patients who are often near death. Her art is deeply spiritual and she often forms a close relationship to her patient . The patient's art work is often the one of the most important thing in their lives. It expresses both pain and hope, and it is often their last memorial. One of her patients with AIDS became such a skilled artist while in the hospital that he had a exhibition in a gallery before he died. As he created more and more paintings, he became well known in the AIDS ward as an artist and his image was forever changed- in his eyes and in the eyes of the staff. He went from being depressed and passive to being involved in life and a good- will ambassador representing all AIDS patients by sharing his images of the AIDS experience. His artwork was deeply moving to everyone, he attended the show and although he was close to death, he was empowered and at peace. As he died, he went from hostility and loneliness to extraordinary creativity. Such an attitude change affects quality of life dramatically and also may lengthen life.

Therese Schroeder-Shaker in Montana has a group of harpists that visit patients of all ages who are dying. They are called by the patient's families and it has become one of the most requested medical services in the area. She has attended over five hundred deaths and there are now thirty harpists playing seven days a week in Missoula.. She reports that her patients have less pain and are deeply in peace, the families are relaxed, and the entire experience of dying is transformed. Her project is currently being implemented on a larger scale, to reach families nationwide. In the Cleveland Rainbow Babies hospital Deforia Lane has set up a program to work with music and children. There are many programs across the nation that are not publicized past their own community that are very beautiful and we honor these programs too.

This movement to integrate art in hospital settings was paralleled in the art world. Feminist artists and African American artists increasingly made art about the woman's experience and celebrating the power of the goddess to heal and nourish women. Writers come together to read poetry and journals to heal, dancers would do performances about AIDS and illness. The theater world mounted plays about AIDS and healing. A common theme in all the arts was a recognition of how artists could use art to heal themselves. Keith Smith, a painter, did a magnificent book about his wife's death from cancer called Mourning Sickness which showed all of us how poetry and art were related to healing. So an awareness of art as healing spread in the art world as well as in the hospital programs,

Networking in this area became a cultural phenomenon. In Vermont, a State Arts Initiative brought together all the people in the community who were interested in art and healing. People came out from isolation and joined in the community to set up healing art as a state wide program and to help it flourish in health facilities all over northern

New England. The people who joined together were as varied as the field. The regional meeting included an artist dealing with child abuse, artists running programs in nursing homes, Virginia Soffa, a woman who had had breast cancer and had set up a Breast Cancer Action slide library, Naj Wycoff, a teacher at Dartmouth working with art and medicine with medical students. They all joined together to implement arts and healing in their area. When a call went out, this diverse group came together and art became an intentional healing force.

A second conference in Vermont encouraged the local university hospital to look at ways to integrate these valuable community resources into mainstream medicine. And it encouraged the community at large to look for innovative ways to integrate the arts in healing. Among conference attendees were government officials, including the state senator. It brought together leaders from volunteer agencies, funding agencies, and health organizations. A state wide arts initiative validates what people are doing on a grass roots level and helps implement projects. At the meeting, one artist suggested painting the tiles on the ceiling, so patients lying on their backs on gurneys could see art above them as they were taken to be X-rayed or back to their rooms. The healing ceiling at Shands Hospital, Gainesville, which now has thousands of square feet of painted tiles, came out of that meeting. In Rhode Island, artists gathered together to see how programs could grow in their state. They held a conference, several exhibitions of healing art, and lectures. The mayor of Providence even declared a healing art week and opened the exhibition with a speech on art and healing, including references to shamanism and art. Artists are joining together, manifesting their passion for art and healing, in programs all over the country. This work is just beginning.

International programs

There are wonderful "art in medicine" programs all over the world. There are rich programs in England and Australia, in Japan and France. In Australia one artist did a mural painting with aborigine dreamtime themes in a local children's hospital. The children and their families from the hospital and the local community participated, painting local animals down a long corridor. The mural was so successful that they did a second mural. It completely changed the children's wards into a place of play and connection with nature.

In England there are numerous wonderful programs of art and healing. Many of the artists in England are salaried and the programs are deeply integrated into British Healthcare. The programs include beautiful hospital buildings filled with sculpture and art and "art at the bedside" programs. Queen Elizabeth Hospital has a huge stained glass window in the entry. Bristol hospital has a local clay touchable wall.

In Vancouver, they held an initiative to get the artists together and introduce them to healthcare providers including the therapists from their wonderful art therapy program. A pediatrician there has hung art around the beds of premature babies. The photographs of the baby's homes humanize the neonatal unit encouraging the staff treat the babies more like individuals. It is a good example of how art can change the care given by physicians and nurses by making the staff see the patients as more three-dimensional.

When a premature baby is seen as a member of a family the institutions whole level of care changes.

Major programs with national visibility

There are hundreds of "art and medicine" programs across the United States, in hospitals, nursing homes, and other healthcare facilities. Several of these programs have developed and grown and are now well- known in the field of art and healing. An example of a successful program can be found at Boston children's hospital which is filled with color and art to help the children feel at home. A program there funded by Very Special Arts makes it possible for Harvard Medical School students to participate in making art with children. The medical students work with in- patients and out-patients as an elective in their junior year. They make fun name tags in the waiting areas, and the children wear them and even give them to their doctors. Cumberland Memorial Hospital in Ohio has a entrance way where people enter under a star called Astra, which is a symbol of hope and endurance. The next thing patients see is a healing quilt made by a fiber artist in collaboration with the hospital staff. Poems are hung on pillars in the lobby and there is a healing garden that is an oasis for everyone in the hospital.

Hospital Audiences Incorporated, (HAI) in New York city concentrates on bringing together patients from hospital residences, nursing homes, and day programs into community arts performances and activities. The arts workshop program of HAI brings professional artists to work with mentally ill adults in residences and treatment programs throughout New York City. Talented artists have been discovered through this program and are currently represented by Louise Ross Gallery. They have a special bus designed to carry patients in beds and wheelchairs to art performances all over the city. Theaters with empty seats call HAI and invite patients to performances. Lombardi Cancer Center in Georgetown, Maryland, has commissioned area artists to create a painting of the Potomac River called the River of Healing. The painting was enlarged to two stories high, cut up, and made into waves. At National Institutes of Health Hospital, there is a changing gallery in the waiting room that shows local area artists. It features a bronze sculpture called Healing Waters that symbolizes the care of the medical center for its patients. At Mid Columbia Medical Center in Dales, Oregon an artist has created kaleidoscopes that are made from MRI images. This hospital has a magnificent three story high waterfall with rocks that fills the lobby and extends up into each floor. The sound of water is always heard in the whole hospital. The hospital is on the Columbia River so that the water sound makes the patients feel deeply at home.

San Diego Children's Hospital is full of wonderful art for children, their families, and staff. There is so much art in San Diego Children's that it feels more like a children's museum. It has interactive works which engage the children and their families in waiting rooms. The art contains messages of hope, wholeness and wellness. St Joseph's Hospital in Phoenix, Arizona has display cases that show the pride the community has taken in the hospital and how it was made by the community. At Paradise Medical Center in San Diego, there are art works made by local artists that celebrate multicultural holidays, family, multicultural healing rituals, and our relationship to nature. Local artists were

brought in to make art that was sacred and that would help link the patients to the traditional healing patterns of their culture. Hasbro Children's Hospital in Providence Rhode, Island, has a "museum on rounds" program where pieces of art from the Rhode Island School of Design Museum are shown to children. The children then make their own art based on the pieces from the collection working in groups in family rooms or one- on- one at the bedside. This hospital is filled with art, murals, fountains, gardens, sculpture, and even has a zoo. Marin General Hospital in Greenbrae, California, has a healing garden by Topher Delaney that has healing plants used for treating cancer. It is part of a meditation garden. The hospital also has photo transparencies above the x-ray machines so patients lying down can see scenes of nature.

The rich program at Duke University started twenty years ago with performances in the atrium. Now performers come to the patients room and play music in the rooms. The program is run by Janice Palmer who has pioneered this work and has been a major force in art and healing for twenty years. Duke also has a play- reading group that meets every Friday. Called the Osler Literary Round Table, it encourages staff and patients to read poetry and short stories. At Duke, artwork was put in the patient's rooms before it was put anywhere else in the hospital. In the obstetrics ward there are ninety -eight quilts done by local quilt makers. The artwork in the pediatric unit is all at child eye- level. In the eye center there is touchable art for sight- impaired people. There is a touchable gallery in the entry of the eye center open all day. At Duke, there is a fragrance garden designed as a sun dial to follow the seasonal lines of the sun. There are birdhouse villages made by local craftsman that the children can see and feel at home with. These programs give you some idea of the scope of "art in healing" programs in hospitals. We hope they encourage you to form your own ideas and programs as you become a healing artist.

Mary tells us the story of the Arts in Medicine Program, (AIM), at the University of Florida

"Every program starts with someone's individual story and personal initiative. I believe that everyone who has passion to create something, can do it. There are always obstacles and hurdles to overcome, but they are just part of the process. My story starts with my own personal experience of art as healing, it is grounded in my experience of how profoundly art transformed my life. It's the truth that art healed my life. This connection to art became my life work. I felt deeply committed to the creative process. Wherever it took me I would go. I followed my passion to be an artist. I realized that being a studio artist was not enough for me. I loved it, but I needed to find a way for my art to be in service to people.

"Since I was a nurse and art had healed me, I hoped to bring art into the healthcare system. This was my opportunity to help others help themselves. No one had ever told me I could take my illness and use it constructively to help myself. Everywhere I looked it seemed like I had been in relationship with a form of healing that was disjointed from my life. It did not support me in the way I needed it to. It wasn't until I threw myself into my creative work, that I felt a powerful healing effect. I needed to throw my whole

life into something powerful. I needed my whole life immeshed in it because that was how I was involved with my sickness. Creative healing transformed my life. I pulled it out of myself and healed myself. It was not fragmented one hour twice a week. My illness was so overwhelming I needed to live my healing all the time, not just in visits to a therapist. What was going to heal me was a relationship with myself that was fundamentally different than any I had had before. I could always be there for myself.

"I remember the day that Lee Ann Stacpoole and I were in the studio, painting. I told her I had found this book the Re-enchantment of Art by Susie Gablik and read about artists healing themselves, others, and the earth. It challenged me as an artist. It said, make your art meaningful in the world. You will have to make art meaningful again, you will have to make it part of service yourself. I knew that no one would suggest I bring art into the hospital, I needed to do it on my own. We live in a world where we are in touch with others. We live in community, and so we have to go to others to get things done. I believed that we could reach out and help others.

"I heard The Re-enchantment of Art as a call to artists who were willing to integrate their art in new uncharted territories, to make it different than before. I came to it from an artist's perspective. I waited. I had to be patient. I had to wait and be awake for an opportunity to present itself. I could see that. Then one day, I got a newsletter from a physician in a local hospital about his ideas about arts in medicine and about how to bring art into the medical school. I saw that this was someone with a ideas similar to mine. I realized at that this point in the process, I needed to form a partnership. I had visions of artists coming in to the hospital to work with patients, he had visions of artists in the medical school working with students. We could bring a combination of both visions to life. I met with him. We talked. I thought about how it could happen. I talked to other people, to other physicians, and I began to sense what I could do. I decided I wanted to start an artist- in- residence program. I would find an artist who would bring the art into the hospital in a creative and innovative way. I would bring the artist to where there was the most illness, create a window of opportunity where people could integrate the arts and become involved in their own creativity. The assumption was everyone was an artist.

"We got a small grant from the Children's Miracle Network and the first artist- in- residence was my best friend Lee Ann Stacpoole, the woman who had helped me to paint when I was ill. I asked her to come into the hospital as a volunteer. We started in the bone marrow transplant unit because the physician who I formed the partnership with, Dr. John Graham-Pole, was a pediatric oncologist in charge of that unit. I thought I would do this for years, five at least. I then went to the college of nursing to earn a Ph.D. so I could get involved in a medical program that would be the backbone for my art and healing and to create an educational process that would ground me and keep me focused. I was committed to do it, and I knew it was my life work. Lee Ann and I started as two 'ordinary housewives', two artists in the studio, and we created another partnership. I realized that the commitment was something we would do for a long tome. Our logo 'passion with patience' was born in the midst of the beginning fires of energy and passion, the velocity of the universe being born. We had to stay grounded so that we

would do it, and so it would mature. We needed patience because otherwise it would burn itself out. You need to maintain passion and let things grow naturally and you also need enough time for a doorway to open and allow people space to become who they are.

"The second artist in residence was Mary Lisa Katakis, a painter who also was a T- shirt artist. She was asked to come into the program by one of the nurses we worked with. As the program grew, we were overwhelmed by people's interest. I told Mary Lisa that we would be here for the long run. Knowing that you are committed to the program in spite of the low salary, and being able to stay focused and grounded in what you can accomplish, is essential. When you stay focused, you accomplish an incredible amount. When you start a program you realize that artists are filled with generosity, abundance, and creativity. They are exploding with possibilities. Their capability for expression is immense. A critical mass of artists is like a wellspring from the earth. I said that we would find an appropriate venue for each artist who comes to us, whether it would be performing in the atrium, working with patients on a unit, making puppets, being a student volunteer, or implementing a two- year tile project. We can find endless opportunities. The most essential component is someone who is willing to harness the creative energy, the chaos, to keep people focused on their own creativity, to honor them and see them- a person who can let each artist articulate their own vision and dream. When you believe in the artists they believe in themselves and in the inherent creativity of the patients and staff. We had a passionate intention to heal.

"It began with completely with volunteers. With our grant we bought art supplies and set up a studio space in the bone marrow transplant ward where artists could meet. Then we started networking . For the first two years we did nothing but network. Everybody was invited to the meetings then. We were networking monthly. We would present our vision to others in the medical school, the veterinary school, to art educators, to social workers, to nursing supervisors. We talked with everyone. We told everyone what our vision was.

"AIM now has had over two hundred artists in fifteen units. It has evolved to become a part of the hospital structure. AIM right currently consists of artists- in- residence who do a variety of creative projects. There is now a musician, a visual artist, a dancer, and a storyteller in residence. There are also many artists who come in one or two days a week and work in the program for months or years. The artists play music, dance, draw and sculpt. They write poetry, tell stories and even dress as clowns. Patients watch, tell the artists what they want them to do, or make art alongside the artists. Performances of music, dance, poetry, or theater, are put on in the hospital lobby . Patients are brought from their rooms, families and staff stop as they go to lunch, the music drifts through the sterile corridors and draws more people towards its transformational power. Patients and staff alike leave relaxed and uplifted, they are changed and healed.

"The musician in residence, Kathy Dewit, plays her piano in the atrium in a weekly series. She also works one- to- one with patients. The musicians serenade like strolling musicians or they play personally for a patient in his or her own room. Kathy and the other musicians have an active music program and it has had a profound and enriching

effect on the hospital environment. The musician has become an important part of the process of healing. Musicians can most easily become integrated in a variety of settings. The musician can perform or they serenade families in support groups on individual units. They bring in their own music, as well as bringing in instruments so that the process can become interactive. For example, they encourage a young patient who plays the guitar to play, they jam, they create situations to jam on wards. Family and staff can join in. They also create songs and sing-alongs. Kathy also plays and brings community musicians who are friends into the atrium for concerts. People who walk into the lobby to come to be treated or to visit, can hear live music. It reaches patients, staff, and the entire hospital community. We also have a harpist and flutists. They have found that drumming is hard for very sick patients who are often over-sensitized, so they concentrate more on softer music. There is also a musician who plays the accordion, and a strolling barbershop quartet has been a tremendous success. We have found the strolling musicians are ancient healers.

"The dancer in residence, Jill Henderson, created a dance for life program. Jill works one-on-one and does support groups primarily on the pediatric bone marrow transplant ward. She forms long-term relationships with the children. She follows the child and begins to create a dance for their life. She introduces herself as a dancer and invites the child to dance with her or asks if she can dance for them. She brings in music. When the music starts, she moves the child. She moves with them, she opens up the possibility for the child to become the director of their own dance. The dancer-in-residence brings in other dancers. Jill has twelve student dancers and they are all dancing with children in thirteen different units.

"The Visual artists program includes the tile wall project, the healing ceiling (which involves painting the foam ceiling tiles so when patients look up they see healing paintings made by the children, staff, and family). There are murals, dream catchers, medicine wheels, origami paper cranes, each one a prayer, and painting one-on-one t-shirts. A patient often paints a huge number of paintings. A bone marrow transplant patient named William Klim painted a series of watercolors during his treatment. Visual artists in residence also use Fimo clay to make objects, flowers, animals, necklaces ornaments. They use clay with patients, family, and in support groups. Photographers gives people cameras to take pictures and encourage them to write stories. Artists go into patient's rooms and people often tell them what to paint, saying that they want butterflies or ten daisies. People know very specifically what they want. The visual artists also make hats, teddy bears, and quilts, and presents for holidays.

"There are storytellers in residence who read and tell stories. They publish the Zine magazine, an underground newspaper in which the children tell their own stories of being in the hospital. They share their perspective of being ill. The magazine is circulated among the children so they can read stories of the children who are hospitalized on a different floor. It creates an underground communication network where children can feel like they are not alone but are part of a community. The storytellers incorporate games, puppets, musicians, songs, dance, and other arts. There is also a theater program in AIM. The playback theater is a troupe that sits with patients and enacts patient's stories.

A professor from the theater department of University of Florida does theater and theater games with psychiatric adolescent patients. The artists work on a variety of units including the bone marrow transplant unit, pediatric intensive care, diabetic adolescent unit, psychiatry, autistic children, general oncology, medicine, gynecology, surgery, mother baby, and even the dental waiting room. Artist will go into any clinical area that is accessible to them or that they are asked to work in. Artists get patient referrals and go into new units such as the sickle cell unit to do imagery. The daily work changes and evolves depending on the artists that there and the caregivers who work with them. One of the most exciting parts of the program now is its flexibility, creativity, inclusiveness, and speed of implementing new ideas. If you walk into the program and look around and think of a unique way to work as an artist with patients, you can put your ideas into action almost instantly.

"Patients at University of Florida who are visited by the Art in Medicine artists say their whole experience of being ill is changed forever. They are more hopeful, happier, feel better and have less pain. This process takes place whether the patients or their families watch the artists or make art themselves. Even if they just watch, they still are an audience who participates with their heart. If they are too sick to paint, they can see themselves being painted, or can tell the artist what to draw. They often ask for a favorite scene, an animal, their child. There are studies in progress now that look at what makes patients heal faster or live longer. It has been shown that patients who feel better about themselves and are more hopeful, live longer with cancer. A person who is in touch with their own creativity is in a state of joy and hope.

"There are many beautiful projects that artists do in Arts In Medicine. The healing tile wall is the illumination of embodied moments of making art. In a studio, the child with cancer, the parents, the staff, anyone who wanted to, could come in and paint a tile. Each tile told a story. When we first set up the studio and got the materials together, we felt touched by a certain luminosity. It was like seeing the light on the leaves. What we saw in each tile was an illumination of a precious moment where someone went deeply into their own soul to make art. The project taught us that making art is transitory, it happens in a moment. The first person who came into the room was a mother with a child receiving chemotherapy. The child was playful, but the mother shook her head and said, "I can't paint." Lee Ann said "I can help you?" The materials were all there but the mother sat there for a long time thinking. She said quietly, "Would you mind if I painted a tile for my little daughter who died in September?" For the first time, the woman felt she had been given the opportunity to make something that would remain. For the next hour, she almost meditatively painted her lost child's name in different colors, and wrote "I love you" and the date that her child had died. The mother became absorbed and transfixed in a busy hospital, while her other child was getting treatment. She quickly went to a very private place within which was all about her painting. Time was suspended as the mother became very focused in making this tile. It was obvious that this was important to her. She said, "so you are going to put this tile in a wall so I can come back and see it?" Lee Ann explained that there would be a healing wall. A teenager painted himself as a brave hero and showed the tile to a little child with the same leukemia as his who was about to have the same bone marrow transplant. They then

made a tile together that portrayed both of them holding hands. The tile was called "two brave men". Tile painting is so easy it could be done by everyone who walked in without any training. The tile wall, of over one thousand tiles, now hangs in the hospital atrium for patients, family, and staff to see each time they came to the hospital. There are beautiful mosaics that surround the tile wall. These mosaics capture the themes and some of the recurring images that are seen in the individual tiles. It is lovingly crafted to complement the art the patients made. Lee Ann created the mosaic after the birth of her son who was born with Downs syndrome. The art work gave her a community and a project when she needed support.

"Those are the kind of projects artists do. They are simply community artists who have come in, who have negotiated with staff and caregivers, who make a commitment of their time, bring in the supplies, and are there for the patients. The projects go on for a week, a year, or two years, but each one is about an artist who has negotiated with a physician or nurse, who runs a unit, to set up a studio and work with their patients. It happens because someone goes in and makes it happen. Artists cannot wait to be asked, they go in as guests. They need to be receptive and totally honor what is going on in the setting. Here they did it by simply creating a studio space for the patients to work. The patients were getting all -day chemotherapy. They would come in for months at a time, they were there.

"This program is a shared vision between artists and caregivers. At University of Florida, it is deeply tied to nursing care. The nurses are brought in as vital participants in the program. Every artist who comes on a unit is in communication with the nurse. Physicians and nurses write prescriptions for art for patients just as they would write a prescription for a drug or other intervention. As the focus of healthcare changes from cure to care, nursing is providing leadership and a vision for others. AIM has become a clinical model for nursing practice to integrate the arts in care practice and for nurses to choose creative art interventions in responding to the patients' needs. It advocates the presence of artists inside the hospital to teach and facilitate how the arts can be implemented right at the patient's bedside as they get their chemotherapy and their medical treatments. The nurse is the facilitator and advocates the patient's voice in this process. The nurse has deep knowledge of how this can happen and the power to manifest it for the patient's care."

How art and healing is different from art therapy

Art therapy has been a major force in art and healing for many years. Art therapy, music therapy, dance therapy, poetry therapy, and writing therapy, all are mature fields with wonderful, creative practitioners who meld the arts with psychotherapy to heal. Expressive arts therapy uses art as a creative force to work with patients in a wide variety of ways as varied as the practitioners who grace this beautiful field.

Traditionally, art therapy involved people who used art to diagnose, analyze, and interpret, an individual's psychological processes. The art work was used in art therapy to try to resolve person's problems and help the individual gain insight through the imagery they drew. Though the art, the person's inner process would be revealed and be

accessible to the patient and the therapist. It was a powerful healing technique that used all the art forms to deal with grief, anger, and emotional and psychological illnesses. The model of art therapy is often different from art and healing as portrayed in this book because art therapy is formally integrated into a diagnosis and treatment medical model which includes classification, taxonomy, and medical reimbursement. It also involves a specific training, a degree, a license, and a defined role in a medical setting. It has sometimes been difficult to integrate into the mainstream medical model due to reimbursement systems and in some settings it works well. Art therapy often has a focus on interpretation and analysis. The people involved are therapists primarily, not artists. Using traditional psychological models the therapist helps the patient deal with the areas of conflict. More art is made as the process continues which reflects the healing and helps it occur. In expressive arts therapy, the therapist helps the patient make art, dance, paint or write. The work of art is believed to help the patient deal with the areas of conflict and the therapist helps by interpreting or doing a process which moves the patient towards healing.

At this point in time, art therapy and expressive arts therapy are much broader than they used to be, and are extremely creative and innovative. They both run the spectrum from psychotherapy, to art and healing, and each therapist has their own way of working that goes from traditional psychotherapy to making art to heal. Right now there are people in art therapy and in expressive arts therapy who do art in healing the same way we discuss in this book, and others who are traditional therapists. But currently there are basic differences in the approaches of both fields that make them separate and unique. Each has its own power, each is right for some patients and some artists. Art and healing provides a new alternative to artists who want to work with patients and not do therapy or be licensed and a new alternative to patients who want to make art and not be in any kind of therapy. It is the right path for many artists and patients.

The basic belief of art and healing is that an artist can be with another person just to make art, and that that process is healing in itself. There is no diagnosis, classification, treatment, or outcome measurement, other than the patient's experience of the process as being meaningful to them. Expressive arts therapy often bridges the two fields of art and healing and art therapy. It involves characteristics of both and can be either in its role. Art therapy today also can be art and healing without therapy or interpretation, or can be strict psychotherapy, depending on the person and the program. Also art therapists work in art and healing programs along with the artists to teach and just be artists. Art therapy is a powerful healing technique that has contributed much to art and healing and to medicine.

At this point in time, in art and healing, we believe that there is no need for licenses to certify artists. The only license you need to be with another human being in a time of suffering, is to be human, to be present, and to have the intention to be healing. What we have found in the most powerful work, is the person's intention to heal, to be witness to their creative process, to be present, to be clear and allow the other person the space to be creative by themselves without imposing an opinion, without any criticism at all, is key. The intention to heal is critical. The merging of the two people's spirits is magical. One

person has the intent to be healed, one person the intention to heal. You join and create a caring encounter. Art is just the vehicle for love, for joining. The artist embraces the person's painting as the finest expression of the individual's life. It is art at the finest because it is taken as something we do together with another person in a new level of meaningfulness.

Healing environments: changing the hospital

"The effect in sickness of beautiful objects, of a variety of objects and especially of brilliancy of color is hardly at all appreciated. I have seen in fevers (and felt, when I was a fever patient myself) that most acute suffering produced from the patient not being able to see out of the window and the knots in the wood being the only view. I shall never forget the rapture of fever patients over a bunch of bright colored flowers. People say the effect is only on the mind. It is no such thing. The effect is on the body, too. Little as we know about the way in which we are affected by form; by color and light, we do know this, they have an actual physical effect. Variety of form and brilliancy of color in the objects presented to patients are actual means of recovery." (Florence Nightingale, 1888)

Since ancient times, environments have been crucial for healing. In Navaho sand paintings, an environment for healing was made that told a spiritual story from the person's culture. The patient was put right on the sand painting and was then part of the whole world of ancient spirits and was in the nonordinary space of healing. In Greece, in Delphi, the healing temples were in places of great beauty and were a healing place to be in themselves. They were in magnificent natural sites and had sacred springs mountains, or rivers near by. It took a pilgrimage to get to the healing temples. They were believed to be on sacred sites where earth energies were strongest. The beliefs of the people let them embody stories of the earth and the gods and goddesses healing them in the sacred sites.

Sacred space

Sacred place is an environment that takes someone from a feeling state of the ordinary world, to one where they are deeply grounded in themselves and can experience transcendence. Just being in sacred space take the person from where they are running around worried and upset, to their being relaxed and in an attitude of prayer. We can intentionally create sacred space in the hospital by having art everywhere that is healing, and by changing the architecture to a healing vision. Doorways, arches, room shapes, can all create sacred space. Each and every room in hospital must be seen as a sacred space to enhance a patient's healing. Making alters in the rooms or in staff areas creates sacred space. We can do this and give patients, family, and staff, permission to do this, Art supports the diversity of different people's faith. It allows people to be open to create a sacred space around them. This is as important a part of medical care as anything else. One physician at a conference told us that he was surprised to see how many patients or their families are making alters in their rooms. He said that families do this especially when the patient is in a coma. It helps them go into a space where they can pray, where

they can participate in the healing process, and where they can actually help the patient heal by bringing in their spiritual help, whatever that may be.

In creating healing environments we must think about the messages people are given. Visual imagery of people being cared for shows that the environment is loving and nurturing. These images could be a nurse gently leaning over a patient, of doctors tenderly holding an old man's shoulder, a hand reaching to help another someone they are with. These images are caring encounters and can be shown to ground the hospital in caring. These images are powerful communicators to everyone to show what is happening. It is indeed beautiful. Another suggestion we have would be to utilize large photo or painting of surrounding landscape near the hospital. For example, photographs of nearby prairies, lakes, mountains, and forests. Bringing the surrounding landscape into the hospital is healing. It grounds people in the earth that they are used to around them. It connects them to the community they are part of. A healing environment then both grounds the patient by putting them in a sacred space putting in touch with nature.

In modern hospitals we realize increasingly that we need to create environments in the hospital that are healing and make a person feel cared for. When people come into buildings that are huge or out of scale they do not feel at home. It's important to make this environment feel comfortable. Textures and colors communicate feelings. Traditionally, hospitals have been sterile, monumental buildings, that make you feel alienated and not at home. At times they have been huge complexes, with long corridors and hidden faces. It is hard for a person to feel oriented, to feel a human presence. The lack of sensitivity to views, to what is seen out of windows, has not been valued. We believe it is criticism important. Hospital environments can be strange with strange noises and often seem to contradict healing. These buildings themselves need to be healed. The communities within hospital need to be healed. Art is the way to heal these environments.

Creating a healing environment in a hospital

We believe that creating healing environments in hospitals is a major part of changing Healthcare. It needs to be done to optimize healing. We need to bring in the elements into the hospital. These elements are Water, air, earth, fire, in nature they create balance and harmony. We suggest natural materials, ecological materials, ventilation for clean air, earth materials, plants, things that are alive, such as gardens. The use of Sunlight, and warmth, hearth centers, and medicine wheels or mandalas are part of our ancient memory and can be used in healing way. Reflections of the community, its heritage, its history, its uniqueness, its celebrations help people feel at home and feel cared for. It is important to be oriented and at home to be open to healing. Images of the peoples in the area are deeply grounding and satisfying to people who are ill. These images let people know they are not alone. They are being cared for in the context of community. Photos of people caring for others illuminate the hospital community and show patients that they will be cared for too. Caring encounters also remind staff that they are caring and enhances care.

The dimensions and spaces, how high ceilings are , how long corridors are, can be orienting or disorienting. Environments can make a person feel small, insignificant, inadequate, even lost, or if they are healing make them feel deeply at home. Huge places accentuate the experience of weakness rather than empowerment unless they are sacred like a cathedral. When you approach the hospital, is there an open doorway, a threshold to experience an entry. an honoring? From rooms are there vistas, is there healing sound or music, are there outside healing gardens? Are there interactive environments that draw you in? Are there fountains with the sounds of water and life? You have to bring nature into the hospital. We believe that light and sound and movement are blended into the environment to make a patient feel and whole. Are there pieces of art that connect you to nature or the spirit on the walls? Are there textures and colors that are create harmony and balance. What tells you that it is a place oh healing for you and your family. How does the environment make the human body feel safe and comforted uplifted?

There are many hospital now that are incorporating these design characteristic into the hospital environment. Annette Riddenhauer of Aesthetics Corporation in San Diego has designed many hospitals which reflect a healing purpose and create healing environments. Her sensitivity to the hospital as a healing environment is helping to revolutionize health care. Her hospitals reflect the spirit and intentionally are designed to enhance healing. We have mentioned her projects above in programs with visibility. San Diego Children's and the Integrative Health Center in Tucson, Arizona, exemplify art and healing in design.

Hasbro Children's Hospital in Providence Rhode. Island. was done by volunteer efforts and contributions. Much of the work was done by Paula Most, a remarkable woman who has made her hospital a place of extraordinary beauty and healing. She worked at Hasbro first as a volunteer, then as the art director. She has joined with Rhode Island School Of Design and brought in students to do murals, she has had artwork donated by local artists, and raised funds for fountains, and gardens, inside and outside. She has put up collections by staff, patients, and community members in windows and put art on every wall in the hospital. The environment is deeply healing to the children who are in the hospital, their families and the staff. When you see a child who has lost their hair from chemotherapy and is obviously very ill sitting in a wheel chair and completely animatedly telling his mother about each star wars figure in a window collection you understand how art in a hospital heals.
Creating a healing environment in our home.

Last but not least, it is essential that we create a healing environment in our home. We heal ourselves by creating and maintaining our own healing environment. We can do this by creating a relationship with nature, with sunlight, and by opening up the views to the outside. It is as beautiful as bringing in the flowers from the garden and letting the sunlight in. Creating healing environment also includes the company of good friends and family and bringing in positive healing sounds of nature. Music TV dim lights candlelight aesthetically important environment at home Inside our own living environment, we can create a sacred space where we honor ourselves and the physical energy of our home. We can make our own alters. We can position art work where we can see it when we

walk around the halls. We can use paintings as windows. The artwork can change our perspective and bring into our lives colors and vibrant images that are life enhancing. We also can create sacred time within the environment that becomes part of our lived experience of healing.

Chapter Eleven

How Professional Artists Use Art to Heal themselves, to heal others, and to heal the earth

Artists making art to heal themselves

In this section of the book is about professional artists who heal themselves, heal others, and heal the earth. For many years, the field of art and healing has been made up of two different worlds. First there was the world of the artists working with patients in hospital programs. Second was the world of the professional artist making healing art in the studio, and in the community. For a long time these worlds were separate. The professional artist did not bring their art to the hospital and if they worked with patients it was outside the realm of medicine. Physicians did not see the professional artist as a healer. The separation is now longer real or complete. Art and healing are one, the artist healer is one figure again. The professional artist is now a recognized healer.

The artists we talk about in this chapter have devoted their life to healing art. These artists are contemporary shaman in that they have taken on the role of being specialists in seeing the soul and portraying it in art to heal. These artists have gone far into the inner world of inner visions and see more deeply than most of us do. They have perfected techniques of healing with art and made their work powerful and intricate. Their healing art can be thought of as "advanced therapeutic practices" that are inspiring for each of us. The art that these artists create can be intimidating to people who just beginning to make healing art. It is professional art and its technical skill often comes from years of training and a lifetime of work. Please don't be intimidated by their art. Instead, realize that their work can be a guide to people starting to heal themselves with art. As you will see from their stories, each artist is also an ordinary person whose story is the same as our story, whose lessons are applicable to all of us.

The first group of professional artists using art to heal are the artists who make art to heal themselves. These artists are people who have had an illness or a life crises and started making art in their own studio to heal themselves. Then they became professional artists and devoted their lives to making healing art. Or they can be artists who had been serious and often well- known artists before they became ill, and the illness changed the focus of their art to healing.

Hollis Sigler talks about painting and breast cancer

Hollis Sigler is a breast cancer survivor who was a respected painter before she became ill. She was a leader in the feminist art movement, painting scenes about her own life as a woman. After her diagnosis she painted a series of paintings that chronicled her inner life with breast cancer. Her work expressed her thoughts about her illness and her anger at the way society views women with breast cancer. Her paintings evoke a sense of vulnerability, isolation, and sometimes waning hope.

The exhibition of her works has toured hundreds of hospitals nationwide and has even been shown at the United States Congress. It has been moving and transformative to women with or without cancer. Women with breast cancer realize that they are not alone in having frightening images of their illness. These stories inform the clinicians who are committed to facilitating healing and you as a healing artist. Hollis Sigler has lived with breast cancer for many years. We deeply honor her work which communicates what it is like to live

with breast cancer and crusades for breast cancer awareness. She may be the best known healing artist today.

Hollis says, "I started out doing the breast cancer artwork as therapy for myself. I was keeping diaries of my experience, and it gave me a handle on what I was feeling about things. It showed me a reflection of my feelings and helped me cope with life. For me, that was its healing experience. The therapeutic quality of letting me have a dialogue with myself about my experience. I think all art is therapy in the end. People will disagree with me, but I think anybody who makes art is in the process of dialoging about their thoughts and their feelings and therefore the art manifests in a language that they can reflect on.

I felt better, more whole, more complete, through the experience of making art. It helped me understand some of my most painful feelings. It was definitely a big bonus that I had in doing it. I believe that being in touch with yourself and your feelings is a healthy thing to do, so being a visual artist is very beneficial in terms of healing. It helps me cope and I believe it does have a major effect on healing my breast cancer.

For the people who view the work, it helps give them a voice to their own experience that is very healing to them. They say, "oh yes, this is my experience." My art has the ability to include people. In my paintings, I don't talk much as an "I". I talk as a "we". So it is hopefully including others in the dialogue. It helps other women with breast cancer find their voice and be included. My intent is to inform, to talk about my experience and share it with others who have had the experience. Also, to let people know they are not alone. We are a community of women in the process of healing ourselves. It is a process that they can be involved in by making art. They can find their own voice."

When I make art, I have a sensation of great satisfaction, it is very meditative. It is a complete sense of self. In the process of making art, I get transported, moved into another realm that I find very, very relaxing. For me, art making is transporting. I can get out the feelings and have them out there to see. I can encapsulate them and examine them. That was part of the motivation when the initial pieces were made. I was waiting for tests, in limbo, with no past no future. Just the present was all encompassing. Putting it on paper helped me deal with it. It always helped me in crises to put it out there. "

Visionary artists

Visionary artists make art that is deeply healing to themselves, and the viewer. The studio artist who is a visionary artist is absorbed in their creative process so completely that they are merged with the visionary space. The visionary artist sees deeply in the spirit world. They journey between worlds and bring the images out from spirit world with their paintings.

Alex Gray, a New York painter, is one of the leading visionary artists alive today. He goes deep into a meditation state and brings out images of exceptional beauty and light to share with us. He sees the union of body and soul and can paint it for us. He has created a large installation piece called *Sacred Mirrors* that shows us our own beauty and oneness and allows us to see how we are all connected to nature and to each other. His figures show

deep spiritual realms of consciousness, the unity of male and female, the wings of spirit flying, and the peaceful and wrathful aspects of human existence. He portrays worlds that he can see more deeply than most of us or that we can not see at all but know are there. Through his art, he heals himself and us.

His pieces are deeply healing and are often used by cancer patients as meditations. Many patients say that the portrayals of space, energy and healing, in Alex's art, correspond to their own visions during healing meditations. The pieces were assembled in a book, *Sacred Mirrors*, which is used for healing by people with illnesses and people on a spiritual path. He is part of the movement that is bringing art back to its roots of transformation and power. He is a true visionary artist in the tradition of sacred artists throughout history.

An Alex Grey painting draws you in and engages you in a way that can be more intense than some "real" scenes. It accesses your imagination more than a real place might do, especially if the place is one you have seen over and over again and are habituated to. The painting magnifies the image for the viewer brings it to their attention. It brings to you the enhanced attention of the artist. The visionary artist brings a spiritual vision to your attention, they share with you their enhanced vision. Alex Grey believes that a visionary artist is a person who sees the deepest brightness they can see, after a lifetime a practice. And then, with the intent to heal, they bring the spiritual vision out to share with the community. That is what all healing artists do. The artist births the spirit into form with their hands, eyes, and commitment. They give you the gift of their undying passion and commitment to what they do. They give you the attention they give it. Visionary artists make spiritual and religious art for a community vision that lasts through the ages or changing times. They make images that will speak to the soul and are truly universal.

Alex Grey talks about visionary art

"The interconnectedness of body, mind, and spirit became my premier subject for my artwork. That was brought home when I had the psychedelic experience of the universal mind lattice. That was not a specifically art event, but it was a transpersonal experience, the revelation of a strata of being, that I had not previously experienced or known about. It showed me a realm of complete interconnectedness with all beings and things via a love energy that was in an infinite, an omni-directional grid, a sort of fountain drain, a toroidal shape. Each being and thing was one of the cells interlocked in this ongoing network. It was there with totally no reference point to the external world or external reality--it was all the energetic realm and it felt like the total bedrock of reality. This was this scaffolding of creation that the dreamlike world of mundane manifestation was draped over. It felt like a veil had been stripped away and I was seeing the way things really were. It was beyond time, it was beyond and it changed my entire point of view about what we are.

I came back from that experience, and looked at my wife Allison. She was looking at me, and I said, 'It was the most amazing space--we're there, we're always there. It's just--I've never seen it before. It's where we'll go when we die, it's what I was before I was born, it's like..'. She says, 'yes, I know... and it looked like this', and she started drawing it and it was the same space. She saw the same transpersonal space at the

same time that just drove it home to me. I'm not saying that that's it, and that's the only space. But it was my initiation into the mystic headspace that I feel is profoundly true. And it did change my outlook on life and spirit.

I felt profoundly grateful for the experience and after the trip, Allison and I felt like there's nothing else more important to make art work about. We felt that we had to make art about our interconnectedness and this realm of loving energy that we all share. This was something for us to base our lives on, So from that experience, *the Sacred Mirrors*, started to gel.

Alex Grey's advice on making visionary art

"I think that there are definitely ways you can reach into the psyche, to the most potent visions that you have, and externalize them. I think that in a way, it's more important that the work be heartfelt, than it be necessarily greatly skillful. Skillful means can be developed, and I'm not denigrating it. I think it's very important, but I think that finding your own personal and universal truth of where you are right now, is what is worth making art about. To give yourself the permission to have confidence enough to pick up that pencil or crayon or paintbrush and make the mark out of your own heart and soul, that can be nothing but healing in itself. Keep praying, you know, pray to whatever spiritual source you feel aligned with and look inside and make the work directly from that. That's as simple as I can say it."

Artists making art to heal other people

The second group of professional artists who use art to heal, make art to heal another person who is ill or in the midst of life crises. These artists can work with groups of people in workshops or classes, or work one- to- one. These artists make art to heal the community, to heal a neighborhood, to heal certain groups of people, to heal race relations, to create peace, to heal prejudice. In neighborhood art projects, they often involve groups of people in making art for increasing self esteem, for empowerment, for change, and for neighborhood beautification. The projects can be done in schools, hospitals, community centers or parks.

Christiane Corbat is an artist who lives in Providence Rhode Island. She was a sculptor who made static figures. After a period of great darkness and suffering in her life, she made a body casting of her body. She found the process and the sculpture to be deeply healing and transformational for herself. She then began to make body casting sculpture with people who had physical or emotional illnesses or were seeking spiritual growth. She made a series of sculptures called *Amazons* for women with breast cancer. From Christiane's sculptures, women could see themselves as beautiful. Often they would take the sculpture home and use it as part of a healing meditation. In one sculpture, the sutures around the mastectomy were to be plucked as harp strings to turn the suffering into music. The sculpture is deeply healing and her experiences have helped Christiane continue her healing art work. In the past years she has made body castings of people with heart disease, organ transplants, asthma and other diseases. Each piece of art shows the person who is ill and makes it into a transformation that gives the person a new view of themselves or their illness. Her sculpture is a new type of studio art, art made with intent to heal another person.

Christiane's process is simple, elegant, and completely extraordinary at once. People are often referred to her by physicians. She talks to the person who comes to her, and together they see a vision. The vision comes out of the simple sharing of stories of the lived experience of the person's illness. She glimpses the subject of the piece with the person and together they see the spirit of what the person will transform into. Then Christiane makes a body casting of the person's body. The piece of art embodies the transformation, is the transformed form, and is believed to help make the process happen.. By participating in the making of the transformation, and by looking at the finished piece, the person becomes transformed. And in the process, Christiane herself is transformed too. She is now the embodied shaman, the one who sees the transformation, manifests it, and makes it happen. She is powerful and her process is real. She is an artist healer, a contemporary shaman, an exceptional woman.

Christiane tells us about how she makes art to heal others

My intent when I work with a person is to help them to access their healing so that they become aware of it. I can make the image that will help them to get on that wavelength or move in that direction. We cast their bodies to see the change that will happen and help it happen. In *A Fine Line Between Hope and Despair*, made with a man was dealing with heart disease, it was the balancing act with the scale. It was our consciously pushing down on hope, which was feather, and pushing up despair, which was those two very heavy pieces of metal, that let him control it himself. He becomes the one who can balance his life.

We gave him an image that he could use to make hope carry the day, on a regular basis when he needed it. The casting process was very close to having an angiogram in that it took place in stillness, and that he's going to have to have that done on a regular basis. Maybe the peace and control will come to him as he is lying there on that table, now that he's doing the balancing act. I think it's very important to give people a myth that they can carry when they are going through a crisis or a crucial moment. If you can be a hero or heroine or you can have a power animal that ideal--it just helps you--it gives you a tremendous amount of power.

Starting a healing art group

There are many artists who work with individuals in the community in informal situations in their studios or homes. Annie Pais is a painter in Florida who set up a studio in her home and created a community of women who came together to make art. As she worked with them, she realized that the making art was a meditation, that it was a way for the women who came to paint, to get deeper into their own lives. She saw that they made art to deal with the issues of their lives and to empower themselves, and that by working together in a creative process, there was more energy. In Annie's own process she believed that art was spirit becoming matter. She herself had used art as prayer, as meditation. She believed that by using the art as a creative process for healing, it would be profoundly powerful. What evolved, was that the group started doing ceremony and ritual together. One woman who was pregnant would make art of pregnant woman, another woman dealing with her beauty, did art of flowers. As a collective, all the pieces of art began to weave a story together.

This healing art group had started as a simple art class where she had invited women to get together and make art in her home. It turned into a woman's healing group that used art to heal. Next, Annie began to do work with women who are surviving cancer. She is now increasingly involved with people who see themselves as healing. She now does art workshops with cancer survivors. They rent a house together and just make art for a week. They have a healing artist's retreat. It started as an informal process and evolved. It emerged out of a need, as she saw the art was healing. She continued because she was committed in her own path. With Annie, much of the healing process centered around painting what the artists loved. She encouraged people to paint what they were in love with. She taught them to look at art as a way of falling deeper in love with the things in life around them. She would paint beautiful still life painting of things she loved and get people to look around their own lives for things that they loved. She painted the magnolias, the blue heron, her living room furniture. It was very ordinary and beautiful. Work like Annie's shows us that there are numerous ways to do art and healing with others. It does not have to be in a hospital program or even with patients, it can be in anyway you see yourself in the community working as a healing artist. Her work also shows us that you do not need to know what you are doing in advance. It will grow by itself.

Medicine art

Medicine art is art that radiates power to heal. When the Yoruba of Africa create fertility dolls, they make them and pray for fertility in one process. It was believed that the prayers went up to the spirit and the spirit actually came down into the doll. When the Yoruba made twin dolls to keep couples together, they were treated as if they were alive and the twins were fed and cared for. When the objects were treated as alive, they become alive to the person and were seen as filled with energy. They become infused with life and spirit. People believed that spirit resided in them. Healing artists make objects that become alive with spirit. A Maori woodcarver told us that his carvings radiated power. Maori tradition says that they have energy fields that affect the world around them. The carver believed that his figures healed by changing the air and molecules. He said that they would work even if the people did not know the legends the piece represented. The Tibetan Buddhists believe that art is an incarnation of the deity on earth, that art is sacred as a presence and powerful in itself. They believe that the deity comes into the piece and gives it power.

Sandy Carlson is a Florida sculptor who makes spirit dolls. She is a contemporary shamanic image maker. She believes that she makes form that the spirit come into so that the form embodies the spirit. Her art gives the spirit a place to rest and a home. Her pieces of art become your friends, they become speakers and seers in your life. The objects themselves carve out destiny, they bring certain energies into your life. They are alive and rich. A woman who lives with one of her figures said, "when I first bought the Kali spirit doll, the goddess came home with me. My life became involved with death and rebirth. It was like the spirit was in the house and brought that powerful energy into my life. She kept me company in my sadness and when it was over she took my sadness. She keeps the treasure of the memory of my sadness. I don't have to keep it in my body anymore. I could release it. If you let go of the anger, you don't have to feel the pain and sadness anymore. The doll can hold the sadness in space and time. It no

longer hurts you . When I was the most sad, I could see I was sad, and I am changed now." The art can be abstract or a portrait. The subject is not important. It is what it brings out in you that heals. The forms belong with you, they live a life with you .They are transformative in themselves and have their own power.

Medicine art objects have been made with the purpose to heal. Any art that comes into your life can change your life. It is imagery that is powerful. Images that are of a visionary landscape make the visionary world real. They bring the visionary world into your life. An image of a deity or of Christ or Buddha brings the holy spirit of that being into your life. Beauty illuminates your life when you hang a painting filled with radiant beauty. Calm comes into your life when you hang a painting that is calming. Painful images brought into your life stir up difficult emotions. You are attracted to what you recognize.

Artists who use art to heal the earth

The third group of artists are artists who use art to heal the earth. They believe that the earth is alive and is presently disrupted and needs to be healed. They believe that making art in watersheds, or mountains, or dry lake beds changes the energy and heals. Making earth art is deeply transformative to the artist. They feel a sense of connection to the earth that is beautiful and sacred. In fact, many of these artists believe that the earth speaks to them through art. These artists receive images from the earth to make art that heals the earth. It is as if She is speaking to them for Herself. All healing artists believe that the earth is helping them heal, but the artists who heal the earth live within the earth's voice and hear Her song.

To be any type of healing artist, it is important to ground yourself in the living earth, to ground yourself in the sacred places where you live. It is important to see the sacred places on the earth around you as places that nourish you and give you energy. Each place that you live in has a place which is sacred and full of power. In Gainesville, Florida, where AIM located, it is the springs, in Marin County California, the home of Anna Halperin's Tamalpa Institute and Michael's Art As A Healing Force, it is Mount Tamalpais. In Providence, Rhode Island, where Christiane Corbat makes her healing body castings, it is the ocean. Find the sacred places around you and go deeply into them and feel the energy from within. Go to the sacred springs, the rocks, mountains, the ocean, the caves, the old trees.

It is important for all healing artists to be deeply connected to the earth. Nature is in a constant creative process. Nature is always giving birth and taking its life back into its body. Nature tells you that what you are doing as a healing artist is totally natural. Making art is what nature does, making art to heal is what nature is. You go to the sacred places near where you live to meditate and nourish and heal. They inform you of what is real in the change of seasons, in the changing light, and in the shadows and the darkness. They create the opportunity for you to know where you are. The path you are on is the path you are on, and the sacred places in nature, remind you that you are deeply alive and creative as you are.

The life of a healing artist is the same as a vision quest. A vision quest is a ceremony done by some Native American peoples where a young person went into nature to find themselves. They sat for days in a secluded place and waited for a spirit animal or voice to come to them and tell them who they were or what they were to do on earth. The vision quest was about finding their own spirit and helping others. It was about listening to the voices of the earth and the ancient ones. Becoming a healing artist or healing yourself with art is also about making your life a sacred vision quest. It is also about finding out who you are and what you are to do here.

As a healing artist, your life is a vision quest, literally a quest for visions. Your own personal life is informing you in every way. You have shifted from an ordinary person who is only occupied with the dailiness of material things, to someone who is concentrating on healing yourself, healing another or healing the earth. The work is connected to your own life. It comes out of your life, and as you see your art emerge, you know that everything is perfect as it is, that it will bring you to where you are. The work is difficult because often you will fall back on yourself for support and sometimes you'll have to keep reminding yourself how profound and sacred the work is. Alex Grey says that if you don't doubt this work occasionally, you are not going deep enough into it. Doubt is facing the opposites, the tension of life. When you go deeply into your visions you feel the dark even as you are in the light.

So to ground yourself in this work, look to the earth. You can do sacred pilgrimages, be alone, meditate with the earth, do an intentional healing of the earth. We believe that all healing art is healing the earth. Whenever you heal yourself or heal another, you heal the earth as well. You can canoe down a river or stand on a temple mound and see and realize you have been touched by the earth. Your spirit soars, and you pray with the intention of being with the earth.

Anouk's path of the feather

One day, Anouk, arrived. She told us she was on the path of the feather. She was an sculptor and jeweler from Montreal, Canada, and she came to the AIM program at Shands Hospital to make healing art. She had been to the rivers and had collected rocks. She brought these "rock people" to the bedside of children with cancer. She told the children stories about an Native American medicine and she had the children paint the rocks the five different colors of the medicine wheel. Each color evoked one element of the medicine wheel, yellow for change, red for healing, blue for passion, black for grounding, green for soaring.

Then she collected the rocks from all the children and arranged them in a circle in the center of the hospital sun terrace. She built a sacred medicine wheel painted by the children with cancer. She had everyone who came by pray to heal each person who had painted the rocks and do imagery to bring up a collective energy to spiral from the earth up to the sky. She believed that the raising of the energy healed the earth. She merged healing the children with healing the earth. The rocks stayed in place for three weeks in this busy terrace in middle of the medical center. It was healing art to heal the patients,

the staff, and the medical center itself. It created a space in the heart of the hospital that was healing art.

It was her idea to make art at the bedside and then do the ritual in the sun terrace. It was an act of boldness and fearlessness in her life as a person and as an artist. The first day she came to the hospital, she walked into a patient's room and asked the person to draw with her. She did not know the patient was blind; and she felt terrible when she realized it. She was embarrassed, shy and upset and she had to get all her energy up to keep working in the hospital. Within six weeks she was so brave she could create her story of the healing medicine wheel of rocks. Anouk as an artist emerged from afar, came in, put her healing artistry to work, and then she was gone. It was as simple as that. We must create openings for people like this.

Vijali talks about healing the earth

Vijali is an earth artist who heals with the light that comes from within her heart. She had been a studio painter in Los Angeles and had a vision that she should go to the mountains and become a hermit. She moved up to a tiny trailer in the mountains outside of Los Angeles and lived alone. There, the rocks spoke to her. A rock opened and showed her to look within. She saw there that she was to go around the earth and stay with people and make art to heal. She went to nine countries in seven years in her world wheel project. In each country she would ask three questions: What is your essence? What is holding you back from being it (that is, what is your illness)? And what can you do to achieve who you are (that is, what is your healing)? Then with the local people she would do an earth carving, or performance piece that embodied the answers to the questions. She would live with the people for months and fall in love with them and their lives. She would heal them as a community by making the piece with them and sharing in their healing.

Vigali says, "My intention in my work now is to heal the planet. Of course, we are the planet--we are part of the planet. All this dissension, wars, bloodshed around the world, yes. There is intention in my preparation for the next World Wheel, especially trying to call for a global cease-fire for 48 hours. There is an intention of getting peace into the world; peace into each individual's life, which I think that is the only way to have world peace. We are on the way to a world transformation, so I am working on a very personal level, as well as on a global level, with the intention of healing. My work right now is global healing.

"Who am I? I'm just light and space, with red-mud splattered on it. When I speak of art, I don't just mean paintbrushes, but the whole of life, where you go, how you sit, how you do everything, everything is part of that gesture of creating. Every thought we have has an effect on the whole galaxy, the whole cosmos, so everything is important, everything is sacred, and everything is ritual. And ritual has an effect on people, so every part of every gesture is having an effect.

"There is no separation for me between art and prayer. No, the art is truly the prayer, there is absolutely no separation. The prayer, when you make a prayer is words. The

words are vibration or sound, even if you're thinking, and nothing is said out loud. That thought itself is creating a particular vibration and on some level, even that thought is a sound. The same thing is true with sculpture. As you're carving the sculpture, it's saying something, it is a vibration that is sent out into the world. It is prayer.

"In the next world wheel, I'm just going to have one question. The next world wheel is dedicated to the children of the world because I feel this next period will be for them, they will be inheriting this world. I feel they are very important and so I'm going to ask them particularly, 'How can you bring peace into the world'. I am going to video the children around the world and have them answer it. I'm going to carry a book because some children will be too young to verbalize it, and I will have them draw in my book. I have people write in their own script and the children draw their answers.

"You know we're being healed in the process of everyone else being healed. I was such a damaged child; and I think that if the child that I was could be happy, filled with joy, the way I am now, I feel that anyone can be healed. I couldn't read until I was 13 years old and people would talk to me and I was so shy that I couldn't look up. I thought they must be talking to someone else, someone in back of me, so I wouldn't even say a word and people would be talking to me. At school they thought I was deaf because I couldn't answer. They kept having my ears examined because I wouldn't respond. I was such a mess and in so much pain internally.

"One reason I am doing the world wheel is because I didn't have a family, so I keep looking for other ways to have a family. So now I have a global family. The art really helped me because I was always drawing even from the age of two, even if I couldn't communicate very well with people. The art led me into the world and into my own healing and the healing of others."

Vijali's advice on how to heal with art

"Well, I would say to really follow your heart and do what you really love. And never make decisions which parents are always telling kids to do about the practical; you know do this job because you're going to make money, and its more practical. But do what you really want to. Go and paint or if you want to work with children do that, because that's the clue from the inside to what is really right. It is the clue to how your yourself will unfold, and what would be really healing for yourself. And what heals you is the healing you do for other people in the world. It's your contribution to the world. So follow your own inner voice, really connect with your own guru, not a guru or a teacher from outside. You can learn tools from teachers but...

"You can meditate. Take time to be alone, to make contact-- just hanging out with yourself in nature you can become attuned to yourself and your world. We all have this ability, we just don't pay attention to it. You know, it's like, our culture tells us not to day ream. You know you are sitting in school and looking out the window and

daydreaming. That's supposed to be bad because you're supposed to be writing down what the teacher is saying. But we have to hear these little feelings that float up. We just have to follow those little moments that really tell us what is right for us to do. Then step-by-step we are led into our own healing and way of being.

Doing ritual on sacred sites to heal

Artists and healers are finding that sacred sites are important healing resources for healing themselves, others, and the earth. Healers are taking patients to sacred sites to heal them and artists are going to sacred sites to make healing art and do intentional healing rituals. There are sacred sites in your backyard and in ancient stone circles, they are both gifts to the healing artist.

Sacred sites play a major role in art and healing. The energies they hold from the earth and the rituals done in the past flow up into us to empower us deeply. Sacred sites are most often situated near rivers, caves, springs, mountains, ancient trees, or the sea. and the energy of these earth forces come up into our body, mind, and spirits to make any healing more effective. The ancient ones who did the rituals to heal in the distant past come to us in visions and speak to us and give us their power too. The thought forms of the ancient healers are around these sites and we can feel them and they come into us. People have found places of power that follow a line across an area which they call ley lines. Often there are churches, ancient stone circles, springs, caves, mountains and ancient trees on these ley lines. In Great Britain, there are ley lines that go from one end of the country to the other. Healers and artists do ritual on these lines to heal.

Artist healers now do rituals in sacred sites all over the world. They do rituals at sacred springs, ancient trees, mountains, stone circles, and temple mounds. They use sacred sites to empower them as artist healers in their work. Each place, every community and wild area, has its sacred sites. Artist healers are now finding and creating their own sacred sites through ritual. Vigali, in her World Wheel has created a ring of sacred sites around the earth. By making healing art with communities in nine countries around the world she made new sites that people can visit and use for healing ritual. Ritual is embodied in multimedia healing art. It is a performance piece done to heal with sacred intent. It is the oldest art and the oldest healing. It uses dance, music, visual arts, storytelling, all at once to produce transformation. Many healing artists use ritual in sacred sites with any other healing art that they are doing at the time. The ritual enhances the art they are making. Sacred sites are an important resource for artist healers in their work.

Mending the Heart Net, Putting it all together

More and more of us are putting it all together, making healing art to heal ourselves, others, and the earth all at once. Alex Grey did a performance art piece at Shand's Hospital, Gainesville, which did this. His piece *Mending the Heart Net*, was done to heal himself, his family, the patients in the hospital, their families, the hospital staff, the hospital itself, art, medicine, the community, and the earth. *Mending the heart net* became the focus of several weeks of ritual for the artists in the community, for a major art and healing conference, and for the people coming into Shands Hospital. It truly was about putting it all together.

Mending the heart net was a sacred ritual. It was the first performance art piece done in a medical center by a major performance artist. Its goal was to heal the patients, staff, hospital, and the earth. Its occurrence changed the hospital's sterile space into a sacred celebratory space where love and healing could be manifest with intent. Its beauty and symbolism were transformative to everyone in the community who came and participated.

The piece consisted of a heart made of fabric with the earth and continents sewn on it. It had an eye in the center of the heart and a paint brush surrounded with a serpent on the top of the heart. Around the heart were fabric arms and hands with a heart sewn on each palm. The hands even had fingernails. Surrounding the heart was a rope net that went for about twenty feet in each direction. The piece was made by Alex and Allison before they came to Gainesville and was assembled on the site in the hospital atrium in front of patients, family and staff as they walked by or sat and watched.

The piece was done in the main entry way of Shands Hospital, the main teaching hospital, of University of Florida Medical Center. Most of the patients and staff go through the entry way many times a day. There was a table set up in front of the piece that had cut up bandages and pens on it. There was a sign that invited everyone to write a prayer on a bandage for someone who was ill or to write their heart's desire. As patients, staff, visitors, and family members came in, they wrote their prayers or wishes on the cut bandages. The bandages were then pinned to a heart and tied individually to the web. By the end of the day the web was covered with prayers. The prayers said everything from "please heal my mother of cancer we love her", to "may peace come on earth". They were heartfelt and wonderful. The moment of writing the prayer was surprising and magical for everyone. Ordinary people coming in to face difficult times could stop for a moment and be with others and pray with intent. While people wrote their prayers, live music was played by musicians on a piano, a harp and guitars.

All afternoon people wrote their prayers and talked to Alex, Allison, and Zena and the AIM artists. Children in wheelchairs were brought down from their rooms by their parents to see the huge heart. At the end of the day, Alex, Allison, and Zena, sat in front of the heart and Alex read a poem. The performance was the making of the heart web and the writing and hanging of the prayers. It gave patients, staff, and families the opportunity to pray with intent and see their prayers in a net with others.

Arts in Medicine artists took the piece down in a ritual after two weeks. Then, two of the artists read the prayers out loud for a whole week as a chant and typed them up so that they could be shown to the hospital administrators. They then were taken to a nearby spring and the artists did a healing ritual. One artist was the old woman of the springs and she read the prayers and gave the bandages, now tied together in a long rope to the other artists. Each artist read the prayers that they were holding out loud. The artists then went down the river in canoes and stopped in a meadow with a huge ancient tree. The tree had been hit by lightning and its center was burnt out. To the artists it symbolized the creative fire within each of them, the power of lightning to open their

hearts. Each artist entered the tree and prayed for their healing artist to emerge, be filled with passion, and be strong. They then buried the prayers in the earth in the center of the tree. Later the artists had a celebration and honored each other as healing artists.

This piece was a ritual to heal that can be done in any medical center by anyone. Of course Alex, Allison, and Zena, are extraordinary but we all can do this too. Giving people who visit a hospital the opportunity to write out a prayer is very beautiful and transformative. Giving the artists in the program the opportunity to come together in ritual was also valuable.

Alex Grey's visualization to mend the heart net.

You can participate in Alex and Allison's performance ritual by looking at the photo of the heart net and by doing the imagery exercise. As you do it you can imagine that you are healing yourself, others, and the earth.

"Close your eyes. Breathe deeply and regularly. Relax and let go of tensions. When you are ready, bring your attention to your own heart center. Many religions point to the heart enter as the dwelling place of the soul. Feel the warm glow and loving presence in your own heart center. Now, using your imagination, project a beam of light from your own heart center out to the symbol of the heart .net. Sense the commingling of energy with the heart of the world, a network of love that links all beings and things. Hands of light reach out from the heart net to help activate all healing and positive intentions. See the heart net accomplishing the fulfillment of good aims through thousands of beings performing heart centered actions. Now , having seen your own love energy connected with an infinite network of love energy, it is time to bring the power of the heart net back into your own body. Imagine that the infinite love energy of the heart net condenses to a point at the center of the eye in the giant world heart. From the eye, a powerful beam of light shoots into your own heart center, filling you with clarity and tremendous healing, loving, creative, energy. All of the your soul's energy is returned to your body, even from troubling problems, which may have felt draining. You inwardly promise to use this energy to benefit others."

Alex said that "this event honors the special connections between healing, art, and the spirit of love. At their best, what links art and medicine is that they are both heart centered offerings of service."

Chapter Twelve

Conclusion: Transforming the future: become a healing artist

"It is like putting on the mask
of the healing artist
and taking it off.

When you take the mask off
the second time
you realize you are changed
and your world is changed."

Let art and healing change your life

In listening to the beautiful stories of the lived experience of art and healing, we hear these themes: Art saved my life. I would not be here if it wasn't for my art. Art healed my life. Art healed my illness. Art healed me of my childhood. Art will take us to the future and heal the earth. And we hear artists and healers tell us that art and healing change your life. Art and healing tells you who you are. Art and healing lets you be yourself more deeply in all directions. Art and healing takes you elsewhere, away from your suffering. Art and healing lets you see the most brilliant illumination that you can find and bring it out for everyone to share. Art and healing lets you fall in love. Art and healing lets you see yourself and others as beautiful. Art and healing lets you bring luminosity to yourself and others. Art and healing is about intent. Art and healing is about trust. Art and healing is about loving Her and hearing Her voice and singing it on earth. Art and healing is about community. Art and healing brings spirituality to art and to healing. Art and healing brings spirit into each of our lives. Art is the most beautiful thing I do except loving my family.

In listening to the stories of the artists doing this work, we hear this advice. To do art and healing it helps to be present in the moment, totally open, and completely flexible. To do art and healing it helps to be committed and see ourselves as artist healers. To do art and healing it helps to be in love with life, with beauty, and with the next moment. When we are artist healers we are the oldest healers and the oldest artists that exist. We join the tradition of art for transformation and healing. We help the mind, body, and spirit, resonate as one. We open our hearts to see the person that we work with as magnificent and as our equal, as someone we love. We see them, hear them and honor them by helping them make art and see, hear and honor themselves. We honor this process with our whole life. We see beauty beyond our dreams in our next breath and in theirs. Healing in the broadest sense is finding and embracing life. In the seeing of others, we see ourselves. It is knowing who we are and what we are to do. It is being born into perfect compassion and grace, into connection and oneness. It is about deeply falling in love with Her and singing Her songs on earth.

For most people, the story of healing yourself begins when you are ill and you exhaust the resources outside of yourself to heal. You reach for art when the loneliness and inner turmoil that you experience is still there, when you leave the therapist after the fifty minute visit or leave the oncologist after chemotherapy and know there is more to healing than what happened to you in the office. You reach for art when you feel you need to something else when you feel angry, sad, miserable, unfulfilled, or depressed. And then you may remember that you have always wanted to be an artist and have never done anything about it. Or you just may be drawn to this work. In the illness you are self-absorbed and struggling for your own personal survival. You realize that the painting, or the dance, or the poetry, or the journal, is the way to be with yourself. Making art is the way to be with the pain and live with it. Not in an inability to deal with it but in an engaged process where you form it and are in relationship to it. It takes you out of the darkness and into forms. And in the art, everything suddenly has a relationship with the disease and the illness. The art lets you be with it, not talk about it.

Your art is like a cocoon you spin around yourself. Suddenly after you start, you surround yourself in it, you go into your studio, you are totally absorbed with it, it merges you with the pain and illness, and one day you pop out of it. You emerge out of it and you can see the cocoon and you are transformed and the memory of what you were before you entered the cocoon is the artwork. That is what is left. You can see who you once were and you are now different and you can fly like a butterfly and you are beautiful and you can see who you once were and how beautiful you now are. And you can see how in the making of art you were becoming who you are now. And you realize the depth, the extent of the change that is possible. The caterpillar does not see the butterfly, but the butterfly can look back and see where they were.

Our dream, an artist for every patient, a patient for every artist

It is our hope that every patient will include creative healing on their healing journey. We also hope that nursing programs, medical schools, and art schools will include art and healing as a part of their program. We also hope that community artists will be able to expand their world in ever-more meaningful ways into service.

Our dream is every patient making art and an artist for every patient. We hope that all hospitals will fund art programs to enhance the quality of care, and that artists will innovatively create forms to make their art transformative. Research needs to be done qualitatively and quantitatively to determine how art heals. More research needs to be done to demonstrate that art improves the quality of life, reduces symptoms, and relieves pain. Important research need to be done to demonstrate that art lengthens life of people with life threatening illness and cures illness. This is best done by both artists and providers in a multidisciplinary team approach. This view of the future requires a radical change in consciousness that can be achieved though education and consumer pressure. The changing medical system is looking for therapies that are inexpensive and have tremendous benefit. Because the arts are a self- initiated process, art in healing is cost effective. The power of these processes is in the individual. The hope for art and healing lies in our hearts. As artists find that they need to make art to heal, and healers find they cannot practice healing without art, art and healing will become one.

A guided imagery of the future of art and healing

This imagery is yours. It is for you to fill in from your own imagination. By now you will have images of healing that you love, pictures of yourself as a artist healer, images that heal you, others, and the earth. I will only give you the sketchiest outlines for you to image on. Bless you as your healing artist. Be well.

We invite you to close your eyes and go anywhere. Go to a healing place, place where you make art, a place where you live as who you are. See what is looks like, smells like, feels like. Look at the natural landscape that surrounds you, the buildings if any, the sky, the water, the ground, the trees. Look at the art or sculpture around you, listen to the music, join in the dancing. Read words around you or listen to songs around you. See the community of which you are a part. See your family or friends. See you as an artist, as a healer, as yourself fully. See yourself loved perfectly from before the beginning of time to after the end of time. See this become your life. Now open your eyes, and bring

this healing vision out with you into your life. What part of it can you live now. What part of it, even the smallest part, can you make come true now?

The Medicine Wheel Web

The world wide web on the internet is a way we can all focus our psychic energy in one place at once. If we all picture an image or picture healing the earth, in the traditions of shamanic artist healers, it will happen. We have set up the *Medicine Wheel Web* on the world wide web to help heal ourselves, heal others, and heal the earth with healing art.. It is part of our larger web site at www.artashealing.org. Our web site has information about the field of art and healing, about conferences, events, and exhibitions, and it lists links to other sites. We hope that each healing artist that reads our site and our book will be part of a collective consciousness of people making art to heal. And we hope that each person who is healing themselves with art will become a part of the web too, to share in the healing prayers and help themselves heal.

The Medicine Wheel Web is about becoming an intentional healing part of the consciousness that surrounds the earth. We all join, share our visions, pray as one, and find the other who dreams as we do. Through the noosphere, the consciousness that surrounds the earth, we become one consciousness with each of its parts still remaining an individual. The term noosphere was first used by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a Jesuit paleontologist, to refer to his concept of a thinking envelope that surrounds the earth and acts like a collective consciousness. Many people realize that the world wide web is a noosphere and through it we can merge and think as one being. We believe that one function of the noosphere is to see the earth and heal her and to receive the thoughts from the universe as it grows and looks back on itself. Our web site is about becoming intentionally part of the healing noosphere, as it self- balances the earth.

Healing artists can make up a living medicine wheel that surrounds the earth. They can be the part of the noosphere that balances and heals. You are healing by just making art. You are a node on the noosphere that is like a cell in the immune system or a cell that can produce growth and regeneration. You are a node in the noosphere that can see into the mind of the universe and be one with it as it grows. The artist creates images, sounds, movements, poems, that resonate in the noosphere all at once. You are like flowers in a spherical wreath around the earth. As you resonate as one, all of us are healed.

We hope that each artist on this wheel will find others who are having the same dream, bringing in the same images. We hope that anyone who needs to be healed will find others who are doing the work they are involved in. Healing artists who make bears will see other people who have same dreams, and make bear art. You will find your spirit brothers, sisters, and lovers. This is about knowing that you are not alone. You will see that someone believes in you, that you are being seen. This is about seeing you. You are being illuminated in the world so you can see yourself and others can see you too. That is how the earth is healing itself. As we see ourselves in these moments, the earth is healed. This is about you seeing yourself as a healing artist. This is about being a

healing artist with others as a ritual healing act. When an artist becomes part of the living medicine wheel, they intentionally become part of the noosphere that will heal the earth.

A collective guided imagery to heal yourself, others, and the earth.

This guided imagery is on our web site and allows us all to actually image at once.

Imagine that you are in the center of an immense field of healing energy. As one of the minds around the earth you are like a star in an immense constellation that is the living being evolving towards God. We believe that if everyone pictured a healing form at once, the earth would heal.

Blessings to you, welcome to the spirits of healing, the four directions, the animal spirits, the ancient ones. Call them in to you as you breathe and as you look to each side of you in a prayer. Now make yourself comfortable, take some deep breaths and let your abdomen rise and fall, go to your place of imagery or meditation, go to your place of peace and power.

Now imagine a web of light that surrounds the earth. It looks like lines of light or pure energy crossing and meeting at nodes that light up and explode with love. Now imagine that you are one intersection, one node of exploding light and love. For each of us as a healing artist is only alive as the node that lights up and holds one point in the web in perfect peace. As you glimpse yourself as a healing artists and hold your healing vision you help make the web and she is born.

Look at the Alex Grey painting Theologue, and see the nodes of light and the intersecting lines. See them as surrounding the living earth with you as one intersection. Hold your image or poem or song or healing prayer and make it your point of light. See the web as whole and you are seen and she is born again. Let this image flow around the earth and see yourself as one node with your art and prayers as your emanation. Put yourself in the web and hold your vision of yourself as a healing artist with your vision that you are working on in place. See all the others around your as far as they go back and forwards in time and space. Feel yourself heal, feel us heal, feel the earth heal.

Go deeper now. Drop into your center, if you have healing forces, ancient spirits or power animals call them to you. Know that you are a healing artist who has a vision to heal yourself, others, and the earth. Feel deeply that as you hold this vision or even hold your space with intent your node is lit up and radiates love and you make the web that heals the earth at this moment. Come out slowly, move your body, touch the ground, pray or meditate on peace, and go on with your day.

Seeing more of the vision

Creative Healing is actually about the way people see the visions that come from within them and begin to use them with intent to heal. So it is the first step. It is the beginning

of how you find out who you are, how you find out your story, how you heal yourself, how you heal others and the earth. Is it only after you start to use your images to heal that your creativity becomes illuminated and you can move from the ordinary world into an extraordinary world. One that can be more a visionary one. In the visionary world your images are formed in color, light, movement, spirit animals come, magical landscapes and ancient ancestral spirits appear. Spirit guides like she who gardens us from above become a part of your creative and visionary life. You can hear the music, the words, the art, from the inner world that is at once magical, mystical, and mysterious. Then, you as the artist healer becomes the contemporary shaman who can hear Her song to heal the earth. This is when the *Path of the Feather* appears, and we see that the sacred sites and spirit animals call out to be heard so that they can be heard by everyone. The medicine wheel web forms and shows us that if we all join all over the earth as the noosphere and see the same vision the earth will be healed. Then, you become the ones who heal the earth.

So in our vision, the path of the healing artist goes like this: 1. *Creative Healing*. We let our images come out to heal and be seen. 2. *The Path of the Feather*. We let the earth speak to us. Her voice becomes sacred again and we hear the voice of the ancient spirits and of the spirit animals. The medicine wheel emerges and the healing rituals are formed. 3. *The medicine wheel web*. Art and healing become one on earth.

When we interviewed the healing artists for this book, we asked them how they ended up where they are. We asked them how they thought they ended up as a healing artist when they started as a studio artist, or a nurse or a physician. We were given two types of answers to our question. The first response was, "It is destiny, I am part of an ancient family, we have always seen Her story to heal the earth." The second answer was, "It is who I am, deeply who I am. By becoming a healing artist I am becoming myself." In a real sense, the two answers are the same. For as we join the ancient tradition of artists to heal the earth we find out who we are.

A final invocation for our healing work to be done

Like the prayer that started this book, this is a small prayer to the forces that help us do our creative healing. Just as we called them in, in the beginning of the book, we thank them and release them in the end of the book.

God, Great Spirit, She who gardens us from above, We thank you for art and healing and for our lives. We thank you for the lives of our families, we thank you for the lives of the people with illnesses and the healing artists that we talked to for this book. We thank you for this sacred work and letting us do it. And we pray to you, we dream deeply up into Her heart that art and healing become one on earth. We dream deeply up into Her heart that art and healing will heal ourselves, others, and the earth. We dream deeply up into Her heart that art and healing will give each of us a reason for being, will change our lives into manifesting the full brilliance of who we are, and will allow us to love each other.

Art is a way of healing, art is a way of knowing, art is way of caring.

