Home Schooled

Why My Inner Child Refuses to Go to College

By
Barry Emanuel Zeve

This is a P.S.A.,
a **P**ublic **S**ervice **A**nnouncement.

If you're home schooling your inner child,
you should read this slowly and carefully.

Why My Inner Child Won't Go To College

In using the word "my"
I'm already revealing to you that I'm a single parent.
I would have used the word "our" if I had a husband
to share the burdens and joys of raising my inner child.
I had my inner child late in life.
Now I'm almost 70 and she's sweet 16.
So, we both suffer from senioritis.

My life was modeled on the life of my parents
who divorced when I was seven.
Like my inner child,
I grew up without a dad.

It should have been no surprise
that I'd have to raise my inner child on my own,
just as *my* mother had to do with me.
My inside voice slowly came out of the closet
long after my penis and anus
had made their way into the world of men.
But now my inner child can speak for herself
in a way I never could or would.

I just want to add that
I'm proud that I'm raising my inner child
like *my* mother raised me.
I've dedicated this book to us.
She's the best thing that's ever happened to me,
with or without a college education.
Now that she's found her voice,
I'm ready to stretch my wings.
I've installed a dimmer switch on my halo
and am ready to play ball.
So watch me, gurls!
Consider me dangerous…

Werk

The word for “work” in Hebrew is “avoda”.
It means both work and worship.
But the gay word for psychological enlightenment is
“werk”,
as in,
“Werk it, gurl!”

So let’s take the “fear” out of “fierce” and get to werk.
I’m going to help you out of that straight jacket you’re in.
I’m going to find you a man’s best friend
from the inside out!
If you’re just a boi at heart,
I’ll turn you into the man you most admire.
And if you’re a girl,
I’ll turn you into one of my gurls.
I’ll turn you into a vison of yourself,
someone with a heart,
and who isn’t afraid to use it.

Everyone has to werk for a living.
The library never closes.
As RuPaul said,
“Reading (judging) is fundamental.”

So as you read my words,
remember that everyone can read.
But only I’ve made a promise to you in writing
to teach you how to read your *self*
cover to cover.

Loss

Some lose their figure over time
and the bathroom scale is the only thing that tells them
the cold, hard truth.
Some lose their way morally
and end up in prison.
Some are locked up inside
because they've lost their will to live.
Some get lost on city streets literally
and drive like they're the only one on the road.
Some lose their heart,
sometimes even more than once.
Some have to suffer the loss of someone so dear
that they'll never be the same again.
For some, it's God they can't find.
And some, like me,
had to lose their mind

What I'm talking about is grief.
I know a grief much greater than sorrow for others.
I can grieve for me.

Rhetorical Statements, Not Questions

"Why my inner child refuses to go to college" is a rhetorical *statement*. It's not a rhetorical *question*. You're clearly curious what the argument is about between my inner child and me, or you wouldn't have bothered to read as far as the first page.

Obviously, I won't *die* without my inner child getting a formal education. I now realize she's not interested in the conventional idea of success. She just wants to live her life like normal people of the working class. She doesn't want see herself as someone special.

Her father and I met when we were in our fifties, just after boyfriend #1 and I broke up in 2004 after our 14 year relationship crashed and burned. Little did I know that I was going to leave that gay relationship, only to be driven by such loneliness and disappointment that I'd get myself knocked up by me!

Who would have thought we'd need protection from ourself? When I discovered I was consciously pregnant with an inner child, nobody could have been more surprised than me. This was an immaculate conception beyond anything they talk about in church…

But now she's at that uncomfortable age when she thinks she knows everything: a Gen Z'er. And I'm certainly not going to contradict her. I leave that to you to do. I'm sure you'll have plenty to say about what she should expect from life after high school.

After *my* mother divorced my father in 1960, my father and I had a distant relationship for the rest of his life that we tried to make look closer than it really was. He really wasn't a dad. He was a European "father" who didn't know how to be a dad.

But I've actually grown closer to him now that he's dead. Now I can see that I loved him very much, even though I couldn't even decide on a name for what we had then.

My mother and I, on the other hand, had a very close relationship until her death two years ago on June 23rd, 2019.

But she and I were actually *too* close. She could be so intrusive that when *I* was a teenager (I swear to God) I actually decided I couldn't have sex in the same city she lived in!

I felt her breathing down my neck even then. I had to move half way around the world to come out in Israel just to feel that I was far enough away from my mother for her not to know what I was doing, with whom, and when.

I found closure with my father when I realized that I'd loved a man I never knew. And I found closure with my mother when I realized that I'd loved a woman, despite everything about her *that* I knew.

If life is a journey with a beginning, middle and end, then this little trip we're about to take together may be a rocky ride for you unless you're a good listener. Don't expect me to have to listen to you… You're going to have to do that yourself. A lot of bitches (queens) I know, think I'm sickening (cool).

You Should Enroll In Secondary School A Second Time

When I was in the sixth grade, the kids were asking one another if their parents had told them about the facts of life. Of course, I said my mother had, but she hadn't. So I had to figure out from what the kids were saying what those facts actually were. The truth, as it turned out, seemed implausible to me. In fact, I thought it was downright nasty. But I was open minded, even then.

In junior high, the kids began to date and talk about the sex some of them were having. I wasn't interested because I wasn't straight. What's the point of talking about something you're never going to do?

At the time I was more interested in developing my head than giving or getting head... And I certainly wasn't going to discuss *that* topic with anyone, not in the 1960s. In those days, nobody knew who was straight or gay. I would have been killed or beaten senseless.

So the topic of sex was something I had to study by myself with my *self*. And I have to say that I was a terrible teacher and student. I didn't have a clue what I was doing. It wasn't until I was 16 that I stumbled upon orgasm, quite by accident.

But in my defense, once I knew the basics, I quickly made up for lost time. (Talk about sixteen being sweet!) And because I was already so flexible and talented as a ballet dancer, giving *myself* head soon became my favorite pastime. And I didn't have to worry about me kissing and telling. Besides, I was pretty hot.

But I had no idea that I would have been considered "gifted" by my peers. I just wanted to become a famous ballet dancer. I didn't want to make a name for myself as a contortionist.

You might judge me for that. And I'd understand if you feel that my modesty went to the extreme at school where I didn't talk about it. But at home, I was coiled up to my heart's content for the duration of my adolescence. Sadly, I figuratively had my head up my ass most of the time, as well. So no need to be jealous.

If I could, I'd actually vote to do it all over again. I'd go back to the beginning of junior high school and go through my whole secondary school experiences a second time. I didn't have a clue what was going on the first time. But with my inner child consciously by my side, I'm sure I'd get a more thorough education the second time around.

That was a long time ago. And now I can well understand why my inner child refuses to go to college. Who needs a college education if you've learned so much about your self

by yourself? Who needs to worry about what others think of you if you're proud of who you (second person plural) are.

My Formal Education

I think we should start by getting to know one another before I tell you what I think about life generally. I'd like to start by boasting to you about myself in a conventional way. When getting to know new people, we all like to slip in our achievements to subtly impress the other person. So, that's what I'm going to do now. Forget what I said in the previous chapter. Pretend you didn't hear it…

I don't want to be sly or shy about my achievements because I don't want to give you the impression that I'm overly humble. That would be untrue. It was bad enough being so modest growing up that I didn't explore sex with anybody other than me. That ruined my adolescence completely. I'm not going to make the same mistake now with humility.

Just don't come back later and blame me for bragging. You knew from the start that I had facilities and disabilities, same as everyone else:

I have a bachelor's degree in English literature from the University of Southern California (1984). I have a master's degree from Cal-State, L.A. in Education with a concentration in curriculum and instruction (1987). And I have another master's degree from San Francisco State University in English with a specialty in linguistics (1995). I also have a secondary teaching credential in English. For ten years, I taught junior and senior high school English and adult ESL.

You'd think that with all that education, I'd do better watching Jeopardy. But I forgot most of what I learned. So it's a good thing most of that education was paid for with scholarships. I'd hate to think of all *my* money having gone down the drain…

My boyfriend – yes! I found a second boyfriend when I was 57! My boyfriend (who's 12 years younger than me, I might add…) only has a couple of years of college, but he could win a fortune on Jeopardy if he wasn't so shy. I keep telling him to try out, but he just cringes at the thought of being on TV. I, on the other hand, would love nothing more than to be a celebrity!

But I digress.

Frankly. when my inner child said she didn't want to go to college, at first I was shocked. And then I was furious. After all the work I went through to become a card-carrying member of the middle class to enjoy the rewards of a comfortable life, she decided she wants to do something new and different. "Why?" I asked her. She wouldn't say. You know how they are at that age…

You never know what might be around the next corner in life. Life is full of surprises. I remember having one of the most amazing experiences of my entire life when I was only six year's old:

I happened to watch a ballet dancer on TV. It was the world-famous ballet dancer Eric Bruhn, and he was on The Wonderful World of Disney. (I later learned that he was in a secret love affair with Rudolf Nureyev at the time.). I also later discovered that I'd watched him perform an amazing 35 entrechat-six in Act II of Giselle.

I was in such awe of what his feet could do, that I consciously experienced the meaning of the word "chagrin" for the first time in my life, even though I hadn't yet heard the word spoken aloud.

A feeling inside me told me that I could never do what he was doing. My family would disapprove of me if I told them I wanted to dance like that.

And then I felt another funny feeling inside that spread throughout my entire body. It was like a shadow that

darkened my heart, leaving the weather within me grey and damp for the rest of my childhood.

For years, my moods all lay under a cloud of repression and depression. I later thought it might have been because of all the fighting between my parents. Then I thought it had been caused by their divorce and the fact that my father lived in New York and I, in California.

But it was always raining inside me. I felt dreary, cold and damp. There was no silver lining to be found in anything I did. I was in a fog. And I don't think it burned off until I entered a ballet studio for the first time when I was 16.

I became a ballet dancer in 1969 without telling anybody. It was love at first sight. I couldn't stop myself. I married myself to ballet, and I thought we were going to live together happily forevermore. Ballet was my first love, and, at the time, I swore that nothing would ever come between us.

But it was a marriage I had to secretly arrange for my self by myself. For the first year, my mother didn't even know I was taking class. But when she found out I didn't want to go to college because I wanted to become a ballet dancer, *she* thought she reacted to my decision very reasonably. She suggested I go to college, become a teacher and dance during my summer vacations.

How do you tell your mother that you're in love with something men do while prancing around in slippers and tights? How do you tell her that you're *that* kind of boi? I think she would have been less shocked if I'd said I wanted to become a drag queen like Divine in "Pink Flamingos".

(But that movie didn't come out until 1972.) [1]

---

[1] "The first person to describe himself as "the queen of drag" was William Dorsey Swann, who was born a slave. In the 1880s, he started hosting drag balls in Washington, DC attended by other men who were formerly enslaved. Their gatherings were often raided by the police and then documented in the newspaper." [internet]

I thought Ballet would be my ticket to fame and fortune. I could see the handwriting on the wall. Nothing was going to stop me.

I had no idea then that I was destined to become a mom to an inner child in my fifties who now doesn't want to go to college. Doesn't she realize the importance of having a trade you can fall back on when you get older?

As it happens, my inner child turned out to be like my father, quite zaftig. She's a big gurl. I call her my "glamor toad". [2] She's not pretty, but she's beautiful. And she knows the difference because she knows what true beauty looks like. She's got amazing eyes that can see down into your soul.

When *I* completed high school, I lived at home and studied ballet in Beverly Hills at The David Lachine Studio under the direction of his wife, Tatiana Riabouchinska, one of the baby ballerinas in the Ballet Russe (1909-1929).

I moved to Israel the following year at 18 and danced with The Bat-Dor Modern Dance Company (1971). In 1976, I went to New York and took advanced classes at American Ballet Theater (ABT) near Lincoln Center and the Harkness School on the Upper East Side. [3]

---

[2] Thank you for describing yourself in that way, Miss Ginger Minj, season 7, RuPaul's Drag Race. You inspired my inner child to seek greatness.

[3] I'm not dropping these names for no reason. I'm hoping you'll be impressed. I was a part of the amazing history of 20th Century ballet. Sadly, my career never took off. In fact, it crashed and burned in New York when I had to be involuntarily committed to Bellevue Mental Hospital in Lower Manhattan. But I still say it's important to have dreams. Don't ever regret your dreams.

One day in Madam Valentina Pereyaslavec's class at ABT, I found myself behind Margot Fonteyn at the barre. We even shared a few words with one another!

And in David Howard's classes at Harkness, twice I was in class with Mikhail Baryshnikov!!! When the class turned to do the exercises at the barre on the left side, I could see him nearby. It felt as though we were dancing as one to some sort of celestial music that had melded with the Mozart accompaniment from the pianist. I fused with his body in class in a way that no woman he's slept with ever has. To this day, he has no idea how intimate we once were in my mind…

Although these were the three greatest days of my life, my inner child is the one who's now nuts about stars, not me. She adores celebrity. I have to convince her that she's as exciting and talented as any of the stars she sees on TV.

Darlean

I didn't tell you the name of my inner child until now. As you can obviously see, it's "Darlean". At first I spelled it, "Darleen."

But when I discovered my little love-child had body issues, I realized I wanted to change her name to "Darlean". I wanted to be sure to remind her to always stay as lean as she possibly could. How else would anyone be able to love her?...

Darlean has held that spelling against me all these years. I can't say now that I blame her. My need to be thin, popular and sensuous has been an unnatural need that was driven into me by my mother. Darlean didn't deserve her legacy. But what am I supposed to do now?

I don't call Darlean my glamor toad anymore because it slowly became clear to me that name calling of others emanates out from within.

Darlean isn't at all like me. It's hard for me to believe that she even comes out of my loins.

But she does. She isn't rude, crude, impolite, inconsiderate, selfish, unkind, unsympathetic, coarse, common or vulgar. She looks *forward* to treating people well. I can hear her in my mind thinking up nice things to say to those she doesn't even like. She's everything I'm not.

Darlean doesn't believe in God, but I do. She hates it when I pray. I love to pray to let God know how much I love life, how well I'm doing down here and how happy I am to be alive. Darlean couldn't care less what Anyone thinks of her. She does what she does for herself and nobody else.

But when things are going badly, she doesn't want to pray with me. When I want to ask God for something I really need and want, *then* she's tongue-tied… And so, we're pretty much stuck with one another having to figure things out by ourselves. God Can Surely Tell that Darlean and I aren't always on the same page.

I do have to say, though, that Darlean has an uncanny way of embellishing my life with a magical glee that makes me question the meaning of this whole experience called "reality". She's constantly asking me questions. The only thing that's bad about that is that her questions only comprise one word, "Why?"

I realize now that encouraging her to be svelte upsets her so much that she's giving me the silent treatment. But she has to understand how gals were raised in my generation, especially gurls from good homes who were expected to use their physical charms to catch a man.

I'm not a racist, homophobe or misogynist. But I have to admit I'm a fat-phobe. And Darlean has been the target of my obsession her whole life.

I really do respect people of other races, lifestyles and genders. I don't judge a book by the shelf it's on. I don't judge it if it's in a library rather than a bookstore. I don't judge a book if it's sitting in a box on the street. I don't even judge a book by its cover.

But like my mother before me, when I see a book of more than 200 pages, I begin to get judgy. I don't like thick books. They scare me. Who can read all that? And who the hell wants to? If the author couldn't write a book that's lean, why should *I* have to read it?

I named my inner child "Darlean" in the hopes that she'd be lean. But I got what I got. And that's going to be a lifelong challenge for the two of us.

U and I

Now that you know a little bit about me, I'd like to turn the conversation around and tell you a little about yourself…

But before I do, I feel the need to lecture you! So just bite your tongue. It'll be over before you know it:

We all have two worlds, a world around us and a world within. We were all born from a woman, and we all have a navel to prove it. And one more thing. We're all going to die!

That's all I have to say about everybody in this world. Now I'm ready to tell you something about yourself:

You're like a hulled, sunflower seed. There's something that you're missing. If you were a pronoun, I'd say that the "y" and "o" have been pushed aside in your effort to grow out of your shell. The only thing left of you is "u".

This book is going to be about u and me. I've asked u to come along with me as I make my way down into my unconscious to relive my past because I've never liked going there by myself. It's like the basement of an old, apartment building. It's creepy down there.

I felt very lonely all my life, and, as you surely know, loneliness feels nothing like solitude. Solitude is magnificent. Who doesn't love solitude?

But who doesn't hate the feeling of being lonely? I dread it. If my boyfriend were to die before me, I'd be devastated.

Now that I know the joys of intimacy with my *self*, I can only hope I'd be capable of managing without him, need be.

So I thank u for listening to me thus far. I think u and I have the beginnings of a wonderful friendship if we continue together in this way (me doing all the talking and you just listening). I wish all my friends could listen as well as u do.

Looking Back At My Life From The Age of Six

When I was about four years old, I did something wrong and my mother sent me to my room. But when she came to my room later to ask me whether I was ready to apologize, it turned out she wasn't fooling around. I flippantly told her that I wasn't ready to apologize, and she promptly slapped me so hard across the face that I bit my tongue, and it bled.

A year later my father told me in no uncertain terms to stop sucking my thumb. But because I was an extremely insecure and nervous child, I couldn't obey him. Every time he came into the room, I pulled my thumb out of my mouth and every time he left, I stuck it back in.

Every night I'd go to sleep to the sound of my parents fighting around our dining room table. One night, my father stormed into my room, saw me soundly sleeping with my thumb in my mouth, and he slapped me so hard across the face that I woke up biting my tongue (again). This time blood ran down my chin.

So with a mother and father who used the disciplinary techniques they had in their tool boxes at that time, it was impossible for me to say what was on my mind.

The era they were born into in Europe was terrifying and torturous. So, it should have been no surprise that it would take me till late, middle age before I could say and do what was right for me without having to figuratively bite my tongue.

I was psychologically arrested by the age of six. And I didn't let me out on my own recognizance until I was 60. I can look back now on what happened then, and see how

damaged my parents were in just having grown up in the first half of the 20th Century. (Not to say that the second half of that century was a piece of cake. But my generation made many improvements over what had transpired before us. But we've also come close to destroying the planet in the process.)

The Theory of Trickled Down Psychology

My lesbian cousin swears that I'm an elitist. Even though she later said she was joking, I know she wasn't joking because I could tell by her tone of voice. (People always say they were joking after the fact, but they were dead serious at the time. The smile on their face later and the indignation in their voice is phony. They're just trying to cover their ass.)

My cousin said what she said with shock, scorn and anger. I don't remember faces, but I never forget a tone of voice.

Like every other lesbian I've ever met, my cousin is really more like a Siamese, fighting fish. You put a mirror in their bowl and they start attacking their own reflection.

This is a lesbian issue. I know so because, although I first noticed it with my cousin, I tested my theory out on her lesbian friends. But to be fair, when I looked more carefully at straight men, I could see them doing the same.

Women and gay men aren't like that. Stick a mirror in our face and we study ourself for flaws and imperfections in our complexion and how our hair looks.

I think my cousin thinks that getting under my skin is a sport. I think it's a pastime she enjoys when she gets bored. So, I like to screw with her mind. I tell her I'm just a mirror of herself. But she and her wife just shake their heads and swear that bitches be crazy…

I digressed again. Ugh!

I wanted to talk about Darlean. Darlean is just a common-variety snob, not an elitist. She thinks all the beautiful people live and thrive at the *bottom* of the pyramid,

not at the top. She thinks people at the *top* are elitists, and she's quite a snob about it, too! She's got no patience for any of them.

She thinks everyday people are the best and finest. She wants nothing to do with middle class, bourgeois elitists who want to claw their way to the top just to be able to call one another "a rich bitch." And she has even less tolerance for the stinking rich.

My father was really the elitist in our family! He came from gobs of gelt. He just couldn't make a living without his parents' money. What my parents were fighting over every night after I was sent to bed was his inability to make a living. We were really poor. He was a shoe salesman in a department story. And he had five people to feed on his meager salary.

I must have been unconsciously turned off by my father even as a boy because he talked so much about the rich life he'd enjoyed in Lithuania before the Russians took it all away. My mother had been attracted to the elitist in him – until she discovered he couldn't make enough money to keep us all sheltered and fed.

That's what sent her packing. She bought three brand new suitcases, grabbed her two young kids and took off for California after the last of my father's older children from his first wife (that *my* mother raised) had flown the coop and gotten married.

We left for L.A. the day after my half-sister said, "I do". It was 1959. My mother decided it would be better to face a world that distained her for being a divorcée than fight with an elitist who loved the rich but couldn't make a living to support his wife and kids.

This is probably why Darlean is looking to be swept off her feet by a guy who's filled with honey (wisdom), not money. She comes from a single parent (me) who has a vision of a land of milk (love) and honey (wisdom). So

Darlean knows damn well not to repeat the mistakes of *my* old man.

The "T" Word

When I went to school in the 50s and 60s, we studied the three "R's." In junior high, they got fancy and added science, foreign language and a choice between shop and home economics.

I didn't take Home Ec. even though I wanted to. Shop and Home Ec. were breeding grounds for either testosterone or estrogen. And you didn't dare mix hormones with electives in those day.

I've always thought I knew how to cook, clean and sew – until I met my boyfriend. He swears I can't do any of them right. He channels his mother in the kitchen and his father in our garage. And so he does everything around the house himself. (Am I going to fight with him about that? I don't think so…)

What we didn't have at school in my day was the word that starts with "t" that rhymes with "wreck" that you can tack on to "nology". It's a combination of science and math mixed into an unholy union that can only be found in machines. It's the study that led my generation to invent computers, smart phones and high def. TV.

I can't even say the "t" word because it brings up feelings of such incompetence and stupidity that the mere mention of it by name sends shivers down my spine. Naturally! My boyfriend is good at "t", too…

If you're single, and you want to get married, I suggest you make a list of all the things you can and can't do. And then advertise on line for someone to trade with you. There'll be far less chance the two of you will ever get divorced, given how miserable you'll both be having to do the things you hate doing.

Call "t" a phobia. Call it a flaw. I don't care what you call it. Just don't call it by name. When faced with things you

hate to do, do what I do. Call your boyfriend to do them for you…

The Second Best Sex I Ever Had

When I was living in Amsterdam (after I'd left Israel in 1973). I met an older man (36) at the D.O.K., the biggest club in all of Europe in those days. I was 21. He sat there with a beer in his hand watching me dance. And he had a look of such respect and admiration on his face that I was fascinated by him before we even met.

Paul was dark and handsome. He had a French last name and looked Latin, although he spoke Dutch, German, English and Indonesian, but not French. His father had had a job with an oil company on an island some distance from Jakarta. So Paul grew up in the jungles of the Far East with brown lads who sported flashing smiles and exotic eyes. And he told me he'd fooled around with a lot of them as a kid, too.

He had a gorgeous body and a nice cock, but he wasn't a top. And as much as I tried to "encourage" him to take the lead, our sex life declined as our friendship grew hard and firm.

Paul was into young guys who were tops, but he couldn't say so in so many words. And I was so obtuse, that I couldn't piece the evidence together.

He'd been in a long term relationship with a guy from Bergen, Norway for five years before we met. In those days, five years together was like 50 years today. And although Paul met Jan when Jan was 16 (just legal in Norway), they separated when Jan was my age, 21. I suspect Paul thought Jan had grown too old for him by 21…

Paul moved back to Holland, and I suppose Jan just kept doing his thing in Norway, not knowing what he'd done that was so bad that Paul left him. I guess *I* was Paul's idea of trying to work out his issues with an older man…

Oh, I think I digressed again. (What's my problem?)

One spring day, Jan came down from Norway to visit Paul, and they drove in to Amsterdam from Utrecht, where Paul lived with his mother. The three of us spent the day playing tourist. Paul's deux chevaux (two piston French automobile) only had two seats, but I had three old bikes. (Nobody in Holland in those days had fewer than two. Bikes were getting stolen all the time.) So the three of us biked around town. It was a magical spring day. The tulips were in bloom and the smell of beer brewing in the Amstel factory pervaded the town. *I* was their local guide and *they* were the tourists. I felt just grand!

But Paul had a night job and had to go back to Utrecht. And I was secretly looking forward to spending more time with Jan, if you know what I mean... He was tall, a typical blond, blue-eyed Scandinavian, about 26 years old. As I implied earlier, he was a top. And I liked older men who were tops.

So Paul left us together, thinking that nothing would happen since he and I were such close friends. Well that was a big mistake because that night with Jan turned out to be the second most memorable night of sex I ever had in my whole life (until I met my boyfriend ten years ago).

Let me fast forward to the point where I was on my back and Jan was deep inside me with my legs over his shoulder. He was very boyish and I was very girlish then. The chemistry was just perfect. I couldn't have felt more attended to.

But all of a sudden, Jan began to hyperventilate. He even clutched his heart at one point. It looked as though he was going to have a heart attack.

But I didn't show any sign of caring. I just got even more girlish and fetching. I did lower my legs until my feet were on the bed, so as not to put extra pressure on his torso. But I was just too excited to stop to talk.

His breathing was heavy. He was gasping for breath. But he, too, was so excited that neither of us wanted to break our rhythm or embrace.

When we came, we came together – in a torrential flood that soaked me inside and out. As we lay in each other's arms laughing afterwards, I felt like I was the angel of death having secured another soul to take to heaven. I couldn't have been happier while feeling curiously malevolent at the same time. I felt I'd done the greatest, good deed of my life for the most despicable of reasons: I'd helped a man get through his fear of dying while making love.

Shakespeare talked about "cuming" as "dying." And Jan experienced his fear of dying while cuming inside me. I wasn't afraid of either. And I coaxed him to die in me twice more... I have to say that that night and the morning after were pretty hot.

I would have sworn that that had been a completely selfless act, if you'd asked me then. I didn't feel the least bit of guilt or the clawing inside I normally felt after self-indulgent sex in those primitive days of 20th Century gay life. It's remained a really hot memory to this day. And I still don't feel bad about it.

Of course, Paul's nose was bent out of shape when Jan told him we'd had sex. But Jan went back to Bergen, and I never saw him again.

I didn't tell Paul any of the details of that sexual escapade. Our friendship continued until the day I left Holland. In fact, he came down from Utrecht to visit me my last night in the country. But that wasn't a night I remember as well…

Chagrinned Again, I'm Sorry To Say

Boyfriend #1 and I met in 1990. We were together for 14 years. How many couples, gay or straight, have achieved a relationship as long as that? We had a house on a hill overlooking the bay side of San Francisco. He was the sole

owner of a market research company with more than 50 employees, and I was the quintessential gay wife who taught school.

We couldn't marry in those days, but we did blow up our domestic partnership agreement to poster size and had everyone sign it at our commitment ceremony. It was a simple affair. We were poor when we first got together. So we made it a potluck. And the theme was "family favorites growing up." We must have had six mac and cheese dishes. One wise guy brought 7-Up and Oreos. It really made me wonder who we'd picked for friends…

#1 was very smart and gifted at selling because he sold himself on me, and I was a hard sell. He never worked to make a *living*. He worked to show off how strong he was inside, perhaps because he was HIV+ and, in those days, that was a death sentence.

He liked to describe himself as never having met a stranger. And I suppose I was the strangest person he'd ever met. He wanted to convince me that I, too, could be his friend.

But #1 just couldn't say those two teensy, tiny words that many other men have trouble with too, "I'm sorry." Not even Elton John's song, "Sorry Seems To Be The Hardest Word" could connect the dots for him. It was #1's inability to apologize that was, in a nutshell, what killed our relationship 14 years later when I discovered he was secretly sleeping with his ex-boyfriend on the side – while I'd been monogamous the whole time!

I really wanted to talk about something else. Now I've lost my train of thought. Where was I?

Oh yes. Soon after we'd moved in together, I realized he used the word "chagrin" in a weird way. Whenever he said that word, it put a smile on his face. So I asked him what he was trying to say to me. And he told me he was "happy."

But because he was too smart and gifted to learn from anyone, he wouldn't entertain the idea that "chagrin" meant sad, not happy.

When I pulled out the dictionary and read him the definition, it was as if I was a dentist who hit a nerve in his mouth with my metal probe. The look on his face went ashen. I could practically see his whole body ripple as "chagrin" moved through it. Looking back, I think that was the day in our first year together when our relationship unofficially ended. Chagrin killed it.

Leaving him, and being on my own in the Castro {gay town} 14 years later as a gay man who'd just turned 50 (2004) was terrifying at first. By then, I finally realized that I'd missed the daddy stage in gay life, and I was no longer the boy-toy I'd been when I was a young dancer. I had no choice but to become a gay granddaddy-type.

Take it from me, gurl, men don't have daddy issues outside the bedroom. They have *grandpa* issues. What they really want is someone who can guide them with milk (love) and honey (wisdom). Whether you're screwing him or he's screwing you in bed, outside the bedroom, every man wants his grandpa by his side.

I never was as popular as when I hit my fifties and turned into one of the few proud, gay grandpas in the Castro. In my opinion, there's hope for anyone over the age of 50 if he's able to channel his inner grandfather If you met me today, you'd be amazed at what happened. Now I've channeled my inner grandma…

If Sheldon's Mom Had Had Me Tested

Imagine I'm Leonard. Now imagine I'm in a long term relationship with Howard, but both of us have a secret lust for Raj.

If you recall, Sheldon and I (Leonard) had a discussion about our mothers in one episode, in which he (Sheldon) told me (Leonard) that he loved *my* mom, Beverly Hofstadter,

because she performed all those fascinating psychological tests on me (Leonard) when I was a kid.

But now imagine that I (Leonard) told him (Sheldon) that I wished Mary Cooper had been *my* mom because then I would have been able to get tested by a third party to find out if it was *my* mother (Beverly Hofstadter) who was driving me crazy.

If things had turned out like that, I (Leonard) wouldn't have had to live my whole life worried about what was wrong with me. The shrinks could have helped me get my mother out of my head long before my internal *syndromes* turned into external *problems*.

I (Leonard) really should never have hooked up with a guy like Howard to begin with. But his issues with his Jewish mother were so similar to mine. I thought we could fight our mothers together. We were both probably friends with Sheldon because Sheldon's mom lived in his heart, not his head. His head was free for him to exercise his genius. And we admired his mind.

Unconsciously, I (me) think I've always really aspired to be more like Billy in "Young Sheldon." His best friends are chickens. He spends as much time as he can cooped up and alone. And Billy likes it that way! He's always happy!

When Billy grows up, I can see him coming out, but not like gay guys come out of a straight jacket into a down, gay jacket that leaves them morose. For Billy, it'll be more like coming out of a hen house than a closet. He'll keep that huge grin on his face. But it'll be because he's so grateful to be able to be with real women after all the chicks he cared for in the coop he was in growing up.

Everybody thinks Billy is as dumb as soup. But he doesn't seem to care how stupid people think he is. And maybe that contributes to why he's so happy. He's just fine being surrounded by a bunch of cackling hens.

What I'm worried will make Billy mad, sad and deeply disappointed when he grows up won't be in having to give

up his birds for the company of women, but in discovering how unkind some women can be! The pecking order of chickens is nothing compared to how some young women treat one another, and guys like Billy.

Billy's mom, Brenda Sparks, like Sheldon's mom, Mary Cooper, are both worried to death that neither of their boys can make friends. But what *is* a friend? How do you *make* a friend?

Sheldon and I (Leonard) became best buds in adulthood. But Sheldon couldn't appreciate someone as nice as Billy growing up. And that was, of course, because Sheldon is an elitist; always was. Amy is the only gal Sheldon associates with the magical delight of being a bird.

I can imagine that when Billy grows up, he'll get a job with FedEx and work off his baby fat delivering packages to people's doors. He'll put his chicken coop behind him and work on his biceps, instead. I suspect he'll never sport a six-pack. But is that what life is really all about?

I (me) think Billy's going to be smoking hot some day because the nicer the guy, the more attentive he is to learning from his partner in bed. And that's a kind of genius that some people take for granted.

God! I (Leonard) wish I'd been more like Billy and not so much like me… Now I'm just stuck with a boyfriend like Howard and a best friend like Sheldon.

Instead of hooking up with Howard, I should have looked for a great guy like Billy on the inside who's dipped in chocolate on the outside like Raj, that handsome Hindu. That would have been *my* dream team!

Oh, wait! I'm not Leonard. And Sheldon's mom is never going to have *me* tested. I guess I'm just going to have to figure out what it means to be me all on my own.

A Very Soleful Person

Unfortunately, years of life on this planet whittled me down until I was left with a very thin skin. You wouldn't

know it because I'm almost always smiling in public. As a dancer in that modern ballet company in Tel Aviv in the 70s, one wise guy even told me I should do toothpaste commercials because I had such a big grin on my face all the time.

But that was 50 years ago. You'd think I might have been able to put that shady lady behind me. Fat chance…

Anyway, here's my solution to thin skin problems in case it applies to you:

Have them take a sample from the thick skin from one of your heels and culture it in a lab until they've got a bolt of really thick skin that's about 6' x 4' x 2'. Then, they can replace all that *thin* skin with *thick* skin.

Then, you'll be soleful. And when people tell you how soulful you are, you can agree with them because they'll never know how *you* spell it. They'll just look at you and wonder what your secret is.

I got my skin transplanted, and now I'm proud to say that I'm a very soleful person. Now I've got an inner child who's home schooled who's majoring in dreaming big. And if it should happen to turn out that life really is just a school for spirits, she'll be fine with just having graduated life with a high school diploma. *She* says she doesn't want or need a Ph.D. in being "me".

I didn't go to college until my late twenties. But then I ate up knowledge as though I'd been starving all my life.

And yet, a university education did little for my self-esteem. They didn't teach wisdom in college then, and I haven't seen it listed in any university class catalogs since. So why go? Just to get a job you'll hate?

A lot of people with a college education are fond of climbing the ladder of success and then using their feet to step on the hands of those trying to come up the same way. It's the spoiled, middle class snobs with money who try to sue the little guys while the fat cats get away with a fortune.

I'm glad I'm not like that. If there's one thing that makes me the proud parent of a brilliant inner child, it's that I'm raising her right. I won't have to look back with shame at how Darlean turns out.

As for everyone else, I hope nobody even thinks about turning my skin into a lampshade like the Nazis did with Jewish skin. The skin they used was from straight Jews. Mine is much too thick for that…

I Am A Front Loading Washing Machine

Socrates said that man is a meaning making machine. That was 2,500 years ago. As you know, I'm terrified of machines because I think machines don't like me. So, the idea of machines that make meaning out of life is utterly horrifying. I can't think of anything more unattractive and intrusive.

The most meaningful machine I have is the cordless vacuum my boyfriend got us. It's thin. It's long. It's got a dial so you can adjust the suction power... What's more, my boyfriend empties it for me. It's so much fun to use that we fight over who gets to vacuum. What could be more meaningful than a relationship like that?

But what I really wanted to talk about is front loading washing machines, not vacuum cleaners. Sorry. My mind seems to have gone astray:

In childhood, we had metal soap dispensers at school that gave you little pink shavings of soap when you hit the metal doohickey. As I moved into adulthood, they were replaced with liquid soap dispensers. Nowadays, you only have to pass your hand under a soap dispenser in a public restroom and it knows to dispense a blob of white, creamy soap into your open hand. You don't even have to touch it. So meaningful…

Sometimes I think Darlean thinks she's a soap dispenser. Sometimes I think she thinks she's a vacuum cleaner. And

sometimes I think she thinks she's washing machine. So I think of her as a maid I've hired to clean up after me.

I throw all my dirty, inner garments on the floor and she picks them up, sticks them in the washer and dispenses the appropriate amount of soap. Then she washes, dries, folds and irons my inner outfits and puts them back in my closet. Every morning when I decide what to put on to conceal my nakedness from the world, there are my panties, glad rags and gowns in my closet, clean and fresh and ready to wear. (She does my dry cleaning, too.)

Now that Darlean's become consumed with the people she meets on social media who are opening her eyes to what we call "reality," she's learning that words like "chagrin" and the "t" word can muddy your inner wardrobe when you're out in the world. They can discolor your attire with cynicism and scorn in ways you may not even notice.

Life is dirty! Dirty, dirty, dirty! I'm so lucky to have a maid to do my wash for me. I don't have to wash my dirty laundry in public, like so many others do. Darlean cuts through all the years of baked on grease and grime inside of me. What a joy to raise an inner child to do the things you don't want to have to do for yourself.

No, Wait. I'm An Artist's Palette

It's sometimes hard to have an inner child because she can be anything she wants, including being a thing. I know a lot of people who project their inner child out onto the world and then treat other people like things.

For me, my inner child is like an artist's palette. I don't know whether other people paint pictures in their mind before they show the world their werk. From the looks of it, they squeeze paint right from the tube onto the canvas of life that we all have to share.

But that's so messy and crude. And it definitely makes this world look unfinished. I know I wouldn't want to sign my name to a work like that.

For me, Darlean is like an artist's palette where I mix my emotional colors together to get just the right hue for every corner I anticipate being painted into by the outside world. Then I apply what I've painted inside out onto my portion of the external canvas with just the right hue. That's how I became so enamored of dark colors.

I wouldn't be caught dead painting pictures right from the tube onto the canvas. I'm no Jackson Pollock. I'm not an abstract expressionist. I didn't invent the drip technique, and I certainly don't advocate using it on others.

If I pour or splash everyday feelings onto a horizontal surface, it had better be in bed. That's the only place where I'd like to see myself dripping uncontrollably.

Bette Midler and Carol King Verses J.Lo and Beyoncé

I had to Google J.Lo because I had no idea how to spell her name. I started with "jello," but when that didn't work, I had to get creative. To tell u The God's Honest Truth, I don't even know what J.Lo and Beyoncé (Be u once) look like. I couldn't point them out to u in a lineup. I just know they're singers. I couldn't even tell u the name of any of their songs.

I'll bet on the middler. And the king of carols never let me down. Bette Midler and Carol King are etched in me like a vow carved like an arrow through a heart on the bark of a tree. Now why is that? And where do I draw the line to separate *these* two from *those* two?

Why aren't I interested in young, women singers anymore? It couldn't possibly be because I'm not gay enough. My boyfriend swears I'm as gay as they get!...

I was deeply moved by Bette and Carol in my day. In my heart. we three were on a first name basis. I can still hear them singing inside me.

Granted Carol's lyrics are etched in my brain, while Bette's voice is recorded in stereo in my heart. But the lyrics of Carol and the sound of Bette have melded in my soul like

ivy that crawls up the trunk of a tree to become integral to its branches.

If Mikhail Baryshnikov could have sung like Bette Midler and composed music like Carol King in addition to the way he danced, I wouldn't have had to speculate on the possibility of angels coming down to Earth. I'd have had hard evidence of their presence. Perhaps then I would have strived to be an angel, too, instead of who I turned out to be.

"Not today Satan! Not today!" [4] I'm not going to get depressed about who I am today. I've still got werk to do.

Rosebud!

A "rosebud" is a sweet and tender description of the anus in gay speech. If you're a gay top, you enjoy rosebuds, but in a very different way than a straight man enjoys vaginas. Straight men don't know the first thing about vaginas. They've never had one.

But everyone's got an anus, gurlfriend. If you know how to deal kindly with an asshole, you know something you can use on everyone.

As the single parent of an inner child who'd reached puberty, I decided to sit Darlean down to teach her the facts of life from a gay parent's perspective. I started with her anus, and worked my way up from in there. I had to convince her that it's better to screw herself over than hurt other people. Teenagers find that hard to believe…

When I was young and gay, I was a bottom. I loved to be penetrated and filled with the lifeforce of handsome, young men.

But I discovered through painful experiences that most gay tops didn't know the first thing about their own rosebud, let alone mine. They didn't love what they were doing. They

[4] Grateful thanks to Bianca Del Rio, season 6 winner of The RuPaul's Drag Race.

only wanted to plow me like a garden so they could scatter their seeds.

I'm not made of wood, darling. I'm a sensitive human being. And my rosebud was a source of great joy and pride to me when I was young. I didn't appreciate tops who thought of me as a planter box to grow vegetables. Maybe they thought we were having sex in a raised bed of soil. Who knows? Who cares anymore.

Over a lifetime, I finally turned into the happy top I am today. The experience of having been a bottom taught me how to respect my boyfriend's rosebud. It's become very dear to me.

Straight men don't realize that a woman's vagina is like a gay man's rosebud. If you make jokes about it looking funny; complain about it being dirty; smelly; cheap; overused; too large; or too small – if you even *think* of it as bad for any reason whatsoever – you're going to find yourself in a relationship that's doomed to fail.

Women and gay, male bottoms want to feel that they're loved, respected, appreciated and enjoyed. If you treat us like an asshole instead of a cherished rosebud, don't complain to me about what happens to your love life. You'll deserve it.

My Inner Child Wants To Know "Why?"

When Darlean was still a child, she'd ask me why the sky is blue. And I'd get impatient with her because everyone knows it's orange at opposite ends of the day. I showed her that the sky turn grey before it rains. I even pointed out the rainbow in the sky after a storm. And who in his right mind can't see that the sky is black at night?

Here comes another lecture. So fasten your seatbelt:

Your inner child asks you "Why?" because s/he really doesn't know what *you* know. It doesn't matter how many languages you speak or skills you've accrued over a lifetime. Your inner child is going to ask you to explain a lot of

strange things. S/he seeks answers to questions you may not have yet pondered. Thanks to my inner child, I now know much more about life than most people my age.

But I'm through talking about my relationship to my inner child for the moment. Now I'd like to talk to you about my relationship to my *mother*.

My mother's voice is still alive and well in me, even though she's deceased. I'm the personification of my mother's voice. And that's become a great privilege for me. I'm truly a queen because my mother is deceased. I'm no longer a princess.

The following few paragraphs are a channeling of my mother's voice. She had a German accent. So imagine wherever there's a "w" starting a word, she would have said it with a soft "v". And the "th" sound, she would have uttered as a "z".

We ought to allow ourselves to experience the void, vacuum, vacancy and vacuity inside us. Such experiences don't mean we're worthless, futile, pointless or barren. That's just how we feel about ourself at a particular moment in time.

Light fills the air we breathe. We inhale light. We live in a light that's in us and around us.

But we also look down into the sea as far as the light will go to see what's in that medium, so different from what we see moving through thin air.

Intellectually, we're aware of strange creatures that reside in the deepest depths of the oceans, breathing water that isn't visible to them.

Their underwater world corresponds to our emotional realm. Our everyday feelings are like fish that swim in water illuminated by light.

But we also have feelings that live in our unconscious that we can't name; strange feelings we can't even identify. They exist below our ability to acknowledge their being

unless they happen to figuratively wash up on shore or get caught in a net.

If you find yourself so bereft of meaning, direction and purpose, face the emptiness inside you. It may be a vacuum devoid if thoughts, or it may be a black, watery space filled with strange feelings.

Don't literally do a thing. Watch nothingness in darkness until you see yourself contributing to nothingness with something you do instinctively that you can be proud of.

This is a snapshot of yourself to share with your *inner* child and for the two of you to cherish for a lifetime. There's nobody in the outer world you can share it with except, perhaps, your mother.

Outer space is no different from inner space. Both are places where you're free to be a child. Both places are a mystery to those who are curious and inspired.

Mysterious is the world where awe (indigo) and ecstasy (violet) exist. You'll be free if you can lead the child in you through red (rage); orange (agony); yellow (horror); green (jealousy); and blue (grief). This is the emotional journey that'll renew your faith in yourself.

You personify the rainbow in the sky after a storm. You've made a promise to yourself to live in harmony with your self. You're the personification of each and every one of the colors of the rainbow. You're a promise you're learning to make only to you.

U can turn off your German accent now.

When Your Inner Child Is Still In Diapers

The voices in my head, like roads, don't all go somewhere. Some are dead ends, and then I have to turn around and come back to where I was before, to move forward in another direction.

I have a tendency to digress. But I always make my way back to the main road even though it can take me a lifetime to get a sense of where my thoughts have been taking me.

Some of my thoughts are accompanied by feelings that inspire me to use my hands and facial gestures to express myself. But u can't see that from ur vantage point.

I'm an author. So, don't judge me for not dancing naked before u or leaving u with a sculptural masterpiece u can view from all side.

Darlean has an intuitive sense of where I am and where I'm trying to go, even if I get lost inside from time to time. She knows that life is a tightrope. I taught her well. She knows that it's easy to lose your balance and fall. And she knows it's a long way down before you crash and burn at the bottom.

When she was little, every time *my* mind hit a dead end, *she'd* start to cry. I could hear her sobbing inside me. And then I'd have to deal with her as well as find my way back to where I was.

Darlean was a difficult child growing up because she was so sensitive. When she was in diapers, she wasn't the kind of baby that ate and slept all day, giving me the ability to do other things. Darlean was a handful right from the start. I couldn't leave her side. And when *I* was exhausted at night and just wanted to sleep, then *she* was ready to play.

I wish I could have submitted a request for the temperament of my inner child. Because, boy, I wouldn't have asked for what I ended up with! She's still extremely sensitive. If I make one wrong move, she's on to me.

But I don't tell Darlean that. I'm her parent, and I love my inner child no matter who she is or how she behaves. But just between the two of us, it hasn't been easy…

Young And Single

The good old days, long before I became a parent, weren't "good" at all. In fact, my youth was just awful. If I'd had any idea that my inner child would grow up to become such a joy and a blessing, I would have allowed her access to my conscious mind sooner.

As it was, I thought I was lucky to be single and carefree. I wasn't. I was cursed. Having fun was never fun. It always turned into trouble.

I was finally committed to insane asylums in my twenties. And it wasn't just because I suffered addictions to alcohol, drugs, sex and food once I was out-and-about as an adult living on my own. I had to be put on psychiatric medication for decades because I was as looney as a tune. But you try talking after you've been to the dentist and your mouth is still numb from the Novocain. That's what it's like being on psyche meds.

Three times I tried to kill myself. But I was so inept that I failed even at that. The first time I swallowed a bottle of aspirin (100 pills), not knowing that you have to choose your pills carefully. Again I say, "Why don't people talk about things that really matter?" Who knew that you practically have to become a pharmacist nowadays to kill yourself with pills?...

But, on the good side, I haven't suffered a headache since... I've only had to suffer a sense of humor constructed on horrible timing; a deep and abiding cynicism; and a deeply dark and pessimistic view of life that has left me worried about practically everything. I'm not a comedian. I never was. I shouldn't try to be funny.

The second time, I drove my car over a cliff. But I didn't want to look like I cared about safety issues, so I unfastened my seatbelt before I hit the pedal to the metal. The car flew off the road, but I hadn't accrued much speed, so the car just flipped over and over. I was hurled into the backseat as the car and I tumbled down the hillside. But when the engine jammed the steering wheel through the front seat, I wasn't in it to be crushed.

I'd also filled the gas tank so as to set myself aflame once I was dead, hoping the car would explode as an expression of my utter fury and exasperation with this world.

But nobody told me that without any oxygen in the tank, that wouldn't happen. So, I woke up in a body of twisted metal and broken glass facing a wall of rock. I had a terrible headache that aspirins couldn't rid me of, but I only broke two ribs.

The third time I gathered big mushrooms from my neighbor's lawn, cooked and ate them, hoping they were poisonous. They turned out to be delicious…

When I was insane, I couldn't talk about my visions, delusions and nightmarish fantasies. My mind was like a stream of consciousness that flowed through me with so many theories that I couldn't maintain a disciplined guard over what I was thinking for any sustained period of time.

Consequently, my mind was never at peace. I was impatient about nothing happening fast enough. But how fast does "nothing" have to go to satisfy your need for speed?

I was always irritable, while trying to look at ease. I couldn't feel connected to others, but that was because I couldn't connect to *me*. Nothing happened that I wanted to have happen. And nobody could tell me why.

I suppose I was the poster child of the "lone wolf," the sort of person people talk about in the media that we should all look out for and avoid. But my fear of being feared by everyone only frightened me more. I thought I had a secret I didn't want anyone to know, but I wouldn't tell *me* what it was.

In case no one has ever told you, let me impress upon you that we were all born lone wolves. Each of us will die a lone wolf, too. There's nothing to be afraid of in being alone with yourself.

The time we spend exploring our *solitude* can enrich our life, as it has done mine. But the time we spend *alone* is like digging through solid rock. Nobody was born anticipating that s/he'd grow up to become a miner who goes underground every day to dig through rock in the dark.

So howl at the moon if you like. Run outdoors at night as though across a tundra with street lights imitating the aurora borealis. Suckle your inner Romulus and Remus as though you were Rome and hungry to raise savages. Engage your lone wolf. It's never too late to admit a new truth to yourself.

Every prized, purebred dog at the show is a descendent of a lone wolf. That mutt is in your mind. Take it home to your heart. Your mind is a pound. Let's get you out of there. Or, at least, let's get some drilling equipment in there so you don't have dig with your hands.

Femininity And Softness

That which got most in the way of me becoming soulful was my distain of my femininity and my revulsion of the wonderful gift I was given in being passive by nature.

What makes a man a man is the *woman* within him. And what makes a woman a woman is the *woman* within her. So what men and women have in common are the women in them.

If I said that too quickly or that was too difficult for you to understand, let me put it into mathematical symbols you might grasp more easily. Read the following slowly, especially if you aren't fond of "t", either:

The x chromosome you got from your mother isn't the same x chromosome you got from your father. His x chromosome comes from *his* mother. And *his* mother and *your* mother are two very different people. So let's check out what that looks like algebraically before we take the conversation any deeper:

The x you got from your mother whether you're male or female: = x

The x you got from your father if you're female: = x

x + y = male
x + x = female

But, as I said before, the x you got from your mother is very different from the x you got from your father if you're female. So let's call the x from your mother = z. That will differentiate the two. That changes the equation to:

z + y = male
z + x = female

It was my z (mother) side that I tried to hide from the world. I didn't want people to know was how much I loved my mother and was like her. I didn't want anyone to see how much I hated the three v's: violence, vitriol and vengeance.

But it seemed to me that society only wanted me to glorify my y side and hide my z side. To put it to u quite candidly, that's what drove me crazy.

Whether or not I've always been successful in maintaining the tender relationship I had with my mother, or she with me, I'm still half woman. And the rejection of that important part of myself created unconscious issues that I've needed to explore all my life.

All gay people and transgendered people know this about themself. They just don't know how to say it in so *many, many* words… So they find a way to say it with gesture, body language, fashion and other forms of communication shortcuts.

Let me end this chapter by repeating the first two paragraphs. Maybe they'll make more sense to u now:

That which got most in the way of me becoming soulful was my distain of my femininity and my revulsion of the wonderful gift I was given in being passive by nature.

What makes a man a man (y) is the woman (z) within him. What makes a woman a woman (x) is the woman (z)

within her. So what men and women have in common are the women (z) within them.

In *My* Beginning

The challenge in delving down into the unconscious mind of everyman was first elucidated in the West in the Hebrew Creation Story as a cautionary tale. Adam was screwed over by Eve because she was naïve to the intentions of the serpent that tempted her to steal the forbidden fruits. But *it* should never have crawled up into that tree to begin with. That tree was forbidden!

Poetically speaking, Adam is the personification of your mind. Eve is the personification of your heart. The serpent is an animalification of your penis. And the fruits, one good and one evil, are representations of your testicles. When *it* (serpent) conspires with *her* (Eve), *he* (Adam) gets in trouble with *Him* (God) for learning the secret to *them* (fruits).

I know that sounds complicated. But it's really very simple: If you do what you shouldn't, you'll get in trouble for it. So ask permission!

In truth, we're all trees of knowledge (x or y) that come out of trees of life (z). And when your *desires* (serpent or worm) collude with your *feelings* (heart), your *head* (Adam) will get you in trouble with your *conscience* unless you're very experienced in receiving permission from your conscience before you do what you do. That's why they always say you should make your conscience your guide.

You've got to learn the difference between right and wrong. And that's a lot like constructing an automobile while riding a bike.

You'll only hurt yourself by doing something you shouldn't. Eventually, you'll see that you've punished yourself by not figuratively allowing you access to the secret to life that lies in your *fruits* (testicles or ovaries). The result of that is that that secret will, poetically speaking, elude you.

And you'll find yourself in a whole lot of trouble that you may choose to blame others for.

I'm Innocent! I Swear!

I know! You're not to blame. It's everyone else who's bad, wrong, defiant, arrogant, insensitive and guilty. You didn't do a thing…

That's what they all say. That's what I said, too, until Darlean started to give me hell for every little thing I did that she disapproved of.

You don't want to have an inner child. S/he'll grow up to think s/he's smarter than you. S/he'll embarrass you in public. S/he'll humble you in private. And s/he'll humiliate you before The Lord. Giving birth to an inner child is no different than becoming a parent to a real child. It's the most gratifying job in the world. But it's really not easy.

Serpents And Worms

The serpent Moses described in the Creation Story was really a penis he didn't want to talk about as such in polite society. And the corresponding aspect of a penis in women is their clitoris. That's the worm that enjoys conversing with serpents.

The gentlest things in the world are those things that lie within you, not around you. For within you, there's no resistance literally. Such is the stuff dreams are made of.

The hardest thing in the world to accomplish is an external goal that you think you can't have because it requires the agreement of others. Such is the *rock* of external reality. But the *hard place* lies within. And sometime you just may find yourself stuck between the two.

The secret to getting what you want out of life lies in the passive werkings that emanate out from within. That, combined with the tactful assertiveness required in working cooperatively with others, is the key to success.

Flat Earth Thinking

Everyone in the world once thought the world was flat. They saw the horizon as the edge of the world, after which they'd fall off the Earth. And yet, everyone in the world today has changed their mind about what our ancestors thought was a "fact".

So, clearly, minds can be changed with scientific evidence. But even psychological evidence can be perceived and acknowledged as persuasive. Such is the stuff the world's scriptures are made of.

Evidence presented with clarity will motivate your imagination to grow with new possibilities. Your imagination can always be developed with faith in yourself.

But faith in yourself requires the friendship that comes from self-intimacy. "If you can't love yourself, how the hell are you going to love someone else." [RuPaul]

I'm Tone Deaf

Darlean is as musical as my mother was. My mother had studied to be a classical violist in Germany before the War and had been a member of the select Munich Children's Orchestra. Darlean has my mother's intimacy with music. She isn't just happy when she's listening to music. She's inspired by it.

But I'm tone deaf. To this day, I struggle to find ways just to talk to people. Speaking a language requires a musicality appropriate to the message you wish to convey. In some ways, I'm a one-note kind of guy.

Because I can't speak to people when I'm upset with them, I try not to show how hurt, insulted and shocked I am by what they say. I don't want them to know I can hear their tone of voice, and how it angers me. I try not to allow my face to show my feelings. I try not to allow my body to show my defensiveness. And I try not to allow my voice express my distain of other people's poor, communication skills.

It offends me that I have to spend so much energy trying *not* to be me. But what else can I do? I can't *talk* to people without letting out how I really feel. I'm not willing to live as though I'm in a closet.

We all know that words are spoken with certain tones that reveal our real feelings. But once I'd been slapped hard by my mother for what I'd said honestly, and how sincerely I'd slept peacefully with my thumb in my mouth until that fateful night, it became clear that I had to hide myself from everybody.

I thought the secret to getting people to like me was in modulating my tone of voice not in learning how to be honest (heady), sincere (heartfelt) and authentic (soulful). Darlean has always noticed that my tone of voice is really harsh and unpleasant when speaking to her. She's called me out many times for being a hypocrite because I talk to her so rudely and others politely.

I'd been limping through life with my guard up with others, while oblivious to how impatient, mean and really nasty I was being to Darlean.

As a child, my parents had taught me always to speak respectfully to adults. That was drilled into me without allowing for any exceptions to the rule. So when I became an adult, myself, I still felt like a kid surrounded by grown-ups.

I couldn't reveal the least bit of cynicism or scorn in my voice because I thought I'd be slapped across the face for doing so. I'd been subconsciously trained to smile with my voice as well as my lips. And I couldn't take that silly grin off my face for love or money.

Secretly, I suppose I still really wanted to suck my thumb. But a grown adult can't do that. An adult can't even admit that to himself. I now know that if I'd been able to put my thumb in my mouth after I'd tried to kill myself the first time, I wouldn't have tried a second and third times.

Instead, I ended up figuratively slapping myself across the face, just as my parents had literally!

Darlean was never stuck in my straight jacket. She doesn't believe she has to be respectful of adult who are tone deaf to her needs. She watches as the zombies lurch through life with their arms outstretched because they can't see things right in front of their nose. And she describes that to me in very colorfully language.

But I couldn't say everything I wanted to say out loud. I had to keep Darlean's observations of me and others a secret because my mother wouldn't have approved of me ridiculing anyone to their face.

But now that my mother is gone and Darlean has made it as far as high school, I can finally put some of my feelings down on paper late at night, that time before the dawn when secrets love to come out of hiding. Now I can swear *in* loud, and say, "Nobody is going to slap me around anymore – not even me! I'm not going to be the Jew du jour or faggot they think they can push around."

I had a great affinity for learning languages in my youth, but I couldn't tell people what was on my mind. I kept thinking I'd be able to elucidate my case better if I'd just learn another language. And yet, I spoke English with a British accent while living abroad because I felt I had to hide my nationality. I was a pathological liar who could only associate being American with reason for ridicule.

Hitting My Funny Bone Just Right

I've always appreciated puns, spoonerisms, [5] paraprosdokians, [6] rhetorical excursions, [7] literal

[5] Spoonerism: The Lord Is a shoving leopard.

[6] Paraprosdokian: The last thing I want to do is hurt you, but it's still on my list.

[7] Rhetorical excursion: A book about why my inner child won't go to college.

interpretations of idioms [8] and other forms of word play. But there's nothing that thrills me more than pregnant pauses because they can't be expressed in words.

Learning to appreciate Darlean's tone of voice when she'd ask me "Why?" is something nobody else could teach me. I overlooked or misinterpreted much of her communication with me when she was a child because I was tone deaf. In so doing, I made her childhood harder for both of us than it needed to be.

I'm funny in the sense of queer. I'm odd in the sense of oval. I'm round in the sense of zaftig. But I'm also gay and Jewish in the sense of blessed by God in a very special way.

Mary Shelley Made Me

When I was insane, I thought of myself as Frankenstein's monster. I thought my body was a combination of pieces of other people's bodies hastily sewn together. What I didn't realize was that my mind, not my body, was made up of pieces of the truth that came from many sources. These truths were figuratively stitched together to create my reality. But I projected that big picture onto my body, and saw my body as a conglomeration of ill-fitting parts from many sources.

In addition, I thought that I was like a cuckoo clock with a hatch in my throat out of which a bird would sometimes emerge to declare the time of day. So I thought I looked like a Frankenstein monster with an added feature that was like a clock that could tell time. And when the time was right, a little birdy would pop out of my throat to make pronouncements about the time remaining before we were all gonna die! (I wasn't the kind of person you wanted to bring to a party. A few drinks and I'd ruin it for everyone.)

---

[8] Literal interpretations of idiom: In this book about a ballet dancer, I've tried to raise the barre.

That cuckoo I saw coming out of my neck corresponded to the Yiddish word "fegele", which means "little bird," a derogatory description of a gay man. The fegele (fairy) in me would emerge from time to time with a message that would declare the real truth about the world that only I could see.

I was a closeted gay man in the body of a Frankenstein monster that I rejected because it horrified me, when it was my mind, not my body, that I couldn't accept honestly, sincerely and authentically.

It took me a lifetime to understand my body, and, by extension the mind that ran it. It took me a lifetime to realize that I'm a dancer who choreographs with words, not arms and legs. I'm not as fluent with physical movements as I am with letters arranged on the page. I have an incredible ability to move myself with the power of my fingers in print. But I can't do as well with my limbs on stage before others. My whole body just isn't as adequate a purveyor of my emotions in telling people what I'd like to say to them. I express myself better in books.

This was the underlying truth about my failure as a ballet dancer that caused me to think that my whole life had been a failure because I couldn't dance as well as I dreamed of.

On stage, I'm not a star, and never was. But from the hours of 3:00-6:00 AM, I'm the most creative guy you'd ever want to meet. Sadly, not even my boyfriend wants to get up that early to get to know me.

I've had no choice but to write my words down on paper to transmit to you the joy I find in being me. I'm darkest before the dawn. And that's my *strength*, not a *weakness*.

From Frankenstein to Cuckoo to Cog in a Wheel

I've since sewn the parts of my body together more firmly. I've ironed them. I've patched them where they were worn. And I've concealed the seams to strengthen them.

I've internalized the cuckoo (fegele), so that others don't have to deal with the constant reminder of the passing of

time. I nailed its little latch shut. Now it can tweet and crow to its hearts content, but only I have to listen to its annoying twitter.

I've since had to recognize that the werkings of my mind are like cogs that are a necessary and valuable part of wheels. And those wheels are necessary in turning the hands of time.

And that was a huge awakening because I wasn't – and here you have to excuse me for going back to a word I hate using – "t". I wasn't very competent at figuring out how I operate, even though I'm so similar to a machine.

I just use my mind like I use my computer. I don't think about how I think. I have no interest in learning how to program me. I just want me to werk well. When I find that a part of me is broken, I have to use spiritual "t" to repair myself. But I hate it!

My idea of numbers is only sophisticated enough to balance a checkbook. And I don't have the skills to reprogram myself using code. My idea of restarting myself like a computer is by going to bed early. My idea of downloading new information is by listening harder to what people are trying to tell me.

I only use the word "code" when I'm sick with a fever and my nose is stuffed up.

Crunchy Peanut Butter and Mussels (not jelly)

Relax. It's just a pneumonic device I taught myself to remember who I am. Without weird ways to remember me, I forget what I want to tell me to remember.

I'd love it if Darlean was my secretary, not just my maid. But it's hard getting kids to do the chores you won't do. I've tried… Like I said, we both suffer from senioritis:

Mussels refers to muscles.

I always thought I was a great dancer, when, in fact, I was a muscle man who wanted to lift very light, moral weights with grace and aplomb. I just wanted to be well defined inside and out. I didn't want to look like Arnold. I

wanted to look like a Greek god frozen in a pose. I didn't want to have to do or say anything unseemly to anyone for all eternity.

As it turned out, life put figurative weights in my hands to teach me how to gracefully lift what needed to be moved in order to define my conscience. So when I look in the mirror now, I see the effect of my life on my body. I'm trim, fit, muscular and moving gracefully through life. I'm well defined ethically as I age.

Crunchy peanut butter refers to diarrhea.

I could never succeed at getting my hips to move as sensuously as Latin men. So I think about crunchy peanut butter oozing down between my legs as I try to squeeze my cheeks shut to keep the peanut butter from dripping on the ground as I dance.

The emotional effect of crunchy peanut butter oozing out of me also reminds me what a tight ass I've been. And that helps me think about what I look like from a more humorous perspective when I attempt Latin ballroom.

All I have to do is think about crunchy peanut butter and mussels and I'm magically able to jump for joy when I hear Latin music. I feel I can now be honest with myself while salsa dancing regardless of what others may see or say. I'm gay and Jewish, even if people see, "White man making a fool of himself."

The Best Sex I Ever Had

The best sex I ever had (until I met my boyfriend) was in L.A. when I was about 24. I was driving home from my mother's apartment in Marina Del Rey and had just turned onto my street in Venice. It was late, but a young guy had his thumb out wanting to hitch a ride. So I picked him up and drove around until we were both sure that we wanted to "seal the deal." And then I drove us back to my apartment.

He was surprised that I lived so close to where I'd picked him up, but he was even more surprised when we got to my

ground floor apartment and I just opened the door without a key. (In Amsterdam it was considered bad form to lock your door. It gave people the impression that you were afraid of them. The Dutch also don't put curtains on their windows. They don't want it to look like they're hiding anything from their neighbors. (One time I was dancing in my studio apartment in Venice, CA, and when the music stopped, about ten people were standing by my living room window clapping.)

I know. I know. I digressed…

The guy was Mexican-American, about my age, with dark eyes, dark hair and dark skin. Naked, he was stunning. And his breath had a musty smell that was intoxicating. We did it twice. I can still remember being in a ball of arms and legs with a fluidity of natural movement that took salsa to a whole other level of hot. We rolled around entwined like two chili peppers.

But that's actually not where I wanted to start this story.

Where I really wanted to start was in Europe. Before I left Holland to come back to America, I spent some time on the French Riviera in Nice. Nice was nice. You didn't need a lot of money in those days to vacation in Nice. It was a real city, not a resort town. There I rented a moped and drove to San Remo, Italy, where I bought myself a pair of cowboy boots that I just knew would be a sensation back in the States.

The night I had sex with the Mexican guy, he happened to see those boots in a corner of my room and commented how much he liked them.

No. He didn't come into my apartment when I was out to steal my boots…

What he did was, he snuck into my apartment one night while I was sound asleep, took off all his clothes, put on my boots, and quietly slipped into bed with me.

Now, I was a sound sleeper in those days, so I had no idea what had happened. I just knew that I was having an amazing dream in which I was being caressed and fondled,

kissed and licked all over. I had never had such a fantastic dream in my whole life.

I felt like I was deep underwater in another man's arms. I felt like we were breathing underwater, and my lungs were filled with a heaviness I'd never felt before. It felt like we would never have to come up for air ever again to face reality.

But as we were embraced in heavy breathing in my dream, we were slowly rising to the surface anyway. And the closer we came up to the light, the more I began to wonder whether this was really a dream.

As we broke the surface of the water into the air, I suddenly knew that this wasn't a dream at all, that somebody was in my house, in my bed and touching me. And then I cried out with fear and pushed him away as I forced myself to open my eyes to what I might have to see before me.

But then I saw who it was, felt my boots on his feet and saw the sly grin on his face.

And then, without talking, we collapsed into each other's arms again and danced like hot peppers on an open flame.

Novelty Verses Newness

Novelty only occurs the first time. Newness comes with familiarity. Most men are into the novelty of sex. Only the monogamous, family man seeks newness in his relationship with his partner.

If you can't appreciate newness, your inner child is still underage. S/he hasn't reached the age of emancipation.

Soul Fuel

Unfortunately, most of my life I was in the unenviable position of having to please other queens in order to get what I wanted. But with queens, as soon as *you* think you've got a handicap, *they* sense it, and then you actually find yourself with the handicap you only thought you had.

It was me or them. Somebody was going to have to lose, and I didn't realize it would always be me so long as I couldn't break through the secrets I was keeping from myself.

But you can't cajole yourself into telling *you* something you don't know about yourself. You have to earn your trust. You have to werk for it.

Why didn't anyone ever tell me that? Why didn't anyone tell me that you have to serve others fearlessly so that that part of you that's clammed up will magically open and reveal the pearls of wisdom about yourself that you're dying to see there within you?

That process of serving others in order to serve a deeper part of yourself took me a lifetime to figure out. That's what led me to marry myself. That's what later led me to conceive my inner child in consciousness through self-intimacy realized. And that's how I came to write this book about Darlean's teenage years.

Wisdom 101

If I could teach a freshman class in wisdom, my first question would be, "What do you know by 40 that you didn't know when you were 20?"

Naturally, the dumbest kid in class who's 25 and a couple of years older than the rest of them would raise his hand to answer that question because he thinks he's smarter than the rest. And I'd have to shut him up to tell him he's just guessing. No one can answer that question until s/he's 40.

Until then, if you're young and curious about what changes as you grow older, do market research. Ask people who are over 40 what they learned since they were 20.

Take a survey. Life should all be about taking surveys when you're young. When you get old, you can pontificate to the young and look like a fool to those your age and above. Until then, just ask good questions.

If you really want to learn about the meaning of life, get so intimate with yourself that you conceive an inner child that you can actually communicate with. Welcome to *my* world. I couldn't be the only one who's suffering with an inner child who refuses to go to college…

The Difference Between a S.L.U.T. and a W.H.O.R.E.

Mom {me} sat me (Darlean) down and told *me* {Darlean) that she (z) wanted to talk to me (Darlean) about the facts of life. Of course, I (Darlean) rolled my eyes. But she (z) insisted.

Even though I'm her teenage lovechild, and she's a frustrated hippy who dropped too much acid, I (Darlean) was actually shocked when my mom (z) started the conversation by saying that she wanted to tell me the difference between a **S.L.U.T.** and a **W.H.O.R.E.**

A **S.L.U.T.**, mom said, is someone dedicated to **S**ervice, **L**oyalty, **U**pbringing and **T**alent. And a **W.H.O.R.E.** stands for **W**omen **H**aving **O**rgasms with **R**ighteous **E**ndings! And mom told me that she was a **S.L.U.T.** and a **W.H.O.R.E**., and she hoped I would grow up be one someday, too.

Well, that wasn't exactly the conversation I expected from her when she said she wanted to talk to me about the facts of life… What does it even mean to be a **W.H.O.R.E.** by that definition?

But, one thing I can say about my mom, she likes to explain every little thing that comes out of her mouth. So, even though I got the long lecture, I'm gonna give it to ya short and sweet, 'cause it embarrasses me to even talk about things like this:

There are lots of women who dedicate themselves to **S**ervice, **L**oyalty, the **U**pbringing of their children and the development of their **T**alents. But that doesn't save them from a lousy, love life.

A **W.H.O.R.E.** is a woman who loves orgasm so much that she's willing to seek a righteous ending to each and every one of them. And, apparently, according to mom, that's an art, not a science.

It made me (Darlean) really uncomfortable having this conversation with her, but I really wanted to know what she meant because she was talking a lot about bitterness and disappointment in life, and I didn't understand what that had anything to do with orgasms.

Apparently my father (y) was a disappointment in bed. From what mom (z) said, it started out great when they were my age, but over time, he (y) got critical of her (z). He (y) got judgy. He (y) started to ridicule her and nit-pick about the way she (z) looked and acted. And the toll from his (y) disappointment with her (z) eventually had an effect on her (z) in the bedroom. Then it spread to their (z + y) mental health overall. That, she (z) said, is why they (z + y) ended up having to be involuntarily committed to insane asylums.

So she (z) wanted to warn me about men (z + y) in general, not just judgy queens.

Mom told me what she's doing now in her relationship with her (new) boyfriend that's so different. She says that she can't ever predict what either one of them is going to feel like after sex. But she likes to werk on her orgasms to get as much as possible out of them, so she doesn't come away with the bitterness and disappointment she came to feel in her youth.

Her (new) boyfriend actually told her that each of them is responsible for his own orgasms. Who knew? She said that took a lot of pressure off her right from the start.

She confided in me that she and her boyfriend are very selfish in bed. I couldn't believe what she was telling me! But she swears that the more excited she gets about what *she's* doing, the more that excites him.

Apparently a woman (z) can also accentuate her excitement in the bedroom by acknowledging her

participation in the other rooms in the house during sex. And when a woman's (z) conscience goes from room to room during the "deed" to think about her other achievements in the relationship, she can create a list of things she does really well at the same time she's having sex.

Apparently, if you've got a partner who's really good in the kitchen and garage, for instance, while you're good in the dining room and living room, that can be a big turn on if you both acknowledge those rooms where you do your best work when the two of you get to the bedroom.

After they have sex, mom told me she goes through her list of accomplishments to check off whether she's seen improvements in other areas of her performance. That, she said, is the time to get to werk. No cigarettes. No promises. No cuddling after the deed is done. They're not making a chick flick. It's just sex. And they want it to be as hot as possible.

In the afterglow with her boyfriend, rather than focus her feelings on him, she focuses them on herself. In this way, she avoids the bitterness and disappointment she sees in so many women (z) who expect something from the other person instead of from themself.

And that, mom said, were the facts of life she wanted to impart to me.

Oh, one more thing. She added that she tells her boyfriend in detail how her orgasms are getting better. Apparently, he's not a show-and-tell kind of guy. But he likes to know how satisfied she is by their sex life.

What they have seems to werk! It's only been getting better and better, and they've been doing it for ten years.

Divorce: Self-Separation Externalized

When #1 and I (me) broke up, even though *he* was the one who'd been having the affair while he had AIDS, *I* was secretly ashamed of myself for having a relationship that was ending like my parents'.

I told myself at the time that *he* should have been ashamed of lying and cheating on *me*. But *I* was secretly ashamed of a something *I* was withholding from myself that I couldn't articulate:

I was lying and cheating on me, too. *I* was doing to me what *he'd* been doing to me. And this was a twist that I couldn't unravel at the time. This was an irony I couldn't fathom because I didn't know the difference between irony and paradox then.

My guilt ran parallel to *his*, even though *he* should have felt guilty, but didn't. But trying to *make* him feel guilty for how he'd betrayed me was a waste of time. He was done with our relationship; but he knew I wouldn't leave him unless he was unfaithful to me and could show me that he didn't care about how that made me feel. Not only did he have no intention of saying "I'm sorry." He couldn't even tell me our relationship was over. He forced me to say it for him!

His behavior isn't up for question anymore. My behavior is all that needs to be explored. That's why I always say that life is a school, and nobody else's grades are going on my report card. Spending your precious time on how *others* do on a test isn't going to improve *your* grades. Let it go. Just worry about your own grades, performance and the werk being given to you.

Paradox Isn't Always Ironic

I've secretly always loved paradox. When I was a kid I thought it was cool to appreciate absurdity, contradiction, enigmas and inanities. Now that I'm a senior citizen, I'm resigned to the importance of paradox. Don't ask me to explain.

OK. I'll explain:

I hate sports, but I love to play ball with my boyfriend… I also love to entertain the thought that refined people don't enjoy team sports, while the masses are stuck with competition through sports because they can't compete against themself.

Both are utter nonsense. My boyfriend loves team sports *and* sex. He's not at all competitive with others, while I profess to compete only with me. And I'm vain about my body. I'm conceited about my mind. And I constantly measure myself against those around me. When I meet someone who's handsome and evolved, I'm jealous of his container and envious of his contents. I want anything any man has that I think I might be missing.

There's a slave in me that yearns to be free. But there's also a shadow side of me that insists it must lay down in opposition to my own light.

There's a side of me that finds me attractive and wishes to spend the rest of its life in my arms. But there's also an inner child in me who wants to spend her life with anyone other than me.

I'm a paradox walking on two feet. I'm an exclamation point that's been hammered down into a question mark. I'm a very strange creature, indeed.

But none of this is ironic. It's all paradoxical. A paradox is a conflict in your inner world. An irony is one that occurs in the world we share. That's why ironies are bitter, and paradoxes aren't.

I've Got An Unusually Large Penis

Figuratively speaking…

My desires are humongous. They protrude into every area of my life. My thoughts are constantly being screwed over by my huge lust for learning. Every time my urge for something stimulates me into getting poetically hard, my heart is the first to feel it. In fact, my feelings love to

lubricate my desires, making me especially easily tempted by the things I want.

For this reason, I'm not exaggerating or lying to you when I complain that I have an unusually large penis, figuratively speaking.

Believe me, having a figuratively large penis is a curse, not a blessing! I wish my penis were as small as most men's! You'd think with a shlang the size of mine, I'd have succeeded in impregnating myself long ago. You wouldn't think I only conceived my inner child into consciousness in my late fifties, a time in life when no one expects to become a parent anymore.

The truth is that I never screwed anybody over. I only screwed me over. But I was so messed up that I didn't know what I was doing to me at the time. Bringing an inner child into my world was more than an immaculate conception. It was miraculous! It gave me a new reason to live to love and to learn.

I don't know why everything in my life has had to be so badly timed. Why couldn't things just happen for me like they do for normal people? Why couldn't my penis just get hard literally, not figuratively? Why does it have to get so lubricated by my feelings that nothing stops it from moving up from there to screw with my thinking?

No wonder I'm so stiff-necked. Why couldn't I have made my conscience my guide instead?

Champagne problems, beer budget… I've had to earn my libations. Nobody could buy my drinks for me.

How to Write Like I Do

Nobody taught me how to write. I had to learn how to *teach* writing before I could put pen to paper. First, I had to imagine myself being an English teacher correcting the papers of all the "students" in my head.

There, within me are all the voices enrolled in my creative writing course that don't yet know how to speak up,

let alone write. I've had to teach them to talk before I could teach me to write about what's really going on inside me. It would have been far too easy for me to say I was of two minds.

Some of my "students," I've had to humiliate. And some, I've only needed to encourage. But I've had to use trial and error to discover which technique werks best on each of them. And that's caused me a great deal of suffering that u can't see.

But now I can see what I say. Now I can see how I come across to others because I've come this far out of my closet.

Becoming a writer is just that simple, and it's just that difficult. Once u can develop the voices inside u, u'll be free to speak for ur selves.

That's how it came to pass that I was ready to write this book about my teenage, inner child – that big, buxom wench of mine who refuses to listen to her mama because she wants to do it all her own way. She has no appreciation of the **S**ervice, **L**oyalty, **U**pbringing and **T**alent she's inherited from me. She thinks I'm crude and embarrassing. Adolescents! What an awkward age!

Sharing 101

The more you learn to ask for what you want instead of simply taking it – and that includes knowledge – the more you'll reap the rewards (blessings) of endurance. That just makes common sense.

When you stop stealing self-knowledge from yourself, you open yourself up to the mystery you hold within you. You open yourself to the treasure you hold inside.

If you wouldn't trust another person who's disreputable, why would you trust yourself unless you've proved to yourself that you're reputable, estimable and admirable, too?

If you think you can cheat on your tax return as well as come to know yourself intimately, you're deluded. You'll

pay for all the money you steal, whether or not you get away with the gelt.

Stealing knowledge is figuratively akin to castration. But when you unceremoniously appropriate your own fruits to discover the secret inside them, you figuratively turn yourself into a eunuch. Just look around if you don't believe me. There are a lot of men out there without balls.

What's even worse is when you sodomize yourself. When you use your power over your *self* with malevolent intentions, you rape yourself of your own esteem and kindness. And then you lose the knowledge you've gained over the very power that you're seeking.

I should feel bad for all the people who've screwed me over, but I actually feel enraged about it. Darlean keeps telling me to chill, that the problem is theirs, not mine. Why can't I listen to my own inner child? And why is it that she knows more than me?

My father was a rage-a-holic. He never grew out of the terrible twos. You can go through puberty and reach adulthood literally and still remain a very young child within. Darlean knows that about him. And she has to remind me that my rage is righteous. His rage was all wrong.

Once you can describe yourself as having two worlds, one within that's secretive and one we have to learn to share, you can teach other people to work together cooperatively toward mutual ends, provided everyone's desire (serpent) for self-knowledge is pure. The problem, therefore, is finding snakes in this world who you can trust…

Life Isn't Anything Like Golf

My boyfriend loves to watch sports on the weekend. He's especially fond of golf. So I've had many an opportunity to watch this game. So now, after great study of the sport, I can tell you, unequivocally, that the game of golf is nothing like life.

The whole point of golf is to get that little ball in the hole in as few strokes as possible. Life isn't like that. In life, you can take as many swings as you like. It doesn't matter *what* your score is. Life is so hard that it doesn't even matter how many time you have to hit the ball down the fairway, so long as you don't give up trying to reach the green.

My boyfriend tells me that golf is a very mental game. He says it's a game in which you're competing against yourself. He says you have to avoid the hazards – like water, sand traps, bunkers, buildings, trees, ruffs, etc. But even the best golfers get stuck in them from time to time.

When I asked him whether you should avoid other golfers, he paused and said, no. He said it's very unlikely you'll hit another golfer. But you may hit a spectator. And apparently there's no penalty for that… (Just be sure it happens with the ball; that you don't club a guy...)

In life, you don't know what direction to go in once you leave the club house. You may not even be able to tell the difference between the front and the back nine. Sometimes, you don't even know when you're on the green, let alone where the hole is you're aiming for…

If you can come away from life with the feeling of succeeding in getting the ball in the hole even once in a while, no matter how many strokes it takes you to do so, feel enormously proud of yourself.

Life is much harder than it looks. And anyone who tells you otherwise has a handicap you don't want to copy. So keep your head screwed on tight, and don't pretend to be anyone else's caddy. Carry your own bag. And join a club. You don't always have to look like you're swinging one.

Fruits From A Fruit

The power in the "forbidden" fruits of knowledge are both good and evil; just as the power of the tongue is both good and evil, depending on what you choose to say.

Those fruits (testicles) are figuratively located in your scrotum, just beneath your serpent (penis). Out of the mouth of your serpent comes the juice (semen) from the fruits beneath them.

There isn't any better evidence I can give you that *you're* a tree of knowledge even if you're a woman and your fruits are located high up in your branches and there's a worm in the wood where men sport a serpent.

The life you create with your self is based on your desires. Therefore you're the personification of a combination of both good and evil regardless of what you may happen to look like on the outside.

The mixtures that comes out of your mouth is no different than what comes out of a penis in orgasm. You're fruitful and deadly at both ends. You give to the world, and you sicken the world. It's all a question of how well you know how to recognize what you were given and what you can do with it.

If you wish to increase the allotment of good over evil in your children, as I've accomplished with Darlean, you're going to have to teach them to give more than take, and love more than hate. You're going to have to teach them to love themself first, and not last.

In fact, I'd go so far as to say, "Don't try to love others at all. Just love yourself. If you can even *like* people, you're doing very well."

I'd add that you shouldn't use your genitals just to create life. Use them first and foremost figuratively to give of yourself through loving words and deeds. In this way, your penis will grow to an unbelievable, figurative length, and it'll surely get harder and harder over the years.

But this figurative augmentation in size and firmness will create moral dilemmas, as well. You aren't always going to have something good to say to others. And since the truth withheld is a lie, you don't want to lie, no matter what. That said, the truth sincerely given might be hurtful.

This makes knowledge much *less* significant, and wisdom, much *more* significant. In an effort to do only good, you may need to search for a way to be honest (head), sincere (heart) and authentic (soul) rather than one or two out of three.

This moral dilemma is the rock between you and the hard place you may find yourself in at times. This is the source of the maddening ironies and paradoxes of life that we're all subjected to.

First and foremost, self-love should be vital to your wellbeing. You ought to forgive yourself for your trespasses as you attempt to better yourself day-by-day. Instead, many people shirk their quest for ecstasy in the privacy of their bedroom in favor of simply looking good in public.

Don't ever compromise your sex life in order to look good. You'll only discover what ugly looks like from the inside out. Ugly goes right to the bone.

A master(z) concerns herself with the depths and not the surface. She models what truly concerns her. This creates what's called a: persona. A persona is a combination of good habits that s/he relies on to communicate as authentically as s/he possibly can.

Most people prefer to stay on the surface of reality without trying to develop a meaningful persona. Like the surface of a mirror in which everything is a reflection of something else, their persona has no depth. It's just an image. It's a two-dimensional surface that only appears to be 3D.

It would behoove us all to figuratively go through the looking glass as did Alice. Look, instead, for the wonderland where appearances have been stripped away and reality looks as raw as it really is. (Just don't do so with drugs.)

The *flower* from the tree of knowledge is the appearance of reality. It's the beauty, fragrance and appeal of life when you're young, innocent and naïve. Only over time does the *fruit* emerge from the flower. Only over time does the fruit

mature from green to ripe, and then, in most cases, turn as rotten as it really is.

That's why I told you from the beginning that Darlean isn't pretty. She's beautiful. But I doubt she's going to rot over time, even if, like me, her skin sags and her hair gets thin and grey.

Because I Looked Back, Nostalgia Was Beaten Out of Me

The uncomfortable darkness I went through when people didn't like me was because my rejection of myself was a feeling too painful to endure. I could endure others' rejection of me. I just couldn't endure my own.

It wasn't until I reached adulthood that I became so mentally unstable that I attempted suicide. Only then did it become apparent to others that my opinion of me had been projected out into the external world. Only then did it become clear to doctors that the only way I could express the voices within me was with conflict.

But when it was a question of talking *about* myself *to* my self, I was figuratively mute. Then I suddenly had nothing to say.

I couldn't yet conceive an inner child. Even though I'd physically passed puberty, spiritually, I was still childish. I was all alone inside. I had no one I cared for inside and no one within me who cared *for* me. And that'll drive you crazy whether or not you've always wished to be the parent of a gifted child.

It wasn't until I came of age – the age of a grandfather – that I could say out loud that I was a single parent of an inner child. It was only then that I strived to do for Darlean what my parents had strived to model for me.

Queens Make Fat Lives, Trans Lives and Black Lives Matter More

During the Civil War, it was the Jews in the North who freed the slaves by insisting that Torah must, in some very significant ways, be taken figuratively. Lincoln only removed their shackles.

Gloria Gaynor gave us the American rendition of Hatikva (Hope: The Israeli National Anthem). And we've all danced with abandon to, "I Will Survive" ever since.

Obama didn't free the gays with marriage equality. The Jews freed the gays. When Harvey Milk told us to come out, we were instantly free to marry ourself. Until then, we were still stuck in straight jackets. Now we sport gay jackets, instead. If yours is down, try leather instead. Just don't tear the lining.

The gays aren't going to free women from the age-old shackles of straight men. The Jews are going to free women by teaching Torah from our z side, not our x or y side. That'll teach the old, homophobic, orthodox Jews what Moses's autobiography was really all about!

So choose the Jew you hope to model and join our club. If u exclude the Jew, u'll exclude u, too.

Just be careful not to turn into a Jewish mother like me. You'll only have yourself to blame. If you ask Darlean, she'll tell you that I can't take me anywhere! I'm like a rabbi (y) on one side and a yenta (z) on the other. Flip me or turn me over. Heads or tails. Like the moon, I'm really dark on both sides.

King Had a Dream Queens Have a Vision

It's not enough anymore to have a dream. People will rip your dreams to shreds and replace them with their nightmare. If you're tall, dark, handsome and Black, they'll squeeze the breath out of you until you're dead. And if you stole a few

bucks or were on drugs, they'll insist you deserved to die. Such are the ways people slap one another across the face nowadays to make them bite their tongue. There's no male sin greater than having been given a bigger penis…

Queens don't dream. Queens have visions. You can't fight a vision any more than you can fight four letter words like "love" and "werk."

If you want to live in a land of milk and honey, you're going to have to learn what it means to cherish milk (liquid love) and honey, that which is even sweeter: wisdom.

Every king will tell you his dreams. But every queen will tell you her visions. Go with a vision. Go with your z factor. Bet on women (z). You'll never be sorry you did. You'll never be sorry you learned how to say you're sorry. Just be sure you apologize to the right person. That person may have to be you.

How to Go Insane Without Driving Others Crazy

I wish I knew… I can't do it. Maybe I should try reading what I've written…

I've already stated that going insane is the result of not having anything interesting to say about rhetorical statements. So, when you want to seriously entertain an idea that's absurd, use your imagination to expand your mind. Be more literal when dealing with figures of speech.

People who go insane can't answer paradoxical questions. When you see yourself as like a seed (contents) in a shell (container), but the seed is growing even though the shell has stopped growing, you discover a paradox. If you can't imagine that much, you've gone too far.

You're like a visitor in a two-story library with thoughts (head) on the upper floor and feelings (heart) shelved on the main floor.

But there are also stacks below the surface that you may think you're forbidden to visit. The first level down offers books on detachment (navel). The next holds books on desire

(genitals). And at the lowest level, you'll find book on paradox (anus), notions that can go both ways.

Behind the scenes of the main library there lies an archive (soul) that's only open to librarians and staff. That's where Darlean got a summer job one year. There, beliefs are collected and stored. There, the mind does research for articles and photos that don't always make sense to the inexperienced scholar who seeks answers to how s/he thinks.

These different forms of knowledge may seem paradoxical to the immature mind. But with experience, every student of life discovers that learning is a natural process that results in soulfulness over time.

Don't feel guilty about driving yourself nuts as you try to orient yourself to your library. You're more than a good book sitting on a shelf waiting to be read. You're a fascinating a person who leads a complicated life. You care for others as much as you can care for yourself. How much more could u care?

That's not a rhetorical question. If u want to care more about *them*, u're going to have to care more about ur *self*.

There were many experiences I had while in mental institutions that I could never fully describe at the time. At *this* time, I can only give u an overview of my library (consciousness); stacks (semi-consciousness); and archive (unconsciousness). Like a President of the United States, u'll just have to dedicate a library of ur own.

Before Darlean Could Ask Me Why

What I wanted all my life was the satisfaction of a craving I couldn't consciously acknowledge. It was a sensation that was occurring below that level of the self we call: consciousness. What I wanted was an intimate relationship with me in which I could use my self-love to forgive me for my trespasses as well as to motivate me to seek greater self-knowledge in all my affairs.

When I was in my twenties, it was hard to stop smoking, drinking, drugging, overeating and having anonymous sex because my cravings masked deeper desires I couldn't address.

But I couldn't address those deeper desires because the feelings that emerged from my heart that accompanied the thoughts in my head were concealed by religious taboos and social prohibitions I couldn't get through.

Many of my desires led to feelings of rage (red), agony (orange) and horror (yellow). But I couldn't talk about why I was going through what I was going through. I could only blame others. I'd only created three bands of my inner rainbow. The other four were below the horizon in an unconscious part of me.

But once I learned to experience the full range of the rainbow of hope, I opened like a flower in the noonday sun. Then it was easy to see why my thinking had become obsessive instead of loving.

Now I have the ability to tell my penis to shut up when it insists on focusing on getting something that's not in my best interests. Cold showers aren't necessary when you can talk to yourself using a cold tone of voice.

In the Eastern sense of the word, I can now understand the life force that produces the mud that generates the modern mind. Water (emotion) mixed with sand (thoughts) creates a spiritual sludge that every lotus needs to grow out of if it's going to burst forth into the light.

My Mother

The world is prosaic. God Is poetic. And your parents are just people like you. If you don't see the boar (x or y) and sow (z) sides of yourself, you'll live in an idealistic fantasy that will leave you disappointed and confused about your own piggish tendencies.

My mother believed in me more than she believed in herself. She helped me through insanity and, in gratitude, I

helped *her* grow for the rest of her life. If you've got someone who believes you can grow, you're half way there. Then you only have to translate all that faith *for* you into faith *in* you.

Every thought and feeling that comes to *my* mind is a clue to a secret I wish to impart to Darlean. I want to show her that I believe in her the way *my* mother believed in me.

Now that Darlean is older, our relationship has evolved astoundingly. We're more like sisters at 70 (me) and 17 (Darlean) than I was with my mother when she was 90 and I was 60!

My relationship with my mother started out as mother and son. It only developed into a relationship between sisters once I'd fully come out of the closet and we could talk about our bad choices in men.

But when my mother was old, frail and suffering from dementia, our relationship turned me into her *mother*. And I had to watch as my precious child lost her struggle with life.

I can't tell you how grateful I am for having had the privilege of having known my mother in all of these ways. It taught me the meaning of grief from the inside out. I couldn't grieve as deeply as I do for me if our Teacher in this school Hadn't Given me the assignments He Did.

Learning to Read

Reading (judging) is fundamental. If you haven't even learned how to read the handwriting on the Wailing Wall, what are you waiting for?

But learning to right yourself judiciously isn't so easy.

Judging others is a piece of cake. Judging yourself is an acquired skill. You have to learn to be fair to yourself. You have to learn that your inner world is subjective (yin) while the world we share is objective (yang).

The secret to self-love is tenderness, not honesty. Honesty is highly overrated unless you can say to others what *you* need to hear in a tender tone of voice.

Vernon Cox Was My Best Friend

I met Vernon Cox at an inspirational lecture put on by a Bay Area educational organization that brought speakers to public schools. He and I were on a three-person panel.

I don't remember the third person, but I remember that *he* had nothing on Vernon and me. And that drew me closer to Vernon even before I got to know him as well as I did.

Vernon became the best friend I ever had. I knew him with an intimacy I haven't even been able to share with #1 and the wonderful guy I've been blessed to have in my life for the past ten years.

Granted Vernon and I never slept together. I did get to see his penis one time when he needed help going to the bathroom. It was simply gorgeous! I'll never forget what it looked like. But we weren't sexual. I was in a monogamous relationship with #1 at the time. And frankly, apart from his penis, Vernon really wasn't my type physically.

The reason Vernon was invited to speak on this panel was that he had had polio as a child. He'd been quadriplegic since the age of eight. His whole life had been spent in a wheelchair. When I met him, he must have been about 60 years old. As I said, I've always tended to like older men.

Vernon and I were seemingly opposites from the start. He was Black. I'm Jewish. He was a community social worker. I was a dancer and teacher. He'd been disabled physically, while I'd been disabled mentally. But we had something in common that transcended our abilities and disabilities.

We were sisters who crossed paths coming from opposite directions, drawn together in a most unusual way. Although Vernon was Black, quadriplegic and gay, I've never met anyone more similar to me.

Vernon needed a fulltime assistant to care for him. So he hired handsome, young men who I assume cared for his sexual needs, too. I never asked. But these young men

always seemed to start out green and ripen into incredible human beings in short order.

Being around Vernon was a magical experience, just as it is for me to be with me... So you can well imagine that our friendship reached the heights of a mythological union. We were engaged as were gods in ancient days.

His assistant chauffeured him in his modified van. There was room in the front seat for a passenger, and Vernon sat in the back facing the windshield, so he could direct. He was nothing if not forceful and direct.

On one occasion, the three of us went out to a restaurant for lunch. Vernon liked to be at the front of the parade, so to speak, so he always drove his wheelchair ahead of us since it wasn't usually feasible for the three of us to go side by side inside buildings or on city streets.

He could drive his electric wheelchair with one finger. (He used a pointer modified as a mouthpiece to operate his computer. But apart from his very expressive facial gestures, he didn't have control over his body.)

He reached the maître d before us and asked for a table for three. But when his assistant and I caught up with him, the maître d replied to *me* that he only had a booth to offer us.

Well, Vernon exploded! He was only about 5' tall (I suppose). I actually never saw him standing up, of course. I just want to impress upon you that he wasn't a White stereotype of a big Black man with an intimidating agenda.

Vernon was intimidating because, from his raspy, little voice combined with his black, flashing eyes, he held a grip on people that was like a tractor beam in a sci-fi movie. He could draw you toward him whether you wanted to go his direction, or not. There was nothing stopping him and nothing you could do to stop yourself.

Well, needless to say, the maître d wasn't prepared for what hit him. Vernon read him the riot act about replying to the person who's speaking to you, not to other people in the

party. He made it painfully clear to that young man that *he*, Vernon, might look disabled, but he didn't behave like a cripple. And he certainly wasn't going to let anyone treat him like one.

I don't know where that young man is today. But I do know for a fact that if he's alive, he's not young any more. And I can also say with some certainty that he's wiser for having met my friend Vernon.

Vernon lived to the age of 72. That, I was told, was most unusual for a quadriplegic. They usually die much younger. I don't know why.

He lived in a residence community in Mill Valley built especially for people in wheelchairs. He dedicated his life to helping the disabled. And he practically willed that residence facility where he lived into existence with the power of persuasion. He was renown in the Bay Area as one of the great movers and shakers of his time.

Sadly, one night a fire was ignited by the heater in his apartment. His assistant would go home at night, only to return early the next morning. So Vernon had no way of protecting himself or getting out. He died from smoke inhalation.

But Vernon *was* a fire who set the world on fire. He was a flame that burned incredibly brightly. It was the smoke that did him in, not the illumination, warmth, burn, mystery, sound or smell of the fire he personified with his incredible strength of being. As I said, Vernon Cox was my best friend.

A Man Who'd Adore Me More

I suppose I could always keep an eye out for another man who might adore me more than my boyfriend. And believe me, Darlean would have no trouble with that. As a teenager, she's quite dismissive of people if she thinks she's found someone cuter, better or more interesting to be with.

If I listened to Darlean, I'd either still be single, or I'd use men like rungs on a ladder to get somewhere I still wanted to go.

The problem isn't with my boyfriend. The problem is in finding someone who'd adore me more than *I* already do. What makes this boyfriend so satisfactory is that he's not jealous of me adoring myself and only liking him. He's actually cool with that. And the fact that we have my inner child living with us doesn't perturb him in the least.

Don't be jealous of my boyfriend. Green is a color that doesn't suit u.

Our New Kitchen

My boyfriend is an enigma to me. He's so different from who I am that I'm fascinated by him. He's like the mystery captured in a flame. He's a spark of delight. He's the embodiment of everything I'm not and never will be.

He loves "t", cooking, reading about the real world, fixing, constructing and telling people what he knows informationally. He also loves participating with people passively. Therefore he's current when it comes to social media, entertainment and the arts.

He's not interested in making a name for himself. He couldn't care less about learning who he is. He knows who he is. That topic doesn't interest him. What interests him is investigating the world we share. He can't seem to get enough of this world. He's entirely externally oriented in the healthiest of ways.

He's also quiet. He prefers to listen rather than talk. But he's a very good listener. But if you ask him what he heard someone say, he'll tell you with the tact and diplomacy you'd expect from an ambassador, not a guy who started out flipping burgers and then made his way up the ladder to fast food manager.

Today he's the secretary of a Catholic church. When I met him, he was 45 and I was 57. Within the first two weeks

of our meeting and a few short months of having moved to San Francisco, he decided to convert to Catholicism. Believe me, it wasn't me who drove him to God… I think I just rubbed up against him in a way that lit a fire in him that he'd never experienced before.

I don't have to tell you that there aren't a lot of gay men who are converting to Catholicism these days. And I can't tell you why he did, either. As I said, he's an enigma. Even if he knew, he probably wouldn't say.

He moved in with me about six months after we met. I'd been living in the apartment I bought with the money I got when #1 and I split up. I'd been living in that apartment seven years before my boyfriend moved in.

Now you may think I'm a good writer. I know I do. But I used to think I was a good interior decorator, too. (I wasn't.) The only interior I've been successful at decorating has been the one inside me. But before I could do *that*, I had to figuratively become a contractor to remake the place. It was truly in ruins.

But I digress. This story is about him, not me.

Because my boyfriend is so tactful, he's never tried to remake me or redecorate my place. And so we learned to live with one another just as we were. We'd both been in previous, long term relationships, and neither of us wanted to repeat the mistakes we'd made with our previous partner.

It's been ten years now that we've been together. And you have no idea how he's changed both me and our place in that brief time. If our apartment is any reflection of how he's made me over, I can honestly say that I live in a palace compared to where I resided before. The place is simply stunning!

But when it comes to our kitchen, the heart of our house, he had to redo more than the rest of the place. The tools, the drawers, shelves, crockery, cutlery… You name it. It all had to be replaced. My boyfriend was like a cardiologist replacing the heart valves of a smoker. He traded everything

out with items worthy of a professional cook working in a professional kitchen. Julia Childs would have been content to cook in the kitchen we have now!

Naturally, we also have a dishwasher, but that doesn't mean there aren't dishes to be washed, pots to be scrubbed, garbage cans to empty, etc. But it's all such a pleasure now.

I can now say that it's been the interior decorating of me that parallels what's changed around me. Both have made for a happy home. Quixotically, my heart is at peace now that my boyfriend has remodeled my kitchen.

The Seesaw

We're all on seesaws with other people. But I didn't like being in the up position. I preferred to have my feet firmly planted on the ground. I wanted to give others the thrill of being high over my head.

Although being engaged with others is like being on a seesaw, you can't just sit there in a crouching position without going up and down with them from time to time. You have to learn to have some fun. If you can't fully engage with people on the seesaw, you're not going to enjoy the other rides on the playground of life. You won't learn about life through your interactions with others in meaningful, fun-loving ways.

The more I got used to the idea of being on a seesaw with others, the more I started to enjoy the thrill of being in the up position with my feet dangling beneath me. The more I also enjoyed the fantastic view I got up there of the whole playground where kids run around wild.

The more I got to be in the up position, the more I felt connected to humanity – until I discovered that there are people who take glee in sharing a seesaw with you only to rush to the bottom so they can jump off the seesaw and watch you come crashing down.

Now, in all fairness, not everyone does that intentionally. I'd say that most of the people in my life didn't have a clue

how they caused me to crash, and then burn with rage inside at their behavior.

But when #1 was having a secret affair with his previous boyfriend and refused to apologize for it in the hopes that *I'd* then leave *him*, he got off the seesaw while he was crouching down and I was high over his head. And because I was raised to bite my tongue rather than talk back to anyone – beginning with my parents – I couldn't describe what I was going on at the time.

And because I became more and more isolated by tumbles from the seesaw of social engagements with others, I didn't realize that many people are as oblivious to what they're being put through as I was.

There's a tendency for some to blame the victim for going too high and being too trusting. But there's also a tendency to blame the perpetrator for getting off when s/he does. What there isn't enough of a discussion of is what's going on from a distant, third-person perspective.

Once people are taught how to play safely on seesaws together, I believe they're going to be a lot more careful about *how* they play so that nobody gets hurt. Even swingers have a lot to learn about how they may be pushing people around…

Now, when people play this trick on me, I can see what they're doing in real time, and I can prepare my feet to catch me as I land. And when witnesses turn a blind eye to what happened, I can see that in real time, too.

Ironically, that means that I have less reason to be afraid of the playground of life than I did when I was little. And that means that this world is getting kinder, gentler and softer despite what some people may say. People like me are telling the truth about the games some people still play

My Obsession with Mortality

In my opinion, most people are obsessed with *not* thinking about their own mortality. I'm just the opposite. I

can't *stop* thinking about it. I'm sure three suicide attempts had a lot to do with that.

I was traumatized by *me*. My life was a post-traumatic stress test that caused me to worry about death at every turn. But that turned out to be a good thing.

Do you wake up, like me, grateful to be alive every morning? Do you cherish your partner for sharing their life with you? Do you see life as a school with a Teacher Who Loves you?

Being obsessed with death is a virtue, if you ask me. I'm looking forward to being dead in the hopes that I'll be able to view my life as would a sculptor with his masterpiece when he stands back to see what he's carved.

I love the idea that life is like a school that I'll someday graduate. I'd love to get a good look at my grades in the roll book and would like to discuss my options for my future with a counselor, in the hopes my transcript will be good enough to get into another great academy of knowledge after I graduate here. I actually *like* learning – especially since I've discovered that *I* am my major.

C.U.N.T.
Charisma, Uniqueness, Nerve And Talent [9]

I was born with **C**harisma. I have **U**niqueness. And I'm developing **T**alent. That doesn't explain why I've felt so **C.U.T.** down and **C.U.T.** out. What I lacked was **N**erve.

I'd walk into my kitchen and think about sex. I'd walk into my bedroom and get hungry. I'd sit in my living room writing, as though in the bathroom looking at myself with the magnified side of a vanity mirror. And I'd sit on the toilet pontificating as though a king on a throne.

When it came to nerve, I didn't know the first thing about how to behave in public because I couldn't even spend time

[9] With great gratitude to RuPaul's Drag Race where I was introduced to this anagram.

alone in my own apartment without embarrassing myself. I was just as lost at home.

People like that never grow up. They only learn how to behave better in public. The older they get, the more their inner child takes over. They get childish, not childlike.

In that sense, I now need Darlean as much as she needs me. By reading about everyday people on her phone, she learns to see through them. She can tell how human they are. She can see that they just don't know how to embrace their own **C.U.N.T.** – **C**harisma, **U**niqueness, **N**erve and **T**alent.

The professionals on TV can all do that. They have the nerve I'm missing that Darlean can at least observe and talk about. They have the ability to express their self-love through their interactions with others. They aren't phony hypocrites, at least not in front of the camera. We should all consider ourselves in front of a camera wherever we are.

Now that Darlean is growing up, she's become a lot more helpful to me. Not only can she sympathize with all that I've been through in a way that she couldn't when she was a kid. Now she can help out by doing things that I couldn't do well. She has a mysterious gift for spiritual "t" that I'll never understand. She can get under the hood, so to speak, and tinker with the engine to improve my timing and get me better mileage. I don't know how she does it. But having her in my life has become a real blessing.

A.N.U.S.

Ability, Nature, Uniqueness And Sympathy

I know I have a great **A**bility to help Darlean grow up to become a citizen of the world. I know now that it isn't my **N**ature to be a professional performer on stage. I know I'm **U**nique. But what's been tripping me up all these years has been too little or too much **S**ympathy for others.

Because of having suffered with severe, mental illness, exacerbated by family members who are criminally insane, my heart is as hard and black as obsidian, a jet-black glass

created by lava that explodes out of volcanos. (Obsidian is actually not very hard. It just looks it. But I like how that looks on paper and sounds...)

I watch the evening news daily, but when I can't feel for all the people suffering out there, I feel guilty about it. It's only when I realize how little I care about what's happening to *some* that I begin to question my own ability to feel for *me*. This is an awakening I've been through many times.

By contrast, Darlean is a very sympathetic person. She cares deeply about the wellbeing of everyone. And this is something I admire about her. But she's not as level-headed as me.

If you were to meet us, you'd understand why people are such enigmas. Their inner child is quite unlike them, but neither usually confers with the other about their similarities and differences.

I may have been conditioned to bite my tongue. And that may have led me to, inadvertently, giving up on myself in the past. I may have been trained to earn a living and can literally nail diplomas on my wall. But I wasn't able to figuratively place trophies on the mantle in my heart.

I've learned so much from my teenage daughter who doesn't even believe in God. When I seek justice from fools, she just tells me to leave 'em in the gutter where Jesus Flung 'em. So wise!

If you want the vote of fools, you're going to have to teach them how to vote for themself before they'll vote out their criminally insane representatives they put in office to steal money and political power.

Darlean doesn't need a college education. She doesn't need a trophy diploma to show off how smart she is. She's filled my heart with many trophies. She could teach professors, deans, chancellors and presidents some things they ought to know about themselves! I think she's amazing! I can't believe she came out of my loins. She's amazing Darlean!

Testing Your Parents

My mother didn't say a word about my complexion all through my teenage years when my face looked like a pizza, it was so full of pimples. She hated her own face, and I inherited her opinion of *her* face on *mine*. It wasn't until I attempted suicide in early adulthood that she realized it was her duty to face the fact that her child needed serious help getting through a difficult time of his life, even if he was a fully grown adult.

Don't bother to try to *love* your parents once you've made it past the age of 21. They're frail and fragile human beings, same as the rest of us. Just do what it says in the 5th Commandment. *Honor* your father and mother. What that means in a nutshell is to recognize that the apple won't have fallen far from the tree.

I wanted to be agreeable with my mother, but if I'd been more agreeable, we'd both have been wrong… You don't have to agree with your parents cockeyed opinions or do exactly what they tell you if it conflicts with how you see yourself. Don't even feel bad if you don't want go to college after high school. If they're that desperate for you to fulfill their dreams, they deserve the nightmare you're giving them.

That said, my mother raised my father's two children and a niece of his who survived the War. Then she raised two of her own. And when I was fully grown and got very sick, she was there for me again.

If you don't have children, don't make any. Avoid the problems that come with kids. Conceive your inner child and deal with your syndromes, instead.

Stick to your *vision*. You'll never regret it. Just be sure you measure exactly how far you've rolled away from your parents' trees so that you don't deny your distance from the grove you came from. Life is harder than it looks. And that's true for everybody, including your parents.

Whether u might feel more like Leonard or Billy, Mrs. Cooper, would want u to get ur sanity tested. She questions

everyone else's sanity almost to the same degree that she worries about Sheldon's.

It didn't occur to *my* mother that I'd contracted a social disease that was keeping me stuck in a chicken coop instead of flying the coop to learn how to spend my life with somebody grand. It didn't occur to her that I ended up in insane asylums because there was something seriously wrong with me that she'd never have a clue how to fix.

In the end, *I* had to watch over *her*, not the other way around. That was a bitter irony. You never know how things may turn out. You don't even know who's going to die first, or when.

I was a social misfit. I was *too* nice. I thought I was just dimwitted like any other idiot/savant. Others agreed among themselves that I was certifiably insane. Being too nice is just as punitive as not being nice enough. The two just manifest themselves differently.

Nobody dared accuse Sheldon of being crazy. Once Mrs. Cooper had him tested, Sheldon was assured that the question had been fully asked and answered. He passed the test. That's all he needed to know about mental health.

Sheldon may have had a bad habit of reminding people how smart he was by trying to let them know how dumb they were. But Mrs. Cooper kept telling him that people didn't like it when he did that. And yet, Sheldon never seemed to be able to stop himself.

Sheldon stayed in his head not to crowd out his mother who tried, unsuccessfully, his whole life to teach him about matters of the heart. Beverly Hofstadter, on the other hand, was living rent free in Leonard's heart, leaving him stuck in his head, although he was desperate to get out of it.

I suspect Billy will have to grow up before us on TV before I'll be able to convince you that he's the real deal. Someday, he'll be able to take *Mrs. Cooper* to be tested – although *that* he'd never do…

Self-Conception

Giving birth to my inner child and nourishing her in my heart began with the intimacy achieved between the threesome I finally learned to celebrate: me, myself and I. The unification of these forces within me figuratively conceived Darlean. This level of self-intimacy was so profound that it was figuratively fruitful.

But *leading* my inner child while trying not to *control* her made the quest for a virtuous life a reality that was difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, when I die, I fully expect my inner child will figuratively slip out of my body as though sliding down a vaginal tube. And then, the fruit of my greatest labor in life will be actualized.

All the people and things u'll leave behind when u die will be useless to u by the time u're on ur deathbed. All that may matter is that ur inner child, figuratively fully grown and ready to live, joyfully seeks what comes next as s/he bursts forth from within u.

But u don't have to die to let the voice of ur inner child out. Darlean isn't mean. Granted, she's stuck with my fat-phobia. But at least she realizes she's inherited this can of worms from me. She knows she doesn't have to open and serve it to other people. And isn't that the real meaning of progress?

It's become much harder for me to tell others what they *should* do, something I had no difficulty doing in the past. Being a parent humbles you.

Who am I to tell anyone how to live their life? Who am I to even tell them not to hate me? Go ahead! Hate me. Watch what that does to you.

I'm not digressing from what I'm about to say.

I'd like to take you to a memory of something that happened to me when I was a kid:

When I was a teenager, but very much a child who thought himself mature beyond his years, I had an 80-year

old Jewish gurlfriend. And when I was 14, 80 was like well over a 120 in today's world. She and I met at my father's, third wife's, jewelry store on 47th Street in New York City when I was flown in for visits every summer after summer school ended.

Mrs. Kossow was a very wise, old, New York, Jewish woman. She dressed impeccably, had a sharp sense of humor and smoked like a chimney – making her the quintessential New York, Jewish stereotype of the 1960s. I just didn't know that at the time. I just thought she was amazingly cool!

When I was in her company, I felt like Johnny Carson. She was like an entertaining guest on my show who I was interviewing for all the world to see. I couldn't ask her too many questions. She just loved the attention.

Mrs. Kassow had an apartment on the Upper East Side that could have been in an architectural magazine. It sobbed with quintessentially urbane, New York style. Her carpets were jet black. She had her housekeeper vacuum them daily. There wasn't a spot on them. (And it didn't look like she was sweeping anything under them, either…)

Mrs. Kossow told me something when I was 14 that I've remembered to this day. She confided in me that many people sought her advice. She added that she knew just what they should do to help themself. And she wasn't afraid to tell them what they should go out and change.

But I'll never forget the look in her eyes when she leaned forward and said to me in in her husky voice from a lifetime of smoking, "But they didn't have the strength to listen…"

I probably should have realized then that Mrs. Kossow was telling me that because she could see right through me. I couldn't listen, either. At 14, I was either too arrogant or too emotionally fragile to be able to face the truth about myself. So she very gently told me about others' failings instead.

If you're emotionally immature, you're blind to some aspects of body language others can see. You're deaf to

nuances of speech others can hear. You can't even talk about what's going on inside you because it's as if you bite your tongue at the very thought of having to say what's really on your mind. Your mind becomes a blank when topics of importance to you are on the table.

Moses wrote his autobiography. It's called: Torah. He was the author and main character. You may not have read it, but you probably heard about it.

Moses was trying to tell us, without being crude, that our serpent or worm is going to conspire with our emotions to overcome the tyranny of our mind. And only our conscience will be able to thwart their plans.

Nobody understood that better than Jesus, the gay Jew 1,400 years later who added to the main metaphor of Moses with a symbolism of His Own. He Told His "Friends" not to eat themselves up over guilt. He Told them to eat *Him* symbolically instead.

You, too, may be a Moses on a journey to a promised land. or a Jesus Who's Already Living in one. You, too, may be surrounded by schmegeges, like Moses and Jesus were. And you, too, may be rushing around trying to get them where they need to be.

But even though u know exactly where u're at, u may not know how to get from where u are to where u need to be if u don't learn to ask. Nobody knows that better than ur inner child. Darlean is constantly asking me "Why?"

Why didn't Moses want to ask for directions? Could it have been because, like me, he had a speech impediment?

U probably also don't know what u can and can't say to urself because u can't say it. Therefore, u ought to learn to overcome ur inability to speak to urself in those ways that u're inhibiting u. U should endeavor to learn how to untie the part of ur mind that's tongue-tied.

For all those who are mentally and emotionally handicapped, your eyes and ears will fail you. The only tool you have is your nose. Your nose knows. And so, you should

follow that invisible scent that leads you where you need to be. It's that same scent that tells you where you need *not* be.

Odiferous fragrances and disgusting smells are the only figurative evidence we have that there's a reason for our being and plan in our can. I say you ought to rely on your nose, since it's probably obvious to some others that you're as blind, deaf and dumb as I was.

If u don't yet believe that u're emotionally disabled in ur own unique way, then why did u bother to read this far to learn about how I werk out my relationship with Darlean? What possible difference could my issues with my teenage, inner child make to u unless a part of u secretly wants to know what it is we have with one another that u don't?

Even if u're not blind, deaf and dumb, u ought to be able to admit that ur vision could always use improving; ur hearing isn't that great; and u aren't the brightest bulb in the pack. So what are we arguing about?

Who *I* was by the time I was 20 was a young, gay man who was about to conquer the world! He was handsome. He was smart. He was clever. He was bold. I'd go even further to say that he was *holey*. But today he's *holy*.

He'd learned three foreign languages and was living thousands of miles from home on the opposite side of the globe. He was filled with potential and strength. And he was doing it all by himself. Mommy and daddy weren't helping him.

But when I looked back at that 20-year old lad at the age of 45, I had to say to myself, "You didn't know what the hell was coming, did you, cookie? You had no idea that mental illness in your twenties would wipe your mind clean like a chalkboard. You didn't know how humiliated you were going to be by life."

At the age of almost 70, I can now tell Darlean that I'm a miracle still in the making. I can tell her, "You're an amazing example of what you're doing with challenges you

don't ask for but handle beautifully, and with a good deal of goodwill."

Who I was at 45 and how I dealt with that young man I'd been in my twenties when I'd just begun middle age was also inspiring. I come from a long line of interesting people.

Now, I can look back on who I was at 20 and 45, and I can see that I'm a combination of many inner voices. What I call "me" is an "I" in a relationship with "you" that I couldn't conceive of until I'd taught myself how to move through my crippled emotions and twisted thinking to discover how to operate myself as a fully functioning human being. Only now can I see myself in imaginative, creative ways.

Although it's true that when u have no sense of self, you have no self-esteem issues – u wouldn't want to give up the possibility of thinking outstanding thoughts about urself. And u wouldn't want to give up being proud of urself, either.

We speak about people behaving like zombies. Yet, we don't want to talk about our *self* as a zombie. Well, from where I'm coming from, *I* was a zombie, too. I projected all my paranoias onto others, so I could fear *them*, rather than *me*.

I'm not the only one in this world who suffers from fat-phobia. The only difference between me now and before is that Darlean reminds me constantly that I'm the one with the problem. And isn't that just what you'd expect from a teenager living under your roof?

If u could conceive ur inner child consciously, u'd give up ur projections. And if u could give *them* up, u'd see how u've used projection like a window out onto the world, a window that's really a two-way mirror.

How u wish to conceive and raise ur inner child is ur decision. I'm sure there are techniques ur parents used in raising u that u'll wish to repeat. But there may also be techniques they used that will keep u from raising ur inner

child any better than *they* raised *u*. Welcome to the world of parenting. It's not easy.

Revenge, Frozen, Is Like Sorbet, A Wonderful Palette Cleanser

Boyfriend #1's boyfriend before me was much better looking than me. I'm sure that added to my hurt in them secretly seeing one another on the side. It wasn't until Darlean reached puberty that she suggested how I might get even with both of them.

But by then #1 and his former boyfriend had both died of AIDS.

Darlean suggested that I think of myself as #1's boyfriend while having sex with my boyfriend now. And she suggested that I imagine boyfriend #2 as boyfriend #1. And I have to say, that was really hot. That made it possible for me to make peace with both of them at the same time without having to take any action out in the real world.

Try using sex with your partner to resolve old issues. Just don't discuss it with him or her. Nobody wants to be used. If you use people, make sure you do so internally so that nobody will ever know what you've done. (And don't tell anyone you learned that from me.) I feel a little guilt just talking about it, let alone doing it.

Body Shaming

Nobody shames my body like I do. You have no idea how I had to humiliate my penis because of what it was attracted to. You can't imagine how I hated my legs, too – and I was a professional ballet dancer!

And my face – if you could see what *I* saw when I looked in the mirror, you'd discover what body shaming means to a queen like me. I couldn't face my own face!

I even hated my bubble butt, until I lost it somewhere in middle age. Now I look behind me with sadness because my

cheeks are so flat and uninteresting. There's no way to win with me…

The Truth May Be Offered on a Sliding Fee Scale, But You'll Have to Pay the Piper *Something* for It

Most people are forbidden fruit that they let languish on a limb. They don't pick themself. They let themself figuratively hang there from their stem (navel) precariously swinging in the wind. Even though they're no longer literally attached to their mother, they're not yet like a seed that's grown into a tree of knowledge fruiting with life as it grows in this garden. They're just a fruit separated from its twig, rotting on the ground, alone and misunderstood.

People are spoiled. Some parts of themself turn black because inside they're so blue. Over time they rot. Then parts of themself need to be cut out. They're figuratively inedible in some places, even though they're juicy and ripe in others.

Be careful! Some parts of you may be wooden, mushy and undesirable for consumption. Nibble at yourself. Don't take big bites. There may even be a worm inside you... Ugh!

Because people secretly know a little bit about themself, they don't dare pick themself. They tentatively pick one or two others who are at a safe enough distance from them to nibble on instead. But the fruits from their own tree seem forever forbidden.

And yet, when they become sour and bitter over time, they don't understand why. And when the fruits of their labor don't materialize over a lifetime, they don't consider that maybe they should go back to basics by tilling their own garden.

What's motivating these people is their ego, not their inner child. They're alone and in bad company. The last person they'd ever want to enjoy intimacy with is themself.

We ought to pick ourself first. But then we should learn how to pick others. We all need to balance the world within us with the world we share.

We all come from a woman (z) and a man (x or y). The scar on our belly is a reminder that it's like the stem of a fruit that's been separated from a branch of a tree. We all come from the juice of the fruit of a tree of knowledge (y) that was infused into a tree of life (z). That's just a fact of life.

We were all then nurtured from the juice (milk) of the fruits of that tree (z) until we were weaned onto solid food to become rooted in a reality of our own.

If you don't think about life in this way, you'll never marry yourself and bear an inner child. You'll project the concept of being a bastard onto every person who upsets you. And you'll never realize that it's been your ego (anus) that's been in charge all along. You behave like an asshole.

That's precisely what it means to have ur head up ur ass. What do u expect to find up there inside u? The secret inside urself can't be accessed that way! Get ur head out of ur ass. Sit up straight or gay. And make something of urself!

Don't Do to Urself
That Which U Find Abhorrent in Others

Most people seem to think life should be fun, romantic and care free. And when it doesn't turn out that way, they often think they've been cheated.

The other conclusion they come to is that they think money, sex and food will make up for it. They may even think that drugs and alcohol will give them what money, sex and food don't have to offer.

They don't realize that what they're missing is food-for-thought. If they could think more deeply about what they think about, they'd find that their mind flows naturally to thoughts that are intended to make them question their very being. And that's a good thing!

U weren't put here to go through life unquestioningly. If u don't ask good questions, life is going to smack u upside the head until u wake up and start asking urself better questions.

My inner child was founded upon taboos set in place by my mother and even by my father during the first seven years of my life. At first I couldn't conceive of an inner child - period.

But then, once Darlean was miraculously born into consciousness, I couldn't talk to her as I would with a real child. And when she was little, she couldn't even remember what it was I was saying.

It was as if we spoke different languages, which was ironic, since my parents spoke different languages (Lithuanian and German). They did fine speaking German to one another after the War until they came to this country and started speaking to one another in English. Then all hell broke loose. The same was true for Darlean and me early on.

Most people choose to distract themselves from hypocritical thoughts rather than delve into them. They don't want to do the hard werk.

The best (and only) question Darlean ever learned to ask me was, "Why?" Just keep asking *urself* "Why?" And stop asking urself why *others* are behaving the way they do.

People don't want to turn their life into a mission that applies discipline to every area of their being. They think exceptions to the rule, self-indulgences and relaxation are what's most important about a life well lived. And so they die almost as numb as when they were born. They come (born) and go (die) screaming. And in between, they're screaming at each other a lot of the time, too.

The little bit of external knowledge u amass won't fill u with self-esteem. Ur external knowledge only reflects how little u really know about urself.

Idiot/Savant

People are patient, and they're impatient. They're *too* patient within and not patient *enough* without.

Every time u get impatient with the drivers on the road or at the line u're in at the supermarket, notice what u aren't

saying to urself because u don't want any "written record" of ur conversation with ur inner child about what u think about those holding ur precious ass up.

To welcome failure, hopelessness, despair and death into your life requires more faith than you were born with. You came out shrieking and sobbing. But if you can maintain that rage by funneling it purposefully and creatively, you'll have something to show for your life to be proud of. You'll leave change behind you like a boat leaves waves in its wake.

Who wants to live life in a constant and silent absence of emotions? Who wants to live life seething because people are slow and incompetent? This world is alive with potential and possibility. If you don't internalize that vitality with humor, you'll never come to love yourself. Your index finger will get longer and longer, while your penis will shrink up to the size of a worm.

You're surely the funniest person you ever met. Yet I'll bet you're the last one you ever laugh at.

I'm not digressing. I really do know where I'm taking the conversation this time:

When I was about 15, I signed up for the science fair at junior high school. I wanted to build an incubator and try hatching chickens from fertilized eggs. My mother drove me way out of the city to a farm. But when I got home and put the eggs in my homemade incubator, I knocked it by mistake and broke all the eggs.

I was so angry with myself that I ran around the house swearing. My mother and sister had never seen me so upset. And I don't think I'd ever been that infuriated with myself before, either. Swearing was not even allowed in our house.

Secretly, I watched out of the corner of my eye and noticed how the two women in my life stood back in fear as I expressed my rage. I'd never seen anyone "honor" my anger with fear before. But, then again, I'd never expressed

it. I'd been taught with slaps across the face to bite my tongue, no matter what.

Anyone can learn to use a computer. But it's a special skill to be able to program it. If I were a computer programmer, I'd come to the task with a screwdriver. I'd assume that to get to the software, you have to remove the hardware. I have no innate gifts when it comes to "t".

And when it comes to raising my inner child, I made equally outrageous errors of judgment at first. What I considered assessments of people were often based on the thickness of their book, not its cover or contents. If I read something in one chapter that was contradicted in another, that validated my presumption that thick books aren't worth cracking.

Why Using Toilet Paper Makes Me Anxious

I needed to know about both the masculine (y) and feminine (z) sides of myself to make wise choices. But I hadn't wanted to acknowledge how much my mother (z) unconsciously determined my *behavior*, not just my *nature*.

Fully half of what's inside me comes from a woman (z). We can all recall coming from a mother we've known since our conception. None of us met our father (x or y) until after we were born.

In losing my relationship with my father at the age of seven, I was really given the opportunity to get to know my mother much better than most other children do.

I don't know about u, but when *I* close my eyes, I see nothing but darkness. I'm completely in the dark inside. But now I'm no longer afraid of that inner darkness. And now I no longer project that darkness onto those with dark skin.

I've had to learn about day and night; life and death; up and down, man and woman, gay and straight. Once I lost my mind, I had to start all over with basics. I now think life is much more complicated than it looked when I was a child and simply took everything for granted.

Now I feel a ripping feeling *inside* when I tear off a few sheets of toilet paper. I associate the shrinkage in the roll with my plummet downhill toward death. Once you're over the hill, you accelerate. Even the water running from the bathroom sink as I wash my hands sounds like bereavement to me. I'm going to die someday, and I can't even tell you when!

I want Darlean to know this about me. I want her to learn to conserve. I realize she grew up in a world that's much more spoiled than the world I knew as a child. But I want to teach her to appreciate every sheet of toilet paper and the flow of water from the faucet. What good is it to Darlean to live in a million dollar apartment in San Francisco if no water comes out of the tap because of global warming?

I didn't find a sense of centering until late in middle age. And, even now, I can't stay at my center for very long. Something is always pulling me off center toward my circumference.

But in this manner, my center slowly turned into a sphere. It should have been no surprise when, one day in late middle age, I found myself in a bubble.

In my bubble, I have a 360 degree view of the external world from within. The external world begins literally where my skin ends.

Although I'm literally shaped like a human being, I'm figuratively shaped like a flattened out sphere. I'm in a spiritual bubble that resembles a galaxy with a huge, black hole at the center. By how people objectively touch me with their opinions, I must determine how they subjectively touch me. And I've gotta say, a lot of people rub me the wrong way. But I can massage that impression with reason.

Contrary to My Contrariness

I had to be contrary to discover who I wasn't. Then I had to be contrary to the ways I was contrary to discover who I was.

Now I'm so old and experienced that, to others, it looks like I'm normal, average, regular, typical, run-of-the-mill, mediocre, common, standard and usual. And I consider that an accomplishment! As they say in New York, "Go know!"

What to Bring a Mental Patient

My father came to visit me in Bellevue bringing a bag of apples. Don't do that! It scared the shit out of me. I thought that had something to do with forbidden fruit, and he was secretly sending me Jewish messages.

The hospital had plants and a turtle in an aquarium within easy access to the patients. One gal pulled the plants out of their pots a few times a day to inspect how their roots were doing. I killed the turtle because I thought it was a relative of the serpent in the Creation Story.

When you visit a patient in a mental hospital you don't have to bring anything other than your sense of humor with you. Bring puns. Bring bitter ironies. Bring light-hearted hope and a sense of optimism that words can heal.

I told this to a friend of mine who'd worked in state government in Sacramento his whole life. He told me that that was good advice when visiting any institution…

What to Bring the Person Who's Lost an Inner Limb

Bring crutches. And if they're those awful medical crutches that look like they're for old, sick people, be sure you paint them all the colors of the rainbow first. Give people who are broken, a promise of hope. What else do they need? And what else do you really have to offer?

Inner Tennis

Once your inner child is old enough to learn a sport, I recommend you start with tennis. Now I've never played tennis. But that's no reason for me not to be an expert on that sport from within.

In inner tennis, you and your inner child get on opposite sides of the net, and you whack the ball (idea) over in an attempt to hit one another. That turns it into a game of dodgeball.

Once you've gotten that out of your system, you're ready to learn to serve a new idea with the intention of challenging your partner to compete with you. That exercises your mind in a way that builds mental muscle.

Over time, you'll want to change sides and play the game from the opposite direction.

Then you'll want to volley your ideas without competing, just to see how long you can go in the pleasure of each other's company while striving for the same goal.

And then I recommend you take the game to the shower where you enjoy the delight of seeing yourself in the nude (without clothing); naked (without beguiling feelings); and revealed (open to the mystery of your spiritual being). All sports should end in a handshake with your inner child.

And all along u thought I was going to say something clever about keeping score with love…

Under Thinking

There was a part of me that hadn't taken Darlean seriously most of my life. It couldn't. It just didn't know enough about life to know how seriously life ought to be taken. And yet, when others didn't take *me* seriously, I felt awful. I felt as though I'd been covered with a wet blanket. I felt depressed. All my feelings ran out of me chilled, leaving me cold and empty inside.

I didn't associate how people treated me with how I treated Darlean. Only once I understood the importance of self-communication did my communication with others become more meaningful. But communicating from within was easier said than done.

Moses had a speech impediment. There was no way he could express himself well with others. When God Told him

to go back to Egypt where he'd killed a man and was wanted for murder, he knew he couldn't do it without the help of his brother, Aaron, to speak on his behalf.

God Only Knows what Moses sounded like when *he* talked to *Him*. If he stuttered before God, you can just imagine how impatient he must have made Aaron and Pharaoh feel when he couldn't express himself before them. Who has the patience of The Lord?

I, however, didn't know I had a speech impediment because I don't literally have one you can hear when I speak out loud.

Nobody told me that when both your parents slap you across the face in early childhood, they create a mental habit by which you'll bite your tongue for the rest of your life. My *thoughts* stutter, not my *tongue*.

I have no problem speaking, reading or writing words. I have a problem thinking in words. I'm impeded by a relationship to words that's psychological, not biological. The part of my mind that's been wounded affected the way I feel and what I want out of life.

The engine of my car is fine. But the shock absorbers and wheels are seriously out of alignment. I pull out of the driveway, and before I get fifty feet down the road, my vehicle rattles like a cucaracha.

Although there comes a time when you have to be able to speak your mind to others, you're very lucky if you've learned how to speak your mind to yourself. But, whether you don't know how to speak without or within, you're going to be judged a fool by someone.

Therefore, learn to speak to urself in order to be able to become more comfortable speaking to others. The whole celebration of writing this book lies in my ability to speak to u about how to speak to urself because who can't see that everyone has a figurative, speech impediment?

Everyone speaks to himself in code. That code gets translated into words that then are made manifest

orthographically with symbols. But the code is the source of our communication patterns. And everyone's code is unique to him or her.

But everyone has an inner child who has problems when s/he hits puberty, as well. That's why Darlean, by nature, turned into a slut and why I, too, behaved like one when I was her age. That's why I had to teach her what it means to be a **S.L.U.T**.

Keep buying the books I write in the future, and you'll discover what becomes of Darlean when she reaches adulthood. Just imagine what she'll be like when she becomes fully emancipated and breaks the code!

Middle Age Insights

During the seven years of single life from the ages of 50-57, before I met my second boyfriend, I was terribly lonely. I didn't know why middle age looked as sad as it did. I was a queen who owned an apartment walking distance from the Castro (the heart of gay San Francisco). I was in good health. I was taking ballet classes three times a week. I was trim. And I had a business that ran itself. I was practically retired. I could even take naps in the afternoon!

But when I'd look back at my youth and early adulthood, I could see that I'd climbed the sheer face of a figurative cliff. I hadn't just literally driven my car off of one.

I just couldn't see what for? I looked down from all sides and couldn't imagine what would come next.

There was nothing to do but make my way down slowly into old age and death. They say, "Once you're over the hill, you begin to pick up speed." But I just want to come down cautiously and slowly, and I didn't know how to apply the brakes.

Growing up, I didn't have friends, even though I'd been with some of my classmates since the fourth grade. When I graduated high school, I never saw any of them again. In fact, I ditched school most of the last year of high school,

coming to my classes only to take tests. And yet, not one of those "friends" ever called to ask how I was feeling. And still I graduated with honors and a scholarship to U.C.L.A.

Making friends of others is greatly overrated unless you've made a friend of yourself. Popularity with people will take a toll on you if you haven't conceived an inner child and can complain to everyone you meet about your problems with parenting. That's what most people are talking about anyway, even if they don't know it.

I started out life not having a clue who I was. But in early adulthood, I soon discovered that, although I'd been terrified of other people hurting me when I was a kid, I wasn't afraid to treat myself violently and disrespectfully as a grown up. And when violence didn't werk in teaching me a life lesson, I used self-deprivation instead. I can't tell you how lonely I was all my life, and how clueless I was to the one I most wanted to befriend.

Now I can. Now I'm no longer forced to bite my tongue. Now I can tell you that I secretly never wanted to kill myself. I wanted to kill my parents for forcing me to literally and figuratively bite my tongue. From that trauma, I lost my voice. It's taken me a lifetime to find it to tell u what's been on my mind that I couldn't tell *me.*

But now I have Darlean to speak to. Dance is no longer my only source of exercise. Now I exercise patience for the sake of my little gurl.

At the same time I had such traumatic encounters with my parents as a child, my mother was going through a trauma of her own. She had a thyroid condition that required an operation. But the operation was bungled and she lost her voice because the doctor inadvertently cut a nerve to her vocal cord. She came away only able to whisper.

For two years, she suffered with muteness while I was learning to speak. *I* lost my ability to speak to *myself*. My *mother* could literally only whisper to *others*. Life can be filled with bitter ironies.

When my mother was the age I am now, she wrote her memoires. Her violin was no longer the instrument she used to express herself. She found her true voice in the same way I've found mine: through writing about living life.

My parents were Holocaust survivors who retaliated against the Nazis indirectly by slapping *me* across the face as a young child in the 1950s instead of realizing that my anti-authoritarian behavior was normal for someone of my age. [10]

My mother's two years of mutism only exacerbated the need for everyone in my family to learn to speak up about what was really on their chest. That should have been a sign to us all that we were all suffering from a form of mutism. Only hers was literal.

Now, in retrospect, the big picture makes more sense to me. Now I can see why some Black youths steal and some White youths become Republicans. Now I can see why some good people protect their parents from humiliation by humiliating themself instead.

---

[10] Perhaps it's not cool to speak about this in a footnote, but you'll certainly learn more about this chapter of my life if you read my other books. When my mother was thrown out of the German, public school system for being a Jew, she was in the seventh grade.

But my father, who was ten years older than her, graduated an esteemed "university" in Germany for all sorts of "degenerates" the state disapproved of. It was called: Dachau Concentration Camp.

War doesn't determine who's right, only who's left. Therefore, the Jews who were left after the Second World War were left for a reason that it behooves us all to still ponder. I may be gauche, but I'm not left in the sense of morally inept.

I'd love to tell you that I have no problems with people because I'm better than them. I'd love to assure you that I was always separate and too special to fit in.

But the truth is that I was only enrolled in some classes in the school of life much later than most. The order of my curriculum may have been unique, but the subject matter we're all enrolled in is the same.

The most challenging task for Darlean every day is to get weighed every morning. She thinks the scale is a crystal ball that will tell her how her whole day will unfold.

I may look pretty good to others on the outside, but Darlean is never satisfied with my looks. I stopped smoking, drinking and drugging more than 35 years ago. But I couldn't stop eating. For Darlean's sake, I wish I could give up food, too.

I suffer from a twisted relationship to consumption. If I'm cavalier about a pound or two I've gained, I'm secretly and viciously attacking Darlean about how much she weighs. It's like being on a seesaw with yourself.

It's not admirable to raise an inner child when you have character defects you haven't eliminated in yourself. It's sad. Half the time I cry with joy. Half the time I cry from grief.

But I *can* say that now I'm more open to my failures and disappointments. Parenting has changed me. I'm more aware of my physical decay and the losses I've suffered over a lifetime, including having lost my mind. But if *I* hadn't lost my mind, who *else* could have ever written a book like this one?

Not A Single Single

Why is it that some singers have one hit after another, and some don't get a single single? Why is it that some batters hit home runs, and others strike out? Why is it that some women pop out one baby after another, while it takes others a lifetime just to conceive an inner child?

Are the newspapers piling up outside St. Peter's Gate? Does God Not Know what's going on down here? Is He as oblivious to *His* Feelings as I was to *mine*?

We've paved this garden and turned it into a parking lot. Yet we don't even respect the vehicle each of us was poured into. Therefore, it should be no surprise that we're choking on the fumed of the vehicles we've created ourselves.

God Is poetic. Man is prosaic. God Doesn't Want us to judge a book by its cover. Yet we refuse to read any book that's too thick or has a Black jacket. And if the cover looks gay or Jewish, you can dump that book in the trash with all the books on poetry.

People hate poetry. They say it hurts their head. It forces them to think. But if u don't force urself to think, how are u going to convince urself to feel? And if u can't feel, u shouldn't be the least bit surprised that u never come to believe.

Romance Over The Age Of 60

After #1 and I broke up when we were both 50, I felt like I felt at 18 when I went to Israel a second time to begin my life as an adult all on my own. I felt like I knew where I was going then. I felt I had a plan.

But I also felt utterly alone in a world that seemed foreign to me. I was scared shitless.

I felt excited about being 50 and single again. But I was also terrified of what strangers would think of me. I didn't have the vocabulary needed to speak to Israelis in Hebrew when I was 18. But I still couldn't talk to people at 50 in my mother tongue: English!

Not being able to speak a language has little to do with communicating.

I've always felt like I just landed on Earth from outer space. I just didn't have the words to admit it to myself. I had to rediscover sex at 50 among a whole new generation of gay men. And the blesséd event of Darlean coming consciously

into my life was still years away. Talk about feeling like an alien from outer space!

All my connections to humanity had been determined by books. Books had been my only real friends in life. If you wanted to get a good look at my friends, all you had to do was look at my bookshelves. I didn't have a rolodex. I had a Dewey decimal system!

It's no surprise to me now that books, not ballet, would become the way for me to actualize my mission, albeit late, in life. It's no surprise to me now that what I really wanted to be when I grew up was a writer, not a dancer. I just didn't know it until I'd lost my youth, my mind, and my first long term relationship. I had to become a single, gay man at the age of 50 to discover my passion for *living* before I could start *writing*. At the time, that was more terrifying than terrific.

Life is a journey. We're all travelers who happen to be in the same moment in time: now. The fixed plans most people have are: 1. Get a good job through some kind of formal training; 2. Get married 3. Have children. 4. Grow old happily together with loved ones. And 5. Die in your sleep.

This is the simple plan most people superimpose upon their journey, not realizing that all of that can be done abstractly. It doesn't have to happen literally to be achieved figuratively.

There really isn't any more to life than: (1) money, (2) love, (3) babies, (4) happiness and (5) a painless death. Why would anyone try to convince you otherwise? The only thing I'd add to that is that you can achieve many of these goals within yourself with your *self*. You don't necessarily have to look for another person to accomplish them with you.

D.I.C.K. Verses C.O.C.K.

Here's my definition of a **D.I.C.K.**:

D Dogmatic
I Insulting
C Cocky
K Krude

Here's my definition of a **C.O.C.K**.:

C Cocky
O Optimistic
C Cockier
K Kind

Now if that doesn't separate the **D.I.C.K.**s from the **C.O.C.K.**s, I don't know what will. But I'll try to make it even clearer for those who still can't see it

A **D.I.C.K.** will leave you with hemorrhoids. A **D.I.C.K.** is just a pain in the ass. You'll feel like your little rosebud has been penetrated with a light bulb that broke inside you, leaving you with shards of glass that will cut you where it really hurts.

A **C.O.C.K.**, on the other hand, will leave you with a warm glow deep down that will turn your navel into a night light.

What makes a **C.O.C.K**. so good is that he's not just cocky. He becomes cockier over time. And that's what makes the difference between sized and supersized.

I've been with far too many **D.I.C.K.**s. And I'd love to teach you to recognize the difference before you, like me, get so hurt that you have to obsess on what you look like rather than who you are.

Here's a short trip down memory lane of an incident that happened to me in Amsterdam:

There was a German **D.I.C.K.** from Dusseldorf who used to come to Holland and stay with me on my houseboat on Saturday nights. I have to admit he was pretty cocky. (All **D.I.C.K.**s are.) He'd bought an apartment in town that he

was fixing up on the weekends to live in, and I was hoping to see a lot more of him once he had a place nearby.

Well, one Saturday night he came over and told me that he'd just finished putting in the bathroom, and his place was finally livable. He didn't have to come over to shower anymore at my place. Then he suggested that we go out to a club.

He had a car. And in those days in Europe, dating a guy with a car was a sign that you'd caught a big fish. You didn't have to settle with the minnows that swam around in the bars who then had to take the tram or the night bus home.

The D.O.K. was the biggest club in Amsterdam in those days. And it was easy to lose someone in the crowd. It was popular every night, but, of course, on Saturday nights, especially so.

He and I got separated, and I looked around for him for what must have been an hour. And then I suddenly realized that he'd dumped me! His bathroom was finished! He didn't need a place to stay in town anymore! So he'd just left me at the club to find someone else to fill the void inside me!

I took a taxi home. I wasn't about to add insult to injury by getting on a night bus with all the losers…

What Inner Power Looks Like

Many people want to prove that *others* are hypocrites. To do so they have to pull down the fig leaf that Adam and Eve set in place with gorilla glue to cover their sins. But who doesn't know that grabbing a person by the crotch isn't acceptable in polite society?

Who also doesn't know that the sin Adam and Eve committed wasn't located between their legs. It was committed in a garden. Covering their genitals was just a poetic description of the guilt they were putting themselves through: embarrassment, shame and humiliation.

Just listening to hypocrites speak can feel like fingernails on a chalkboard. It sounds so bad because it's a distant

reminder of your own two faces. One voice comes out of your mouth and the other comes out your other end. But "good" people everywhere feel it's their duty to prove to you that when you turn the other cheek, you should know which mouth you're speaking from.

Kissing an asshole isn't something reserved for those who engage in rimming. There are plenty of assholes in this world kissing other assholes.

So, pulling off fig leaves is one poetical way to remind hypocrites that they ought to be ashamed of the way they look, with or without their clothes on. I'm talking about a nakedness that goes right to the bone.

Chances are that u're a hypocrite, too. So unless someone is criminally insane and stealing from someone, be very careful about how indignant u get over other people's transgressions.

Gone Bananas

When I was insane, I had a reoccurring vision of me being a gorilla with my left foot stuck in an underground trap. I could see my left foot holding a banana in the trap, but I couldn't get my foot out of the trap to eat the banana.

Let me begin explaining that delusion by saying that everyone knows a banana tree isn't a tree at all. It's a grass, like bamboo. So the fruit of the banana tree doesn't apply as fruit in the Hebraic sense of the word. Bananas aren't forbidden fruit. And that's good because I just love slightly unripen bananas... Doesn't matter in the least to me if they're big or small. Some of the sweetest bananas I've ever had were the little ones no more than three or four inches long from the Far East. Fabulous!

I think I've lost track of what I wanted to say. I digressed again. This time a whole other topic came to mind…

A vision of me being a hungry gorilla with food in my foot that I couldn't bring up to my mouth was a reminder of my lifelong frustration to the point of exasperation with this

world. I felt I was in a trap I couldn't see before I'd stepped in it. And there I was – *stuck* – most of my life, hungry and unable to feed myself.

Now I have a boyfriend who's faithful. Now I have a sex life with him that's more fun than a barrel (bed full) of monkeys (unenlightened men).

One of the things that makes mental illness so painful is that the mind always makes perfect sense in the same way that poetry makes perfect sense if you can get inside the mind of the poet to see what s/he's describing from a novel point of view.

That's why this novel had to be novel. If it were just another story of love between a mother (me) and child (Darlean), I'd hate myself for having written it.

Disorderly Eating

I, Darlean, am the C.E.O. and president of the "Clean Plate Club." If I'm just full, I haven't eaten nearly enough. But my mom's so vain that she becomes clinically depressed if I gain a quarter pound.

It's not that I charge out of bed to eat breakfast every morning. I'm not really hungry until noon. But I know she gets upset if I eat anything *after* lunch, so I start the day first thing with breakfast. If I'm hungry and snack at night, she's absolutely catatonic and morose the next day.

I'm not happy watching other people eat themselves sick. But mom says I've used up my allotment of sweets and fat for this lifetime, and she doesn't want to dip into future lives to sustain my addiction.

I actually like fat people. I even think fat looks good on *me*. It just doesn't *feel* good to my mom. So because *she's* cold, *I* have to put on a sweater…

Once my appetite isn't under control, it's true that I turn into a monster. It's like I rise up out of the sea to terrorize Tokyo. I get so hungry that I'll swallow anybody whole without even having to spit out their bones.

Such is the storyline of my horror movie. If u don't like it, turn the channel. U already know the monster dies at the end. So what's ur problem?

I Make Me Sick

Without knowing how to nibble on new information; chew it; and swallow it gratefully, Darlean wasn't able to stomach learning as a child. Either she'd immediately vomit up what she knew onto others, or it would sit like a rock in *her* stomach until *I* got cramps.

She wasn't able to digest new ways of being. Nothing seemed to nourish or fulfill her. She either nauseated *others* or she left *me* with diarrhea. Trying new ways to be herself only caused *me* to get a case of the runs, often concurrent with literally having to throw up.

My first bout with the "runs" occurred during high school when I played hooky most of my senior year. The second case came when I ran off to Europe and Israel two days after high school graduation to explore life on the other side of the globe without knowing a thing about what was happening here at home.

Then, it hit me again at 18 when I decided that I had to move to Israel permanently. At 20 I had another case of the runs, this time to Holland. And at 23, I ran away from Holland to move back to L.A.

By then I was pretty weak. I couldn't keep down spiritual food or drink. It should have been so surprise to me that by then I couldn't stomach my own company. Whatever went in me about me, figuratively came out both ends.

It was poetic justice that I ended up at Bellevue. There, while I was reading a magazine in the waiting room, I got so agitated by the photos I was looking at that I had to be pinned down by a team of workers and shot up with a tranquilizer. The next morning I found myself on a locked ward, on a cot, literally in a pool of my own feces.

Some people might have said that I was full of shit long before I ended up in an insane asylum. But the truth is that I just couldn't keep down food-for-thought. Either it went through me like a freight train, or I suffered severe heart burn from it. In fact, I've been so burned by new information about me all my life, that burning acid still drips down into my stomach from my heart when I get upset.

Life gave me cramps in those days that left me figuratively doubled over in pain. I can honestly say that I was a pain in the ass until I learned to dine on food-for-thought, not vomit it up an hour after eating it.

And if I'm really honest with you, I'd have to admit that I'd figuratively stick my finger down my throat to remove unwanted knowledge about myself that I couldn't stand. I was spiritually bulimic.

When I dealt with the stinking mess I'd made of myself that first morning in Bellevue, it didn't occur to me that there was also a stinking mess inside of me that couldn't just be washed away with soap and water.

Committed

Life in Belleview was routine and actually quite pleasant. The other patients quickly became fast friends in odd ways I hadn't been able to make friends in the outside world. Before Bellevue, I never realized how much I had in common with people who were literally crazy.

But when I drank from the metal, drinking fountain on my unit and saw my reflection in it, I experienced a profound belief that I was also made of metal, while ingesting a cold, liquid substance that was a non-metal. And that perturbed me. I didn't want to consume water once I realized it wasn't made of metal if I was.

I also got my exercise by doing grand jetés up and down the corridors every night, hoping to achieve the physical height necessary when the staff was at a minimum to fly out one of the windows without being caught. But the hallways

weren't long enough for me to get up the speed I needed for liftoff.

Accepting reality really isn't possible if you can't *tolerate* reality. And you really can't tolerate reality if your inner child has been so repressed in your unconscious that your first priority is to protect yourself from him or her rising to the surface. Having a wild child deep down within is time consuming and debilitating.

I didn't get out of Belleview eight weeks later by relinquishing my fantasy about my body being made of metal. I just didn't admit to the staff that the armor I thought I was made of couldn't protect me from reality. I had to tell myself I wasn't waterproofed inside and would therefore rust from drinking water. And the staff never asked why I insisted on drinking juice or milk.

I didn't get out of Belleview by acknowledging to myself that I'd never be able to jump high enough to fly out those windows. The runways (hallways) were long enough. I just told myself that I didn't yet have the power I needed for liftoff.

I got out of Bellevue by faking sanity. I treated my evaluation with the doctors like a performance. I got on stage and acted *like* a normal person. If I could dance *like* a ballet dancer, I could act *like* an actor. The act only had to go on for a matter of minutes and then I knew they'd let me leave.

It wasn't until years later that I understood the word-play my mind was using to play tricks on me. I simply had to bite my tongue in the moment, something I was already an expert at doing.

But you can probably already guess that I needed to be locked up a second time because my mind was much too sensitive and fragile to handle reality as normal people do. People who are normal seem crude from the point of view of an insane person.

When I drove my car over a cliff two years later, I was hoping to crush my body in the metal I was in that literally

surrounded me. I was trying to destroy an encasement that wasn't good at keeping reality out. I knew I was in a vehicle of some sort, and I just wanted out of it.

But I was really seeking peace of mind. Was that too much to ask for?...

Although water is needed for life, I personally associated water with rust. I feared I was a machine that was rusting. I was like stain-*less* steel. I stained. I rusted; just a little less than I had before. I couldn't find a way to waterproof myself. I could tell that there was a leak somewhere inside me, but what's a body to do?

When I drove my car over the cliff, I was in a race with the world that I had to win. But the only way to win was to die before everyone else did.

I didn't succeed in killing myself in my attempt to achieve inner peace. Instead, I had to learn how to explore my mind like a grease monkey under the hood of a car. I had to get my hands dirty. And that was as loathsome then as "t" is to me today. I didn't have the patience to do the werk. I wanted other people to do it *for* me.

I didn't want to hurt anybody. But I didn't want people to hurt me, either. The more people hurt me, the more I bit my tongue. And the more I bit my tongue, the more I wanted revenge against myself for being so weak that I could be hurt. I could still taste the blood in my mouth when I'd been a young child.

But I couldn't put that taste into words. I was as helpless as a baby. Life is a maelstrom for a baby because it has no ability to organize its experiences with words.

Every word I'd learned in life reminded me of the taste of my own blood. I sickened me. I wanted to develop a taste for life, and I didn't know how.

I didn't realize that I wanted revenge against my mother and father. I thought I loved them.

But the taste for revenge was in my mouth, and after two attempts at killing myself, my blood was now on my *hands*

as well. *You* could even see it on my pinkish face. I couldn't look myself in the eyes.

To write to u, I had to learn to write to me. I had to learn to build a bridge between us that u could understand without calling me crazy.

I'm not "Still Crazy After All These Years." I don't have the luxury of talking about myself in such a cavalier manner. I'm *not* crazy after all these years. And I couldn't be more proud of myself for being able to say so.

We're All Going to Die!

I suppose God Made man contrary right from the start. Paradox is built into His System. Man is never going to take the shortest distance between two points. If he did, he'd cut off heads because of crafty thoughts. He'd cut out hearts because of hateful feelings. And he'd cut off hands for stealing self-knowledge.

Tolerance is an outcome that's harder to achieve than it looks because it requires taking the long, rocky road that has many twists and turns. Perhaps they call history "his story" because it's much more his, than hers. If anyone should have to take responsibility for the cruelty in this world, let it be man (y).

Darlean is still too young and foolish to think about death as something to be taken seriously. She's just a teenager. She just wants to live, love and have a nice life. She doesn't like my constant reminders about the end being nearer than it looks. She thinks it's morose. She thinks I'm unrealistic. She doesn't realize that there's no order by age to the way in which we leave this world. The death of others is a constant reminder that every day counts more than she knows.

Running water still reminds me of rusting. I have to use water judiciously not to feel guilty about it pouring down the drain. Toilet paper reminds me of a lifetime of having had the runs. I can only rip off three sheets at a time, so I buy the most expensive brand because it's the thickest.

Sometimes just walking from one room in my house to another makes me involuntarily wish I was dead. That's how upset I get with myself when I go into another room and have forgotten why I went in there.

Darlean has a cavalier attitude about everything she does. And so, I feel I have to remind her that we're all going to die whether we wish for it, or not. Ironically, that keeps me sane.

One day, Darlean and I are going to be parted, and that already makes me sad. That kind of parting is truly the meaning of "sweet sorrow." So I beg her not to argue with me about little things that really don't matter much in the greater scheme of things. I tell her that we should just improve the way we do things on a daily basis and move on.

I wasn't able to reward Darlean for a job well done until death became a daily topic in our house. Just telling her "thank you" or "you're amazing" seemed to require herculean strength. And it didn't accomplish much of anything. Until I could imagine sitting in a coffin with her and nailing it shut from the inside, she wouldn't sit still when I tried to talk to her.

She and I need a lot of private time together. We need time to talk about things that don't come up in "polite society." But that's very hard to achieve with a teenager. It requires enormous patience and understanding.

Only after having given too much to others, did I discover that giving must first be given within, so it'll be doled out in appropriate quantities without.

When I reward Darlean with compliments and praise in words, it increases her esteem of herself, regardless of how hollow my words may resound to me. I promote inner harmony by pointing out to her how devoted and determined she is to improve the relationship between us. *That's* rewarding.

My love for Darlean, paradoxically, makes my support of others more meaningful to *them*. A lot of people love me

now. It's the most amazing thing to see. It's truly magical! They see me as someone who's really capable of trying.

From a position of giving in both my worlds (internal and external), I find myself in a much better position to appreciate external comforts; small improvements in everyday communication with others; and the pursuit of my desires in bed with my boyfriend – all for rewards well earned. This is the direct result of Darlean having decided not to go to college. She's learning enough just from me and life itself. And I'm learning a lot from her.

S.L.U.T.

Darlean will never be a slut, a term gay men like to use on one another. She's of **S**ervice to others. She's **L**oyal. She's had a difficult **U**pbringing. But she's incredibly **T**alented. She's a **S.L.U.T.**, just like her mom. And I'm not in the least bit ashamed of appropriating that word to describe us this way. I'd even describe my *own* mother this way. The only difference is that my mother literally had children and I only figuratively did.

For all the weirdness in the background of the Mona Lisa, I can tell you, that I've been where she's sitting now. Her background looks as other worldly as mine did.

I can relate to the smile on that woman's face and the way her hands are folded in her lap, as if to say, my werk here is done. What's behind the Mona Lisa is her past. What's ahead of her are people like u and me.

There aren't a lot of paintings I can relate to. I relate a bit more to music and dance. But even these art forms have to touch me in a special way that I can never predict.

#1 once complained to me that I looked at life through a funnel turned backwards. He said that everything he threw at me bounced off. He said it was next to impossible to aim well enough to get anything through to me.

I may have had a sexual relationship with him for 14 years, but I was figuratively a virgin the whole time. Don't ask me how that's possible. But it is.

Monogamy, like old age, isn't for sissies. If you want to devote your body to one other person besides your self, you'll need to devote yourself all the more to your inner child. Without a little boi or gurl to raise to be a gentleman or lady, you're always going to look around for someone else to hang with, even if you can't literally touch a soul.

Anorexia and Food for Thought

When I realized in my late fifties that I was ready to give birth to an inner child in consciousness, I was in seventh heaven. Becoming pregnant was a dream come true. The blesséd event was only marred by the fact that there was no one to share it with. Not only could I not tell people that I'd reached a level of awareness of my inner child that was unprecedented. There was no man in my life ready, willing and able to devote his life to a queen who was about to give birth to a Jewish princess…

My mother had been afraid of remarrying after having made such a bad mistake the first time with my father. She resolved to find a second husband only after my sister and I had left the house. She didn't want to traumatize us with the possibility of another divorce.

My Catholic boyfriend is fine with me having brought my little Jewish princess into our relationship. But he didn't find out about Darlean until after he moved in. I wasn't crazy! I wasn't going to scare him off before I hooked him!...

When I finally felt I'd found someone who could accept me as I am, I knew he had a family-man personality. I knew I could trust him not to sleep around, leaving me and Darlean in the lurch.

Before I got pregnant it hadn't occurred to me that my inner child might turn out to be a gurl since I'd always dreamed about having a magical relationship with a boi. I

knew nothing about gurls. It even made me feel a little weird about her having all those female bits and pieces I never had any interest in.

Having a baby was a psychological challenge that nobody had prepared me for. And I hold the modern world responsible for such appalling lack of psychological insight and instruction. What are people talking to each other about? Do they ever get serious?

I guess I started to take my *self* more seriously once I decided to marry me. I knew by then that something was different about the way I was engaged with me, but I didn't realize yet what it was.

In April of 2008, I got up the nerve to go to Israel expressly to marry myself at the Wailing Wall. My wedding was on Friday night, April 11th, 2008. There were no guests. It was a solo affair.

After that, I still had no idea that being married to me would create a level of intimacy within me that would figuratively conceive a child that would come to consciousness in the way it has.

Although I'd been having sex with myself since I was 16, never in my wildest dream did I expect to give birth to an *inner child*. And I certainly didn't anticipate a gurl!...

When Darlean was little, I didn't dare call her by name or speak to her directly. My sanity was no longer in question, but I didn't want to push my weirdness too far. But it soon became apparent that she needed to be called something. "Inner child" was so impersonal, and speaking about yourself in the third person is so cold.

I thought about calling her Annalexia. But that sounded like a drag name. It was a combination of anorexia and dyslexia. But I didn't want the bitch to hate me for the rest of my life…

"Annalexia" just wasn't a name that would imbue my inner child with a sense of hope and great expectations. It came too close to the truth about my past.

I know that spelling Darlean's name the way I did isn't politically correct or supportive. But I don't want there to be any secrets between us. I'd rather she know what an unhealthy relationship I've had with my mind and body. Why hide it?

Single life before I married me wasn't exactly filled with a lot of self-love. It should have been no surprise to me that Darlean would turn out to be a complex person who suffered many unknown issues I'd have to help her through. I was prepared for that. Hell, after what I've been through, I was prepared for anything!...

But I still have problems around people who seem to have no inner child or who have a relationship with their inner child that isn't peaceful, loving and kind. That comes too close to home. I'm sure people can still see the tension in me from a mile away. And I'm sure they can tell that Darlean is years away from being emancipated.

My figurative eating disorder is in part caused by me having always eaten for two. I just didn't realize it was because I was figuratively pregnant and repressed. Now that Darlean is fully borne into my conscious mind, the less I stuff myself, the less guilty I feel. But that's just what *I* have to do.

Who, but a drama queen, would complain about having to raise an inner child in this fraught-filled day and age? You look at the snot-nosed little brats running around, and you see their parents as children exposed to the outer world without training, guidance and education. I suppose that's why Hillary said, "I still believe it takes a village to raise a child."

But what's the good of home schooling your inner child if you don't provide good instruction? Do you really want the village idiots to raise your kid?

I'm impressed that Americans are learning about healthy eating habits. I'm glad they're irrigating food deserts where people used to be unable to find fresh produce. I'm glad that

there are food gardens where people can turn up their nose to junk food and processed foods to pick healthy options instead. Glorifying an addiction to sugar and fat doesn't make it holy.

But these aren't my problems. My problems are in feeding my inner child the spiritual food she needs to grow up big and strong like *my* mother. There are two mouths to feed in my family. One mouth has to be fed food literally. The other has to be nurtured with food-for-thought figuratively.

I blame the world for my disorderly eating disorder. I wouldn't have turned out this way if people hadn't corrupted me with own addictions and distractions. I don't blame Darlean or me. It's not our fault. Anorexia is an external expression of my effort to avoid enlightening me.

If Adam and Eve indulged in *forbidden* fruit without admitting their guilt about what they'd done, it seems to me that Darlean and I should be able to learn to enjoy *permissible* fruit without it making us feel bad about ourselves.

The problem comes out of our genitals and anus. It doesn't start there. If u exacerbate the problem with further problems down under, don't blame that on gay-Jews.

The only thing I've been able to do to help Darleen and me maneuver through our eating disorder is to assure Darlean that food-for-thought is good for her, even if she has to wash it down with a little guilt. I suggest u do the same.

The Voice Of Loss

Loss isn't unique to me. Everyone suffers losses and feels s/he's misplaced something irreplaceable. The more I can see and admit my own losses to the parts of me that aren't taking life as seriously as I am, the more realistically I can respond rather than react to the losses others have to go through.

To be at one with your own losses, you're going to have to protect others from *future* losses, even if those poor bastards don't realize how much has been stolen out from under them already.

Just turning your back on other people's suffering, shrugging your shoulder and muttering under your breath that they're on their own – is the legacy of a big loser. If you want to see greater loss inflicted upon *you,* all you have to do is close yourself off emotionally to other good people's defeats. I can guarantee you that you'll end up learning a great deal more about your fate, and very little about your destiny. I know I did.

I'm not asking you for money. I'm not asking you to volunteer your time. I'm not asking you to pick up hitchhikers, bake cookies or save canned goods for the poor. What I'm asking you to do is feel – just feel!

Your natural *responses* aren't your natural *reactions*. Everything will only fall into place when you learn how to respond, not react, judiciously in the moment.

But when you find yourself justifying other people's misfortune with "good reasons" for their pain or suffering, you may be defending your unwillingness to feel sympathy for them. It doesn't cost a thing to feel bad. It's just a feeling. It's not going to be deducted from your checkbook. And you won't have to account for your grief at the end of the year on your tax return.

As I said, sympathy is just a feeling. It's the feeling that assures you that we're all human beings learning how to make our way from birth to death with pain and suffering interspersed with small amounts of happiness to affirm our efforts.

We were all enraged when we were victimized by our mother's contractions and forced out of her vagina into this world. None of us asked to be born. Not even I, the product of a caesarian birth, wanted to be removed from my mother's physical, all-encompassing protection. I may have come out

silently, not screaming, but, as you can see, even I have finally found my voice.

If you think I'm talking to you out of my other end, then you have a great deal of awe and regard for gay men. You must think our little rosebuds are more talented than all your straight asses put together. You must think we're that different from you…

All my life I worried about how abandoned and alone I'd feel when my mother died. I saw us as connected at the hip. But when she did pass away at the age of 98, I actually was relieved and happy for her. I didn't feel abandoned by her passing. In fact, I celebrated her life and her departure. My boyfriend and I went out for a fancy meal that night. I ordered lamb. She was the ewe in my life, not u.

You aren't going to know in advance what you'll consider a loss until you lose it. What you may anticipate as a loss in the external world might not feel that way at all inside. The death of my mother turned out to be a day of great celebration after me worrying about that event being the most grievous day of my life.

The reason it werked out that way is because I believe that life is a school, and she'd been a pretty good student. I thought she graduated with a few awards, even if she didn't achieve high honors. And that made me proud. This school isn't easy.

As it so happens, the loss of my mind is something I'm still learning to live with. I grieve the loss of that. I'm still stuttering inside. My journey in the real world is bumpy because I'm out of alignment. I'm trying to replace my shock absorbers and chasse while driving. That isn't easy.

Rome was built day-by-day. Rome wasn't built in a day. Because of the "accidents" I was in as a small child, I was left broken and mangled inside. And the body shop I needed didn't yet exist in those days. I had to sit by the side of the road and wait decades for help. And when nobody ever showed up, I had to find a way to fix me by myself.

Today, if Darlean wants to become a grease monkey or waitress, not a college graduate, I understand completely. So long as she learns to serve… If she doesn't want to pursue diplomas like trophies to hang on her wall, I completely understand. I did that *for* her. Now *she's* free to pursue visions, not dreams.

I separated my head from my heart in childhood. And in denouncing the power of my *own* love in favor of my mind's eye, I succeeded in physically weaning myself off of my mother's breasts to acknowledge that "our" umbilical cord had been cut and firmly knotted. I gave up her liquid love (milk) for the hope of finding a greater love later in me.

I had to give up on other-love when I discovered that there wasn't enough love to go around. After 14 years of trying to prove my love and devotion to #1, I realized that I'd asked for too much from myself.

I fell in love with ballet as a teenager. I fell in love with boyfriend #1 as a mature, gay guy. But, as a senior citizen, I *like* the boyfriend I have now.

He and I don't talk of love. We tell each other that we're in a "like" affair, not a love affair. It's so much harder to like someone than to love them.

Learn to love your inner child and stop there. You've done enough if you can show people how much you *like* them. Spend your life proving your love to your self. Ain't nobody else who needs it as much as you do.

My mother's second husband died in her arms eight years before her passing. They were a devoted couple who found one another at about the same age I found my second boyfriend.

But I never liked her husband. I was jealous of what they had. Now I think of him often. And I regret I didn't get to know him better. That would have prepared me better for my relationship with Darlean.

U know what loss is in ur own way. I don't have to describe loss to u.

I first learned about loss in Bellevue Hospital when, suddenly, I "saw" a crown *in* my head come crashing down. I saw my jewels scatter inside me. I perceived all the platinum and gold I'd shaped into a halo *in* my head instead of *around* it get crushed and turn to dust. And then I saw myself at the center of a massive ruin that looked like the remains of the Twin Towers decades before that obscenity happened. I cried like a New Yorker for a loss I couldn't put into words.

But I eventually built a memorial – in my mind – on that site. And then I moved on. What else could I do?

There, in New York, at Bellevue in 1976 was when my crown of jewels collapsed forever. That's when and where I lost my mind. Crushed, I moved on.

If you believe that all human beings are mysteriously connected inside-and-out to something you can describe in one word (love), then you're like a fish that breathes a mysterious something even as you swim through it.

But if you've also been hooked and dragged out of your perception of reality and then floundered about in confusion as you gasped for breath in an experience of life you've never been able to talk about, then you know about the world of spirit as well as the world of love.

And even if you don't know about this mysterious thing some call "spirituality," you know about the need to wear a mask today to keep others from breathing the same mysterious, invisible substance that you're breathing and moving through. You know about the need to maintain six feet distance from others, even from some you love and yearn to embrace.

Rebel Without a to Do List
(We're All Sick and Tired of Causes)

From James Dean we learned that rebels without causes go crazy and die young. But the only cause he was offered in the 1950s was to grow up, get a good job, get married,

have children, grow old and then die. He was only offered the same to-do list everyone else had at the time. Wasn't that the cause he was really rebelling against?

I, too, went crazy when I had to face that option. Who wouldn't? Only now it's too late for me to die young…

This problem still exists in our culture today. People don't want to do "it" like the Hindus. They want to play god with one another, not God. They don't want to take time to contemplate their navel from both sides. They want to forget why it's there and move on.

Even Jesus Had a navel! You can see it in any rendition of Him on the cross.

Our navel is proof that we were born from a human mother. We didn't use up a yolk and then have to break out of our shell. We came from a live birth. This is what it means to be a mammal; have a navel; and be a part of a spiritual evolution that's been reflected in the literal evolution of the species.

People are more consumed with their survival than living a happy life. They can't pluck out all the knives that have been flung in their back, and so they're bleeding inside. Their frown gets deeper. Their need for resilience gets greater. And their determination to survive till the bitter end becomes more apparent with every passing year.

You can see people rushing around on the roads and in stores trying to get everything done on their to-do list. But they're never satisfied when something gets crossed off their list. It's just replaced with something else to do the next day.

The wound people once had on their belly healed into a knot a long time ago. But they don't want to think about where they were then and what's happened to wound them further since they were born.

They started out asleep in paradise. When their mother suddenly had contractions that forced them out of her womb, they got whacked on the butt and started screaming, enraged

about something they couldn't describe, but which is no different from what everybody else has been through.

I look at the agony on people's faces and can imagine what rejection they've gone through since then. But I got whacked on the butt, too. Am I any different from the rest of you?

Once you, too, are a rebel without a to-do list, you may finally take the time to look around and question what it is we're all doing here.

If you're not consumed with joy about the challenge in becoming a better friend to yourself day-by-day, how the hell are ya gonna make friends with others?

Queensplaining

Ru Paul taught us that reading (dishing) is fundamental. But unless you can read people like a drag queen (with x-ray eyes and an MRI-like nose), don't call yourself literate in the gay sense of the word.

Unless you've succeeded in turning yourself into a pretzel to figuratively give yourself head just the way you'd like it, your head may be consumed with your failures in the outer world. You may insist you couldn't possibly love yourself as much as others do. And you may have gone out into the world to try to find someone who'd love you *for* you.

Don't consider yourself as having achieved any more than the eighth grade reading level the New York Times applies to its paper unless you can admit you enjoyed having sex with yourself when you were Darlean's age. Nobody did it like you did it then. There was something magical in never having had sex with another human being besides yourself. You just didn't know it at the time.

And even if some do it better to you now than you did it to yourself then, you once had a puppy love crush on you that you'll never forget, unless you've never admitted it.

Darlean isn't going to be a teenager forever. It seems like every day we're growing further apart. She's moving toward

emancipation, something Lincoln achieved for Blacks that we're all now having to learn to do for ourself.

Growing up is harder than it looks. Your inner child is going to have to face reality with less reliance on you over time. And that's going to have an effect on you, as it would on any other parent.

The best way I can describe that process is that the maturation of your inner child is going to ripen you. You're not forbidden fruit, after all. You're permissible and admissible. You may only have thought you were forbidden when you were budding and green.

Is it too harsh to say that most people have their head up their ass? Is it too judgy to say that they look ridiculous? And because their experiences don't give them enough of a view of their inner world, they continue to screw themself over in the outer world. Although I've done all that to myself, too, at least I'm not proud of it.

Call me incompetent. Call me lazy. I tried to screw myself literally as a youngster perhaps in the hopes that I wouldn't then have to do so figuratively. But I didn't succeed. I got too excited, and then I couldn't keep it in.

What you call "mansplaining", I just call a lecture on the facts of life. What you call "telling it like it is," I call the posture of a queen before her one and only subject who's being raised to be a lady! I tell you what I think of myself for one reason only: noblesse oblige.

I'm not impressed with what other people call "honesty". I don't think most people are being honest with themself, let alone one another. Let them begin the process of being honest from within. And *then* let's hear what they have to say about others. Honesty without tenderness is like sodomy without lubrication.

The Kama Sutra is the Hindu book of love. I read it from cover to cover. I even wrote a book about it. (Playing god With God). But I noticed that the ancient Hindus were missing a few positions you can't carve on a temple wall –

positions you have to take with yourself. And that, my friend, makes all the difference.

Living All Alone

I had to figuratively take the path of "faith in myself" after I was released from Bellevue and later, St. John's Hospital in Santa Monica. I had to put my faith in a man who didn't have a clue how to make my dreams come true.

I couldn't get anywhere in life with that broken down vehicle I found myself in figuratively. I could only sit behind the wheel and pretend to push all the buttons on the dashboard.

They labeled me paranoid schizophrenic. Then they later changed their label to bipolar. Later, others patted me on the back and assured me I was just one more neurotic to laugh at.

There had been someone inside me who'd tried to kill me. He'd resisted every opportunity to better himself under my instruction. He'd defied every opportunity to make peace with me. He was a murderer, and there was no way I'd ever be able to get away from him. I had to discover his motives. I had to befriend him. There was no other way to recover my sanity.

I decided I was going to be fine. I chose to believe that the world was more deeply disturbed than I was. And experience over time has proved me right. That's why I write.

I instinctively knew that I was only a mess because I couldn't see the gifts I'd been given, not because I was punishing myself needlessly. It became exceedingly clear to me that I'd been my own worst enemy.

But nobody was honest enough to tell me how to become my own best friend. I would have been sane years sooner if somebody had told how to do so. I needed step-by-step instruction. I needed someone to sit me down and tell me the

facts of life figuratively. I knew them literally. That did me no good.

There was no way to try to recover my sanity other than with pill therapy. Learning to put my faith in someone like me, who I had no conscious intention of ever wanting or needing to like, let alone love, was never my idea of what life should have to be about. But from the looks of it, self-love isn't something others are doing a great job at, either.

Loving myself to health and healing became a necessity in choosing life over death, for I knew I'd try to kill myself again if I couldn't find a faith within me that I could tie to a better reason for living than just becoming financially comfortable. I needed a comfort that didn't have anything to do with money.

I didn't need or search for faith in God. Once I had faith in myself, having gone to college; forged a career as a teacher; and found a boyfriend (#1) to build a fortune together – I'd proved to myself that I had what it took to feel like a card-carrying member of the human race – specifically the middle class.

That's when relationship #1 hit the fan and the shit was flung in every direction. That's when I was forced to move on, even though #1 had to instigate our separation with infidelity. But, by then, I knew I could go it alone. Nobody had to tell me.

After our separation in 2004, I was unknowingly preparing for my trip to Israel in 2008 to marry myself. That's when I gave and received myself, for better or worse, in sickness and in health, until death when I'd die and be separated from me once and for all.

To be a lord and not a layman, you must elevate your position in your *own* society. To ground yourself, you need only grow *roots*. You're not a tumbleweed. You're not a plant out of place. But that awareness of yourself takes *faith*.

Restlessness is the result of impatience. Impatience is the result of suffering being with yourself day and night. And

suffering is the result of paranoia: *fear* of yourself. There's no such thing as fear of *nothing at all*.

When you can relate to your *self* metaphorically, you describe what's going on, on the inside using experiences from the outside that we can *all* relate to. This is the magic of *metaphor*! Without it, we'd be truly as alone inside ourself as we were in our mother's womb.

When you can relate to yourself *figuratively*, rather than just *literally*, you open yourself to magical possibilities you didn't see in the past and magical possibilities right here, now. *This* will give you hope to earn magical possibilities that will enhance your future.

Why Fish Don't Wear Pants Or Skirts

Fish (Christians) don't wear pants or skirts because they're not embarrassed by what's below their belly button. Unlike others submerged in the world of feelings who know there's a whole other world of land (thoughts) and sky (spirit) above the one they're swimming around in, fish have to be hooked, reeled in and introduced to what's been there above their head all along.

Fish have nothing to be ashamed of down here where we're all submerged. It's only been shrimps, clams and oysters who've tried to convince them to put something on. But who wants to live in a shell?

This leads to another, more complex question: Since fish swim around naked, why don't they contemplate their navel? And that's a Hindu secret I've now given myself permission to reveal to u.

The navel is the scar everyone has in the middle of their body that's the result of being cut off from easy access to food right into our belly. We had to learn to take in liquid love (milk) after birth from a whole other direction. Then we had to learn to chew on food as well as on all our experiences.

That's why we've all had to learn to digest what we've been through, and then eliminate what we can't use. People are so embarrassed by their anus because they only use it literally. And that's turned this world into a toilet we're all having to swim in.

Although fish don't need to wear skirts or pants, there's a tendency for them not to understand that the story of love started at birth because we all came from a mother. And that includes the biggest fish of them all: Jesus. He Was no different from anyone else in that respect.

Those fish who insist on putting every man in pants and woman in a skirt don't understand the importance of the Golden Rule. They feel uncomfortable about their nether region, so they defy convention by focusing even more attention on those pesky cravings and desires below their navel that we all know are so hard to satisfy by ourself.

This lack of a dress code is, naturally, upsetting to clams and oysters. And it puts undo pressure on octopuses who then question themselves, too.

If you're *nude*, you should be in your bedroom or bathroom. If you're emotionally *naked*, you can walk securely through every room in your house even with the blinds up.

But if you've *revealed* your self to yourself completely, you won't claim to be the only fish that calls itself a sole. You'll avoid such misunderstandings.

How to Win the Blame Game When You're the one to Blame

The essence of the allegory of the Creation Story in Torah is that *you're* the tree of knowledge that's been planted in a garden. And when *it* (your serpent) conspires with *her* (your wife), *he* (your best bud) gets in trouble with *him* (your conscience).

That God Created man whole; Planted him in a garden and Breathed life into him produces dogmatic racists, homophobes and misogynists.

That God Created woman out of a bone from the first man is utterly illogical and contrary to science.

But the idea that there was a talking serpent in a tree that conversed with her, tempting her to do something that was forbidden by Him is truly taking the ridiculous to the point of absurd.

This is as an allegory for psychological forces at play. You'd have to have been lobotomized by your house of faith if you took this story literally.

And yet, many in all three of the Abrahamic faiths do. They can't internalize the Creation Story. They can't envision it as a description of inner forces [desires (penis); feelings (heart) and thoughts (head)] all interacting with one another in psychologically meaningful ways that will help people ascend the mountain of faith until their faith in themself and their loved ones spills over into faith in The One God Who Created us all – including queens, Darleans and all those mysterious creatures of the deep.

As the result of the moral challenges inherent in this allegory, your understanding of the intentions of The God within and The God around you becomes one of the great mysteries of your life, similar and yet so different from the mysteries of everyone else. This mystery will lead you to change your mind many times, transform your heart and transcend your conscience over a lifetime until you've become soulfully enlightened to the meaning of your being.

What's more, your desire for *external* gratifications will eventually become sated, and you'll begin to experience a desire for *internal* gratifications, more.

This internalization of desire is a spiritual self-penetration that none of the religions of the world wants to talk about. They think it's nasty because it figuratively deals with penises and clitorises.

So, ultra-religious people rail against masturbation and sodomy, instead. They can't envision the idea of internalizing the voice of their serpent or worm so that they can unite the psychological voices of their penis (clitoris), heart and head.

Many are stuck with a head and heart that are only unified so long as they can play the blame game. But it's not a "finger" that they're pointing at others. It's their penis that's either pointed straight up at God in defiance of Him or straight out at others with blame. You'll never see it pointed in at themselves. And they can't tell you why the crazies express their penis envy using machine guns that splatter hundreds of rounds of ammunition.

The only way to point your penis at yourself is, of course, by attempting to suck on it. That's the position you need to imagine because that's the position that you'll think of next time you see someone pointing a "finger" at you.

Don't believe all the posturing people make. They're upside down, twisted and backwards in an attempt to get to know themself.

Self-sodomy is not only a physical, near impossibility. It's understood to be the ultimate self-humiliation. That's why it's used to ridicule.

But self-fellatio comes in at a close second.

Most *secular* people treat themself horribly in many shameful ways, regardless how sacrosanct they treat their anus with pillows, soft toilet paper and warm baths.

Most *religious* extremists treat themself figuratively abominably by insisting on taking their scripture literally. Regardless of how sacrosanct their opinions about their own genitals are, they're castrating, circumcising and dismembering one another figuratively. It's painful to watch.

The Dawn Arose Over Burnt-Orange Waves

Orange is the color of agony. Agony is a combination of rage (red) and horror (yellow). So *burnt*-orange is a

description of what it looks like when you punish yourself for the agony you inflict upon yourself.

Some people who know this secret (but don't want to punish themself) punish others for the agony they're in, instead. And so this world is burnt-orange in many places. All of Iran is burnt-orange. So is North Korea. Russia has been psychologically painted burnt-orange, too.

It dawned on me early on that some of my feelings exposed a smelly truth about me when I was worried. I smelled like low tide. I smelled like agony. I smelled all the things I can't smell when my feelings conceal what's at the bottom of them. Only during emotional, low tides do I see the parts of my heart that are like a tide pool with mysterious creatures stranded in it.

Our emotional tide goes out when we're worried. We're always constrained by circumstances that drag our feelings out to sea. This creates tidal pools that expose odd creatures in our semi-conscious that could teach us about our nature if we were more in tune with ourself – if we'd just walk the shore honestly.

But people have a tendency to forget themselves when they're under pressure. And when the tide creeps sheepishly back in, and all is again submerged under water, they may believe that the truth will never again be exposed for them to see. And that erroneous conclusion repeats itself month after month for a lifetime.

And so what choice do the waves have but to crash against the shore when they can, to try to remind us of what's beneath them?

Twitch

I used to close an eye to others' behavior toward me. That didn't work out well.

But then I closed an eye to *my* behavior towards *others*. That didn't work out well either.

Later I winked at people to give them the impression that I knew something that I was sharing something with them that nobody else knew.

From all that posturing, I developed a twitch in my right eye, which is like a stutter in the oral realm. But a twitch, like a stutter, is a form of self-embarrassment that can be overcome.

I got through my stutter in learning how to speak despite a lifetime of biting my tongue and speaking tongue-in-cheek. So, I had no doubt I could get through my twitch in learning how to see myself as Darlean saw me. What others have seen of me has been little more than a reflection of my embarrassment in having to be with me by myself.

Now I wink in the mirror because I know something about me that had once been a secret.

Shape Up Darlean!
I'm Not Going to Put Up with your Crap!

There are days when there's no other way to describe Darlean than: a royal pain in the ass. She thinks she knows more than me about me. She thinks she's more experienced than me about life. And she thinks she can do anything I can do, better.

The gurl isn't even emancipated! Now, suddenly she's an expert on everything!

I suppose it's my fault because I sheltered her from life all these years.

But I really only wanted the best for her. I didn't realize I'd spoiled her.

But really! With all the insanity of others I have to deal with, I've got little bandwidth for an inner child who pretends she knows it all. There are days when I just have to put my foot down and tell it to her like it is.

When I look inside and happen to see that my own inner child is just like others in some awful ways, that's truly

beyond the pale. It's maddening because Darlean has been such a contribution to my life in so many other ways.

But I cannot let her get out of control by offending me the way others do or by feigning helplessness. I didn't come this far to lower my standards now. Darlean and I are together for the long haul. Other people will come and go. So this relationship has got to werk. There simply isn't any choice in the matter.

The only other option would be for her to go off to college. If she wants to leave me, she's free to go. "I will survive."

U Don't Know Me

U may think u know me, but u don't even know my name. I haven't told u my name because I was afraid of what u'd do with the power that comes with a name. I wanted u to get to know me and my relationship with my teenage, inner child. But I didn't want u to get to know *just* me.

What you know is that I'm really a man. What you know is that I've put a picture on the cover of my inner child who looks like a dog. On the back cover I call her a bitch. And on the back cover I've got a picture of two rings, implying that we're marrying each other.

This book has been about misogyny; but a misogyny that began within me. It's been the story of a relationship with myself that I've described to you using two feminine voices, a mother and daughter. And for any man, looking at himself through the eyes of two women should be an eye-opening experience.

This strategy comes out of self-love. I know a bit about the premise of self-love, and I'm not sure what u know about it. I know that self-love is like a mountain road that gets flooded and washes many men away as they try to ascend to the summit. They tumble off cliffs because of the unseen power of a love for themself they can't contain. They land

unconscious after slapping the ground so hard that it feels like every bone in their body has been broken.

I know this about self-love. I know this personally and intimately.

But I also know something about flying high that's also associated with self-love. I've earned my wings and the dimmer switch on my halo. And I'm not sure whether u're crawling through life, underwater emotionally or just flying on fumes. I don't know what u're on, a magic carpet or a pill of some sort.

So, for this reason, I decided not to tell u my name.

But that doesn't mean we're not sisters (z). And it doesn't mean that I don't like u. I know that may sound insincere coming from me now.

But I really do have feelings for u. I wouldn't have told u how afraid I am of fat people who indulge in food instead of food-for-thought if I didn't trust u - somewhat. I just can't afford to tell u more about me now. My next book will reveal my name and my journey.

Politics and Religion

We've all been told to avoid these topics when in polite society. They say these subjects always lead to trouble. And that's because politics and religion are deeply entwined.

But what they're deeply entwined with is sex. It's politics, religion and *sex* that will get you in trouble, not one or two out of these three.

Those who are good at sex will behave well when it comes to politics and religion. And those who are not can be found further and further from the center of the political spectrum.

I'd go so far as to say that there's no such thing as a political spectrum in the sense of a line with two extremes. The political spectrum is actually a circle, and the further you are from the center, the more those at the extremes begin to look and sound alike.

Those at the political, extreme right *and* left are both bad in bed. They're both ashamed of the body they were given. Neither would be comfortable strutting down a fashion runway in the nude. And neither is comfortable imagining themself in their house of worship praying naked before the name for God that they've put their faith in.

They haven't been able to create the bonds of self-intimacy necessary to conceive, give birth to and raise an inner child. Consequently, their loneliness drives them to a secretive relationship within themself, one in which sex has to be dirty, guilt-ridden and indecent to the point of obscene. And to hide their crude and lewd relationship with themself, they project their self-hatred onto Blacks, gays, women and fat people.

Politics isn't really about Blacks, gays or women. Politics is really about fat asses who are so terrified of the vehicle they were given for the journey they're on that they want nothing more than to create accidents and incidents with everyone else on the road. They're obsessed with what other people look like. If you're Black, that's bad. If you're gay, that's worse. And if you're female, that's the worst of all. But if you're overweight, they'll just ignore you. You aren't even worth mentioning.

These aren't really political or religious issues. These are spiritual issues. But the people who are so terrible in bed link politics to religion to punish all who are good in bed. And that's not really fair, is it?

Squirrel Friends

I live in a garden apartment in an upper, middle class neighborhood of San Francisco, one block from the border of the Castro. I own my place. Needless to say, I think you should be impressed with that. Real estate in San Francisco is like an education. It never goes bad.

In my garden, there are a pair of squirrels who I used to think lived in the big tree that sheds tiny thingamajigs that

are impossible for me to get rid of with the blower. But it turned that they live in a neighbor's yard and come over the fence to visit me and play.

I didn't start feeding the squirrels until one day when one of them jumped up onto my living room window screen and scared the life out of me. I could see that it was a male. In fact, I later read that male squirrels have a scrotum that's 20% of their body length (excluding the tail) and their penis is more than twice as long! I also learned that there's a famous picture of a male squirrel fellatiating itself and then consuming his semen. Apparently, they do this to avoid getting sexually transmitted diseases. (God Bless the internet!)

Well, when this little guy jumped up on my window screen and I saw what he sported, I have to tell you that it reminded me of when the Black Lives Matter movement first got started... I felt frightened, guilt-ridden and inadequate. I felt small, lame, unqualified and impotent. And that wasn't what I expected to feel when I compared myself to a grey squirrel..

I knew my squirrelly friends were just hungry, and they were trying to tell me to feed them. And I couldn't resist getting to know them better once I saw their sweet, little underbelly and tail. I was hooked.

So I went to the Asian market where they sell peanuts at the best price you'll ever find: $1.29/bag. And now I go through a package of peanuts every three days.

I go out every morning with a small bowl full of peanuts that I pour onto three rocks that are well situated for viewing from my window.

You know how squirrely squirrels can be. They move as though they're on permanent, red alert. It's like they're connected to an electric wire that juice flows through in bursts every couple of seconds. It's almost disquieting to watch them. And yet they're so cute.

Well, here's the problem. The squirrels don't show up any more until brunch time. Now that they're so well fed and secure in the knowledge that I'll always be there for them, I think they sleep in late. And recently they're even showing up with a baby in tow!

I know I've spoiled my squirrelly friends! But I couldn't help myself. I know now that their new routine is not in their best interest because the crows fly in early every morning to bathe in my bird bath and feast on the nuts. The robins, sparrows and jays get plenty to eat from my bird feeder. But they, too, hop around the rocks to eat the food meant for the squirrels.

And that upsets me! This isn't the natural world I was hoping for. I expected my squirrelly friends would get plenty to eat at any hour of the day. But the other critters in the garden seem to think it's all for them. And that's just not fair, either.

Without My Bust

Most people think they're just a bust of a human being. They acknowledge that they have a head, heart and soul.

But it all ends there. They don't have the imagination or courage to look down any further. They can't imagine any need to contemplate their navel, genitals or anus.

And yet, most people are perfectly comfortable talking about their inner child as though everyone has one. The definition I'm using for an inner child is: "a person's supposed original or true self, especially when regarded as damaged or concealed by negative childhood experiences." [internet]

U've read more than a hundred pages of this book without having concerned urself about what an inner child officially is. I suppose u thought u already knew.

But if a person has the capacity to conceive of an inner child, it should be possible to ask the gender of that child and where that child lives within us. These are valid questions.

They're just as important as why this question didn't come up for u any sooner.

Where is ur inner child located? If u can close ur eyes and see nothing but darkness inside u; if u can project that darkness onto others in the form of racism; if u can't even question the gender of ur inner child, but u still question the sexuality of others – u should at least be able to state where ur inner child is at.

Darlean and I would like to know how u'd answer that question. Inquiring minds want to know.

Making A Rainbow

Today we're going to do an art project. Please buy a canvas and finger paints. You're going to need the following colors:

Black, Red, Yellow, Blue, Purple and White

And buy a frame for your canvas while you're at it. I'd like you to hang your painting up over your toilet when it's finished, so you'll look at it several times a day. Or, if you prefer, just pin it to your refrigerator with magnets. That's fine, too.

1. Paint the background of your canvas white and let it dry.
2. Then squeeze out a mound of color about the size of a coin from each tube in the order given above into a pattern of your choosing (line, arc, circle, wave), leaving an equal amount of space between each of the colors.

If you've followed these directions, you may have done so mindlessly. So please consciously turn on your imagination at this point in the project so that you're witnessing what you're doing with regard to the emotions

you're having while you do it. That's an important part of the assignment.

3. Using your fingers, mix some of the black and red paint together in the space between the two. You should create a muddy brown color. If you're also producing streaks of red, black and colors in between, you're doing an especially good job.
4. Now wash your hands.
5. Then do the same with the blob of red and yellow, creating a mushy orange mess between them. (You might even like to add a dab of brown to make some burnt-orange.)
6. And repeat the process, washing your hands between each mixture you create on your canvas, being sure to carefully observe the feelings that come up during your interface with all the colors.

Here is the color key that you'll want to reference:

1. Black — Guilt
2. Brown — Humanity
3. Red — Rage
4. Orange — Agony
5. Yellow — Horror
6. Green — Jealousy and Envy
7. Blue — Grief
8. Indigo — Mystery
9. Lavender — Self-Love
10. Violet — Joy
11. Light Lilac — Self-Like
12. White — Purity/Redemption

The results of this project are personal. Your relationships to these colors are voices in your head that you should now be able to perceive visually. If you like, you can

use this canvas as an example of what your inner child can do when s/he werks with you.

This is a rainbow of hope you've created for yourself. This rainbow corresponds to the rainbow in the darkness within you. I know that's an oxymoron. Rainbows are only supposed to be visible in light.

But the rainbow you've created on canvas was made in the *light*. It only came out of darkness. It's a reflection of an emotional palette you have in your heart that you may not have realized is there.

When you go to the bathroom or kitchen and see what your inner child has made for you, remember that your inner child and you aren't "evil" for sharing these feelings and sensations with one another. You aren't guilty of having done anything "bad" or "wrong".

This is merely a relationship you're having with your *self* in the privacy of your inner dwelling. God Only Knows what unspeakable deeds you've done in those rooms… So don't make a big deal out it.

Nobody needs to know what the two of you are thinking except you. And if you believe in God, you're even free to ask Him to remain outside your inner world when you need privacy. I don't think He Will, but if you're that prissy, you can ask.

P.E.N.I.S.

Personality, **E**ffort, **N**ature, **I**nspiration, **S**ervice.

Every male wants to know the secret to having a penis. Every man wants to learn how to use his penis in ways that will make the world groan with glee without you becoming smug.

Now, you'd be wise to use your right hand to follow along with the next five statements I'm going to say. Start by touching your crotch, then your heart, then your head and then your breastplate. Practice it a few times to get it right:

A. Crotch
B. Heart
C. Head
D. Breastplate

Go slowly so that you really concretize the meanings of the next five statements using your body. Put your right hand on the corresponding part of your body as you read along:

1. When the serpent (A) conspired with Eve (B), Adam (C) got in trouble with God (D).
2. When your penis (A) conspires with your heart (B), your head (C) gets in trouble with your conscience (D).
3. When your desires (A) conspire with your feelings (B), your thoughts (C) get in trouble with your beliefs (D).
4. When your godless nature (A) conspires with your love of life (B), wisdom (C) and faith (D) fly out the window.
5. When the Buddhist (A) in you conspires with the Christian (B) in you, the Jew (C) in you finds himself in conflict with the Muslim (D) in you.

You've got to develop a **P**ersonality. But that takes **E**ffort. You've got to recognize your unique **N**ature, different from everyone else's nature. That takes **I**nspiration. And you can't accomplish that without being of **S**ervice to others.

Playing Ketchup

If you feel like a bottle of ketchup, that's because you're like a bottle filled with a red condiment that makes you tasty from the inside out. That red stuff in your bottle adds flavor to your being.

Figuratively, pour that condiment over all your food-for-thought. Don't spill that condiment literally.

Your bottle was given to you full. Just turn yourself over and slap your bottom to pour some of you out. Or, if you prefer, you can save what's in there for somebody special to share your contents with one another. This is the secret to brotherhood, romantic love, gay love and the love of life and God. This is the secret to being yourself.

Sadly, we're at the end of this little trip together down into my unconscious.

Ur mind has now been expanded to include aspects of ur imagination that u hadn't been able to envision until now. Hopefully, this has only been the beginning of ur journey with me into ur self.

Think of this book as a satellite view of a mountain with seven paths to the summit. This mountain of faith rises up out of a plain that ends at the sea. Don't believe John Donne when he said, No man is an island." He couldn't go high enough to see the truth. *Every* wo/man is an island.

If u'd like to learn more about urself with me by ur side as ur guide, u can always buy my next book. It will take my ideas further into modernity.

But if u'd like to explore the foundation of faith that got me this far, may I recommend the 17 books I wrote before this one. They'd be much cheaper than a psychiatrist or a stay in a mental hospital.

I've been off all psyche meds since the year 2000. If u've suffered as I have, u might be able to slowly reach sanity with the help of ur doctor if u pursue yourself with self-love and devotion.

I not only recommend that u read my previous books if u're interested in faith through scholarship. I recommend u read them in the reverse order I wrote them. I wrote them as a curriculum of instruction for the pursuit of the self before God. There's a list of them at the end of this book.

And if u know someone who's very far to the extreme right or left of the political spectrum, u might like to share this book with them. I'd even tell them that it was the rings on the back cover of this book that inspired u to marry urself.

Famous Last Words

If you're like Sheldon, my advice to you is to learn to *like* people.

If you're like Leonard, my advice to you is to learn to love *yourself*.

And if you're not sure, my advice to you is to learn to emulate Billy, Sheldon's childhood neighbor. He modeled someone who could love himself *and* like other people. And that's what we should all do, in my opinion.

In the end, it won't matter how smart you are. The only thing that will count is how good you've been.

Life Is Short but Precious

If you don't learn how to stand up for yourself,
you won't be of much help to the rest of us
just sitting there.

Spend your life learning how to be yourself.
As Oscar Wilde said,
"Everyone else has been taken."

Post Script

What I once thought was a cuckoo
trying to come out of my neck
was a darling.
I'm no longer a Frankenstein monster
who's afraid of running out of time.
I don't have to nail the latch shut in my throat.
I don't have to bite my tongue.
I don't have to think of myself
as a front loading washing machine
in which I watch my food-for-thought
digesting through my transparent belly button.
I am a fully growing man.
I am a human *being*.
Darling,
this book was for you.

Previous Books

(I recommend you read them in the reverse order written.)

17. **Lazy Susan**
    How Taoism Spins Paradox into Food for Thought

16. **Your Buddha Within**
    Inside Every Buddhist Lies an Anti-Authoritarian Who Yearns for Peace of Mind

15. **Playing god With God**
    Hinduism, Health and Healing
    How to Believe in God by Believing in Yourself

14. **Quran: The Book of Lights**
    Volume 1 High Lights
    Volume 2 LAND: How to Become a Genius and Save the Planet
    Volume 3 SEA: How to Love Life
    Volume 4 SEA: How to Love Life
    Volume 5 *Sky*: How to Believe in Yourself
    Volume 6 *Sky*: How to Believe in Yourself
    Volume 7 **Flames**: How to Circumcise Your Own Soul

7. **A Guest at Their Table**
    My Gay-Jewish Review of Christ's Feast of Self-Love:
    Volume 1 Christ's Bread and Body
    Volume 2 Christ's Wine and Blood
    Volume 3 Communion in a Human Body

4. **The Forbidden Fruit's Perspective**
    Torah For Straight People
    Volume 1 The Genesis of a Moses Like You
    Volume 2 The Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy of Everyone
2. **The Wisdom of Self-Love**

Life Is a School. I Am My Major

1. **Becoming**
   89 Poems of My Love for Me