



12. INNER PEACE

Top 15 Things Money Can't Buy

Time, Happiness, Integrity, Love, Character and Manners
Health, Respect and Morals
Trust, Patience, Class, Dignity, Common Sense
And Inner Peace

Roy T. Bennett,
(The Light in the Heart)

Why aim for inner peace?

Achieving Inner Peace is the icing on the cake, but it means various things need to be in place and, the previous eleven levels are part of the package. Once we have the environment sorted to a level that makes us feel glad to be home rather than feeling dread because of the chaos, the sooner situations and our behaviour improve.

When we take the right action;

We feel capable; we begin to regain that personality everyone says; 'where the hell had that person gone?' When our beliefs and values are ethical; we often need less rather than more; and why many long for a more simple life and may even take a massive reduction in salary to gain a happier lifestyle. When more satisfied, worries cease, obstacles seem less, and what comes the way we handle better than we did before. We become more adaptable, flexible; we learn more about ourselves because our mind, heart and soul are connected working together with our higher self. The stronger we feel, the more likely we will achieve inner peace. And this isn't about living the perfect dream.



A COMMON DENOMINATOR

Neither is this a false map of reality or that bad times won't exist, because they will; however, we deal with those crises because of our unshakeable faith, trust and belief we can survive. Even though they'd reached Inner Peace, they expressed something was missing in their life, and that voice was getting louder, but spirituality is a subject on its own. I began to recognise that throughout my own experiences; a common denominator ran through my life.

A Timeline

Doing a timeline, and tracing back to all the things I'd done, was very revealing, I discovered my love and fascination was for people and communication. Helping people become the best they can be. I was a natural storyteller, while I'm in no way a Richard Bach; or any of the great writers, I have to settle for middle of the road and hope my message gets across. Even though I'd been writing to my pen friend since I was a tad under ten years old and all my friends had cheery notes, postcards, and often long letters, I also I got high marks for assignments. When a web designer told me writing articles for the Internet would boost my ratings on google, I wrote avidly.

When texting and emailing took over,

I delighted in writing as I spoke. The challenge was to write what strangers would want to read. Still, I had my doubts, and why I did the right hand, left-hand exercise, as I'd just finished reading the Reluctant Messiah for the third time, over a thirty-odd year span and each time a little more spiritual knowledge emerged as I climbed the celestial staircase. Books like this made me realise I was a spiritual wanderer.



I needed the devotion I had as a seven-year-old. I regret stopping exploring spirituality at eighteen. Like many people, I confused religion with the dogma, and while I knew spirituality was part of this world, I needed a rest from religion. However, religion doesn't have to be rigid when you sift through the nonsense; it can be inspiring and helpful.

After completing my Timeline,

I noticed that my life was like a massive jigsaw puzzle of life, where all the pieces were slotting into place. Everything I'd done had a purpose, and in all of those experiences, I'd felt an inner peace and I was patient to wait. My spiritual journey started at my first Holy Communion and a year later at my Confirmation. I even considered becoming a nun, but a wise nun knew me too well.

As my spiritual education continued,

I attended a local convent with mum who wanted to become a Catholic. My spiritual mentoring was with Father Williams, but my love of different religions started when I worked for a Jewish woman on Saturdays. Still, my practical journey at Woolworths and Morris Bodies had me planning my new home. Meeting (blind date) and marrying my husband was an almost sacred journey, one I knew was destiny because I'd seen him as a child of five, and I knew there, and then there was something unique.

Having our first home together, moving to the country to live in what I hoped would be a Walton Style lifestyle where I'd have four children (that never happened) and be involved with the community (that happened). I was a founder member of a village youth Club.



THE APPRENTICE

I raised money for a youth club, became a preschool teacher, (a dream) supported my husband in his business, and I did voluntary work. I had my shop, one I hoped would emulate the Jewish woman's elegant shop I worked in at fifteen in Coventry. Becoming a therapist, the many counselling courses and psychology, everything I'd ever done pointed to communication, people and training.

Sharing my skills seemed as natural as breathing.

But why not start when leaving school, or when I was in school? Some know from the age of five-years-old and younger what their purpose is in life. Many famous musicians and actors started as childhood prodigies. Mozart was five when he did his first composition, and twelve when he wrote his first symphony.

The maps of my reality

I had many opportunities to continue my education and gain qualifications in psychology or writing but shelved the idea for fast-track earning so I could have a place to call my own. I wanted security and learnt you are the master of your ship. At fifteen, writing and becoming a psychotherapist wasn't in my map of reality.

But earning money was, having my place was, getting married was, and while I did and had two children, this was part of my plan. I saw no reason not to be able to incorporate homemaking and mothering as I ticked off my bucket list of dreams. As well as working with children and the elderly, I was building friendships, being a wife and mother, training others, and mentoring.



BUILDING BLOCKS FOR THE FUTURE

At the same time, someone might call these distractions or mini dreams; I choose to call them building blocks for the future, and an apprenticeship where everything I did in those early years was building foundations for my future. However, I'd always trusted in the process of life, believing our life is preordained, even our death. But we don't see this, because we're usually too busy to notice for various reasons. The timing isn't right, or because we've missed the signs.

Advancing the soul's energy

I had so many clients asking about doing a workshop on advancing one's soul energy, to gain inner peace, so they could be beautiful inside out and hopefully outside in, so I arranged for a small group of like-minded women to attend a workshop in 2014. I called this Optimum Woman because I'd noticed a fear of ageing was prevalent amongst many women. Comments like, 'why do men get better looking with age and women don't?' Which isn't true. So I wanted to show women who were entering their second semester (fifty-one years old); to have hope and inspiration for the third semester and the fourth semester of their lives and seeing images does work.

Old Age Trendsetters

I used photos for the PowerPoint from a well-known photographer Ari Seth Cohen who photographed women who he'd coined, OATs (old-age trendsetters), and they were indeed stunningly beautiful women and trendsetters and some of mine. He'd captured them so wonderfully that I was inspired to take photos myself. Some of these women were in the third and fourth semester of their lives and looked divine.



INNER BEAUTY

The purpose of this workshop was to show that we all can shine no matter what age. And so I asked the group to think of older women they admired. The workshop was inspiring, challenging the perceptions and beliefs on how older women can look. I defy anyone who looks at these photos by Ari Seth Cohen of women some heading into the fifth semester, (one hundred and ten years old), of their life with such grace and courage, and not to be in awe.

I seriously wanted to know their secret.

These women had something way beyond wellbeing and inner peace. Could it be spiritual acceptance, That they were on borrowed time? For in each of these women in the PowerPoint radiated serenity and wisdom. When I was preparing this presentation with technical help from my grandson, the words of Elisabeth Kubler-Ross who I met in 1996 came to mind.

*People are like stained-glass windows.
They sparkle and shine when the sun is out,
But when the darkness
Sets in, their true beauty is revealed, but,
Only if there is a light from within.*

Only one woman, (someone I didn't know who came with her daughter) was scathing, she criticised everything from wrinkles, shoes, clothes, to a shopping trolley. But as one of the students said: 'I think you're missing the point, look in her eyes, what do you see, I see past what you see, I was focusing so much on her inner and outer beauty, I never noticed and still can't see what you see.' I wasn't surprised at this response for the student was a divine woman.



THE DIVINE WOMAN

This mother had reared lovely young women. In the afternoon, we did a Reiki share; the only one who wasn't Reiki was this mother playing the devil's advocate. I know these photo's of Ari Seth Cohen advanced the existing student's wellbeing and hope, but I also found out later this workshop and the Reiki share had changed this critical woman's life. She came to realise that something very fundamental. Maybe she'd touched the divine that day?

Not Just a Pretty face

*Beauty isn't about a pretty face or a perfect body.
It's about having a pretty mind, a healthy body,
a perfect heart, and a beautiful soul, but most importantly,
she radiates inner peace.*

Sylvia Lerigo

The BIDA Woman

The next step into real womanhood and inner peace is the BIDA Woman who Believes in herself, believes in life and others, she Inspires everyone around her to "BE" and to do better. She Dreams the impossible, so others want to emulate her, and she Achieves where others fail. The BIDA Woman is the epitome of wisdom, grace, serenity, unconditional love and humility; she is aware of her flaws but does her best to modify and eradicate them. Unafraid to be herself, she knows and accepts herself inside out and outside in which is divine to observe. Most of the women I've met were the BIDA woman in the making.



UNIQUE AND INCOMPARABLE WOMAN

BIDA means Unique and Incomparable Woman, and we need these women in our lives because they teach us so much about ourselves, the flaws we need to address, about stepping up and being kinder, having more responsibility, more courage, love and compassion. These women counterbalance those we meet who fall short of these qualities and traits. Women like Diane, Ruth, Mo, and Annie who I've picked from thousands I've met. Why? Because they all share the attributes, I admire most, courage, kindness, generosity, gratitude, wonderment, and unconditional love.

Diane

When looking for a place to rent, Diane came across a cottage, when enquiring she found it had a bad reputation for being broken into; nevertheless, Diane decided she'd rent it and placed a notice on the door. 'I haven't anything, but you're welcome to whatever I have.' Now we all know that there is always something someone might want, and yet they never stole from her, the place was never broken into again. Why not? She was promoting honesty, integrity and trust all very catching. Her daughters are also pretty darned, amazing young women.

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*Suffice to say no matter how skilled we are,
we human beings can't live on bread and water alone,
We need food for the soul.*

(Sylvia Lerigo)



MAUREEN (Mo)

When we moved into our present home in 1971, we were struggling. Never starving, but fresh fruit and vegetables were scarce. Our children played on the front garden, then open, but we had plans to make it into a walled garden as we wanted privacy from the main road, and I wanted to grow vegetables. But for a year every week, a large bag of vegetables and fruit was deposited on my doorstep.

I never saw the person, but I was very grateful.

Then one day passing the front door, I saw a shadow, opened the door to see my neighbour from over the main road scurrying down the steps. 'So you're the veggie fairy,' I exclaimed. Mo turned came back and apologised. 'I'm so sorry. I hope you aren't offended, but your children bring me so much pleasure and joy. I watch them from my kitchen window. I watched your youngest learn to ride his bike, and he reminded me of the day our Valerie did the same.'

I'd also watched that day and still have that photo.

I was to learn she'd lost her only daughter in a car accident at the top of the village. She could have been envious, bitter and angry, but wasn't. Only after she died suddenly did I learn of her exceptional work and generosity. What was she promoting? She made me feel grateful to have my children and thankful for the food. I learnt when someone came to her door asking for flowers or greenery from her garden or food for the harvest festival; she gave willingly. She was a natural giver, where others would let food rot in the ground or on the vine which I've seen many times, she gave away. Apples were left outside for free; she was indeed an aware and kind woman. Many missed her.



I often had coffee with Ruth, a nurse of exceptional integrity, one day she attempted to cancel our date, the reasons; she was running late; however, I'd left early, (we didn't have mobile in those days) and I never got the message. I arrived at the surgery, passing a man around forty, carrying a rucksack, he smiled my heart fluttered he was incredibly handsome. Ruth followed stinking to high heaven.

We agreed to reschedule. Later, I found out why? The man I'd passed was the cause, a tramp that wandered the countryside and turned up at the surgery door periodically without any warning. The doctors were used to Ruth's kind-heartedness; they allowed her to convert a storeroom at the back entrance back to the bathroom for this annual ritual. When he arrived at the door, he was bone tired and weary.

Ruth was tender and kind,

Yet pragmatic, she cut his fingernails and curling toenails, his matted lice-ridden hair, and he allowed her to shave him. Her on the toilet seat, and no doubt, mentoring went on. I spoke to the other nurses and found out that she washed his back, the most intimate thing a woman did for her husband when he came back from the coal mines.

Ruth was people-focused, paying more attention to what others needed and in my eyes, that's pure unconditional love, compassion, and vocation. She never spoke of her work and I was to find out she did many amazing things for others, way past what others did. Ruth arranged clothes from the WRVS and food. She was a rare breed in the world of the Hippocratic oath, to help without judgement or criticism. He had nothing to give her, or had he? Trust is a powerful gift.



When Annie's mother was failing in health, and her home too challenging to manage, Annie and her husband took her into their small rented house. Bearing in mind their mother-daughter relationship was complicated. But Annie validated that it would only be for a short time; and being a nurse, she knew time was running out. Annie also believed it was better to see how her mother was faring daily rather than a weekly, and more importantly to see her mother's face, for that way she could tell what her needs were and how best these could be met.

Annie didn't want a stranger taking her place.

As Annie said of caregivers. 'they play a role, but they're not her children, that's my job, it's payback time.' With masses of TLC and adaptation on both sides, her mother went past the six-months. A year passed and then another and into the third. When asked how she'd done this, her reply was, 'this has been the most rewarding thing I've ever done in my life. What I learnt about myself was priceless.'

Annie transformed before my eyes.

She shone with inner beauty. I wondered how therapeutic this had been for her, and me as a trainer. Could I have done what Diane did? Sleep in a cottage, knowing that it easy prey? Or Annie who took her mother into her tiny home? At the time, I couldn't although Annie taught me compassion because her relationship was fraught with old hurts, mine had all been resolved years earlier with my mother. Yet it took me four years to get to Annie's level. What about Ruth? Could I have done what she did? And Mo? When I had a perception of poverty? We call these acts of humility, unconditional love, grace, and compassion.



LOVE AND COMPASSION

I was able to be more of these many years later with a neighbour who was always falling, and because of severe diarrhoea needed washing each time, but I had grown a lot, and he was a gentleman, and I respected him. Could I have done this for my husband if he'd survived his major stroke, in a heartbeat and I'd have loved the opportunity to take care of him, but that never happened?

When my mother was cruel to my dying father,

I challenged her gently, but firmly, and she said, 'payback time for the years of abuse,' and my answer was, 'now isn't the time to be paying anyone back let alone an ill and dying man.' I cleaned him up, remade the bed and tucked him in. I'd forgiven him years ago all I felt was compassion for a dying man. But I was also saddened, as by now, I'd worked in the voluntary sector and knew my mother's impatience and anger was prevalent in the world of nursing homes.

I also recognised how easy it was,

To lose that natural caring attitude we have as children when we enter the adult world of "must have" and "taking." I'd seen old friends die for want of love and support from their adult children and both my husband and myself feared for our ageing future. But it was Ruth and Mo way back in the 70s who were the catalyst to kindness and giving, and Diana in the late 90s who taught me about attachments and trust, and Annie who inspired me to be a better, kinder person. And while I was the spiritual wanderer and still growing back then and still am today. I'd forgiven my parents, so when it came to having mum stay with us, I was more open to Gordon's suggestion.



GRATITUDE WITH MAGNITUDE

These women never succumbed to avaricious wants; instead, they worked towards needs. Each had gone beyond wellbeing, some attained inner peace, but they were into the realms of the optimum spiritual woman, the divine woman, and had the makings of the ultimate BIDA woman. But how can we become this special and be part of this specialness? We could do something straightforward, something that gives's our time, something we can never buy over the counter by following the five steps because this leads to gratitude with magnitude.

1. Stop more
2. Step back more
3. Reflect more
4. Give thanks more
5. Step up more

Avoid people who don't feed your soul.

And look out for women like Diana, Mo, Ruth and Annie, be with them. Listen to them, learn from them, emulate them, but always be yourself, never try to be someone else just a better version of you. Ask them how they do things, because without women like these, we become superficial and shallow, merely existing and surviving, and that's not enough. Please be aware I've had many women in my life who've had all the qualities I admire most.

My grandmother, my mother-in-law, very close friends, all selfless, however, I chose these four women out of thousands of clients and students because, at the time of writing this Ebook, years ago, these women were in my life.



SUMMARY

These women had me: Stopping, stepping back, reflecting, being grateful so I could step up as they often did. But how do we get to be like these women? Every day for a few minutes, do this:

- ❖ Check out the environment closest to you.
- ❖ Check out the situations closest to you
- ❖ Be mindful of your behaviour
- ❖ Check out your actions
- ❖ Look at how more capable you could be
- ❖ Correct those personality flaws
- ❖ Check out who you are, your identity matters
- ❖ Check if your beliefs are congruent
- ❖ Check if your values match your expectations
- ❖ Check if you're in line for your purpose
- ❖ Has your and others wellbeing been a top priority
- ❖ Have some time out to engage in inner peace

A young teacher fresh out of college told me in the 50s, that if we only learn one thing, could be from a book, a course or someone, then that was enough to fire the desire to learn more. I took that on board, never expecting something huge, yet always finding something inspirational, and the magical happened.

Memories, ideas, a thought that had me stopping and stepping back, ad me, reflecting, being grateful, and in that magic, I retained essential information to pass exams. To learn the lessons of life, to know with complete authority that there are no mistakes, only learning experiences, that to accept challenges, take risks, to love and be loved, to have children, have various careers. But more importantly, to be me.



I BELIEVE IN LOTS OF THINGS

I believe in pink in the third semester of my life.
I believe in people
I believe family is more important than money,
I believe that money can change lives,
I believe in second chances, but not third ones,
I believe in giving value for money,
I believe in working smarter rather than harder,
I believe hard work never kills you, but laziness does
I believe self-education is self-mastery,
I believe stopping, stepping back, reflecting, before stepping up,
I believe that order, routine and responsibility is vital,
I believe in hugs.
I believe forgiveness is freedom,
I believe there are leaders and followers for a reason,
I believe in loyalty
I believe that laughing burns calories much quicker.
I believe in kissing and loving but only with those you love.
I believe in gratitude with magnitude,
I believe in the power of the mind, body and soul,
I believe in kindness and giving,
I believe a smile cost nothing yet is utterly priceless
I believe in inner strength when everything goes pear-shaped.
I believe mistakes are learning experiences.
I believe that tomorrow is another day.
I believe in a Higher Power than us, and I believe in heaven
I believe in unconditional love, having faith and hope
I believe in miracles, synchronicity and signs
I believe happy women are the most beautiful women.
I believe in me.

Sylvia Lerigo



A LIFE OF LEARNING

At some point, you have to value yourself enough
and stop crossing oceans for people
Who won't even go over a stream for you?
Maybe it's time to DELETE big time.

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A crisis often has you valuing things differently.

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So have courage.
Be flexible and spontaneous.
Delete the negative past and forgive because it's freeing.
Be kind and fair and give something back every day;
Smile, it creates a good feel factor.
Just for now, do not worry, fear, anger, envy or hate,
be a giver, love unconditionally,
and do things without conditions because of everything in life,
the good, the bad and the ugly come
Back ten-fold.

Sylvia Lerigo

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Sometimes you have to stand alone,
To prove that you can still stand.

(Anon)