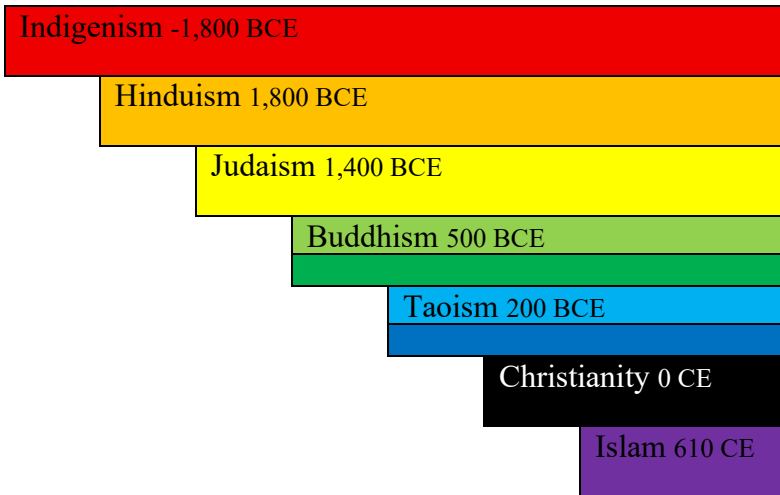


For **GOD's** Sake,
Tell Me How You Feel!

If you think about what you think about,
you'll discover how powerfully you feel.

A guide to solving personal problems with humor



By
Barry Emanuel Zeve

Dedication

This book is dedicated to Maria Brann:
born June 30, 1925

Maria was a nun,
a W.A.V.E. in the Navy
[Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service]
and a social worker in San Francisco.
She lived most of her life with a lesbian
although they never consummated their relationship.
Here's the refrain from one of her favorite songs:

“Me Go Where You Go Amigo”

A Yankee sailor met his senorita
just before his time to sail away.
He kissed her with a sigh,
and as she said goodbye,
suddenly these words he heard her say.

Me go where you go, Amigo!
I'll follow you near or far.
Me go where you go, Amigo.
I'll always be where you are.

Like a boat and a sail;
like a knife and a fork;
like a hammer and nail;
like a bottle and a cork.

Me go where you go, Amigo!
We'll be so happy, I know;
uphill and downhill just like Jack and Jill.
Me go where you go, Amigo.

Me go where you go, Amigo!
I'll follow you near or far.
Me go where you go, Amigo.
I'll always be where you are.

Like a towel and a rag;
like a carpet and a tack;
like a door and a key;
like a puppy and a flea.

Me go where you go, Amigo!
Please say si, si; don't say no;
uphill and downhill just like Jack and Jill.
Me go where you go, Amigo.

Rosalie Allen and the **Black** River Riders:
Queen of the yodelers
1946

If you haven't heard this song, I suggest you google it to listen to its catchy tune. It reminds me of the good times I had with my Aunt Lillian who was a happy-go-lucky **Jewish**, American singer and piano teacher. She **married** my Uncle Joe, my mother's first cousin. He was a **Jewish** doctor.

My **Jewish** mother who came to this country after the War could dance to American tunes with ease. She just couldn't hear them in her heart the way we can. I guess she heard them with her feet. There's something about **America** you have to be born here to fully appreciate.

Warning

All the characters in this book are real.
Names have not been changed to protect the **guilty**
or admire the innocent.

The following is for mature audiences only!

I'm 69 years old.

I wrote this book for my peers.

If you're over the age of 70,
be warned that this book may, at times, go over my head...

Is it OK to criticize the political left if you're on the left?

Is it OK to criticize a country mouse
if you're a city mouse?

Is it OK to criticize women if you're a man?

Is it OK to criticize lesbians if you're a gay man?

Is it OK to criticize family if you're just cousins,

Is it OK to criticize siblings if you suspect
sibling rivalry is involved?

Is it OK to agree with a **Jew** if you see that you're both
partially right and partially wrong?

Oh, yeah!

It's all OK

provided you're respectful.

I begin my story by telling you
about my mother who was a **Holocaust** survivor.
She was a German Jew who tore off her **yellow** arm-band,
ripped up her identity card,
which alerted everyone that there was a **Jew** in the room,
and ran for her life,
living in forests and on farms to avoid the **Nazis**.
Her mother had only told her she was a **Jew**
a week before all **Jewish** children
were thrown out of public schools in Germany.
My mother met my father,
[who also was a **Jew**]
two months after the War.
He was a Dachau Concentration Camp survivor.
He'd bribed three **Catholic** orphanages in Lithuania
to hide his two children [Henry and Ilana]
and a niece [Ellen]
before the ghetto was liquidated.
Male **Jews** who were strong enough to work,
were taken to work camps
such as Dachau
to slave for their **Nazi** masters
until the **Jews** died of illness or starvation.
You already know
that the rest of the **Jews** perished in the ovens,
including Henry and Ilana's mother
and Ellen's parents.
After the War,
my mother and widowed father came to **America**
with his three children
and **married** in New York City.
She raised his three kids
and the two they bore,
my sister Rina and me.
My mother took her responsibility
as step-mother very seriously.

She left my father a year after she intended to leave him,
two days after Ilana's wedding,
because Ilana had begged her not to leave her
alone with our father until she was **married**.
Henry and Ellen had already left home by then.
Only once her step-children were out on their own
did our mother take Rina and me to California,
where she divorced my father a year later,
after attaining California residency;
raising us as a single mother
from 1959 when I was six years old
until I left home at 17 in 1970.
My father was a deadbeat dad who didn't pay
child support until his third wife forced him to.

My mother was there for me
after I tried to kill myself three times in my twenties.
She was there for me when I was twice
involuntarily committed to mental institutions.
And she was there for me when my relationship
with my former boyfriend of 13 years fell apart
when I was 50 years old.
She died on Sunday, June 23, 2019
just before dawn
at about 4:00 in the morning
at the age of 98
at the **Jewish** Home in Reseda, California.

As much as I loved and respected my **Jewish** mother
for how she lived her life,
I'm proud to say
that I've replaced her voice in my head with my own.

Every **Jewish** mother's voice lives on well after she passes.
And all mothers are **Jew**-ish at heart...

By figuratively silencing
my **Jewish** mother's voice within me,
I succeeded in moving past those of her **vices**
I'd unconsciously adopted.
I'm now free from my mother's worst character defects.
I'm also free to celebrate those **virtues** of hers that
I'd unconsciously thought of as my own.
I now parent my inner child myself.

I'm still the poster child of the mother/son relationship.
But when explored from within,
the **meaning** of serenity
[**freedom** from my thoughts, **liberty** from my feelings and
emancipation from my **beliefs**]
lies in my relationship to my head, heart and soul.
This is how I find reason
to laugh at my external misfortunes
when compared to what I have to deal with within.

I'd love to be able to tell you
that when I was young and naïve
I was a *crazy* hippy.

I was not.

Most of the time, I didn't enjoy insanity.
Oh, I very much enjoyed the sex and the drugs.
I enjoyed the travel around the world.

I enjoyed my romantic relationship to poverty
and my adventure with the **m**ystery of young adulthood.

I particularly enjoyed being handsome
and having men lust after me.

But what I unconsciously most wanted
was to be *sane*.

You wouldn't have known that at the time
because I did everything I could
to look unique and different.

But deep down inside I yearned to feel included.

I just didn't know what other people knew that I didn't.
Nor could I figure out what I knew that they didn't know
until I figured out the basics.

Now I know the **m**eaning of life.
Now I feel sane and included.

Life is like a school.
It was like school when I was young, too.
We all have one **TEACHER**,
although each of us comes out of a religious department,
a national classroom
and an ethnic row of desks
that sets us apart from most of our classmates.
Some yearn to learn together with the bozos
at the back of the room.
Some like to think they sit up front near the **TEACHER**.
I first came to school unprepared to learn.
I didn't do my homework the night before.
I resented the lectures from my classmates.
I didn't commend myself
for doing well on spot quizzes.
I didn't study for life's tests that never stop coming.
I didn't give a second thought to my final exam.
And I got meaner and nastier over time
because so many of my report cards were so awful.
I could sense my transcript
wasn't going to look good
with all those failed grades
and the classes I'd simply dropped out of
with an incomplete that I later ignored.
I couldn't even tell you
why I was given my first tutors
[my father and mother].
And yet I used to swear
I got plenty of love from them as a child.
I didn't see the sibling rivalry in our home as toxic.
There was never enough love to go round.
I didn't know then
that we're all here
only to compete
with who we were yesterday
in preparation for who we'll become tomorrow.

If there's one **feeling**
I've had to learn a lot more about in life,
it's been coveting.
When I'm jealous of other people's container [body]
and envious of their contents [**virtues**],
I get impatient, uptight and frightened.
I assume I'm inadequate.
And that unconscious conclusion is spot on.
I was prone to **feeling** this way
until I **learned** about an even more unpleasant **feeling**:
guilt.

This book is outwardly about bullying and name-calling.

That's something we all have to deal with.

But it's a topic in the school of life
that would behoove everyone to learn more about
because bullying begins within.

It's vital we deal with how we treat ourself.

We won't be able to stop bullying others
if we can't stop bullying and beating up ourself.

Some people call self-bullying
"self-discipline."

But you know the difference.

We all need to figuratively give ourself
a good, swift kick in the butt from time to time.

But when our self-esteem is so low
that we can't celebrate being the best we can be,
it's not because of the parents we were given,
our sibling

or the kids at school **g**rowing up.

They only gave us tools to hurt others.

We chose to use those tools on ourself.

And if you're anything like me,
you've probably excelled in that department.

This world wouldn't look nearly as **bad** as it does
without self-bullying contributing to all our woes.

That may sound weird,
but it's not at all funny.

The keys

1. The visual key on the title page and on the front cover differentiates the seven religious categories of humanity using the seven colors of the **rainbow**.
2. There are seven-letter words that I also **believe** hold hope, like the word **rainbow**. I use these seven-letter words as visual clues to how I feel. The **rainbow** was first used as a symbol of hope in **Torah**, the core of the **Hebrew Testament**.
3. There are also words you'll need to emphasize when you read them. Here is an example:
I didn't do it.
He did it!
I'm using *italics* as an oral key to the emotionality I'm infusing in those words.

If you speak, read and write another language or if you read music or dance notation, you're going to love this book. It's going to free your emotions in a way that you can already do with other forms of communication.

But if you're the sort of person who rarely blows your horn when behind the wheel of your car, but you mutter to yourself about all the **bad** drivers on the road, or if you're the kind of person who watches the checker at the supermarket add up the groceries of every person ahead of you because you feel they're wasting *your* time by going so slow, this book was made for you, *too*. This may seem like a rash, even bold, statement to make, but this book will cure you of impatience.

If you get annoyed while observing patient people, you already know how grievously you suffer from impatience. I know just how you feel. I'm learning more patience everyday. The difference is that today I'm learning patience

with *myself*, not others. I can't give them something I haven't given me.

You don't have to do a thing to profit from this book other than read it. There are no exercises to do at home. I'll deal with your inner operating system at a subliminal level. Just pay attention to the **meaning** of my words as they enter your head and touch your heart.

Good luck! You're in for a big surprise!

Good thoughts,
Barry

HIS story and my story

HIS story is history. The combination of HIS story and my story **creates mystery**.

When I was young boy, I was almost legally blind, but my parents didn't even know it until I started school, and the school nurse told them I needed glasses. My glasses turned out to be Coke-bottle-thick.

Despite the weight on my ears and nose, I was enchanted when I saw the world as it truly looked through a visual aide. That was my first experience of a **miracle**. I was suddenly in awe of the world around me.

Sadly, I didn't **realize** until late middle age that my visual defect included emotional colorblindness. And all because I didn't have the key to the psychological and sociological color chart of the seven colors of the **rainbow**.

I didn't even know what **emotion** was, to tell you the truth. I couldn't recognize feelings in myself, or others. I knew what feelings were intellectually. And I felt them from time to time. But I didn't know what caused them or how to control them even though body language, facial expressions and vocal intonations were clues.

Dread was the place where I lived inside [a combination of **orange** [anxiety, worry and agony] and **yellow** [fear, terror and horror]]. I couldn't possibly conceive of the hope needed to imagine the seven colors of the **rainbow** that shine inside us all. I was filled with anguish over everything.

The **rainbow** that was given to **Noah** by **GOD** as a **promise** from **HIM** not to flood the world ever again was, of course, a metaphor. But nobody told me that! I had no idea that the **rainbow** flag of the **LGBTQIA+** community meant so much more than anyone had alluded to. And *I* ended up gay!

There really is a place you can figuratively go to over the **rainbow**. But I didn't know how to describe it as my heart

or how to get there. I was no wizard or friend of **Dorothy**. I was a **Dorothy**! I just didn't know it.

Moses began **Torah** with the story of **adam** and **chava** [**Hebrew**: man and life]. It's not the story of *a* man [**Adam**] and *a* woman [**Eve**]. It's a metaphor that describes the beginning of life for every boy. And by extension, today, we'd say that the **Jewish creation story** describes the beginning of life for every girl, too.

What we call "The Age of Innocence" was something we've all been through. It was childhood. That was the time of life when we didn't know the **meaning** of life. We had clues to the **meaning** of life, but we were assembling those clues into a framework. Nobody told us what we were doing to make **meaning** of our life. That was a big mistake on the part of our parents and society.

Moses addressed this oversight in his **creation story**. When a boy reaches the age when his **serpent** [penis] begins to converse with his heart [**Eve**], his head [**Adam**] becomes emotionally overwhelmed by the experience of his first **orgasm**. This is what differentiates a boy from a man.

This initiates the adult world that every male wrestles with for the rest of his life. Am I going to behave like a child or a grown up? Am I going to seek the **meaning** of life through my **orgasms** or am I going to seek something else, like money, instead?

The **Jewish creation story** is a description of a boy being biologically, emotionally and spiritually allowed access to know a part of himself as though picking fruit from a tree previously forbidden to him. **Orgasm** decrees that childhood is now behind him. And as we all know, nothing will ever bring childhood back. You can never forget the *sensation* in your penis and **feeling** in your heart that comes with your **orgasms**. This defines the **meaning** of life in the most personal of ways possible.

You may recoil at this conclusion, but hear me out. Life became infinitely sweeter once you reached **puberty** and could reach up to pick the previously forbidden fruit from the **Jewish tree of knowledge** that you were. You were planted in this garden for that reason. Such is the **magical** achievement in learning about truth through metaphor.

You grew *roots* as you grew up from the *rock* of your being into the *light*. Then you *branched* out with more and more understanding of **reality**.

Until you reached your first **orgasm**, you couldn't take the **Jewish creation story** to heart. It didn't yet mean anything personal to you. Cutting yourself off from your roots is the poetic definition of atheism. Anyone whose roots are wrapped around our **ROCK [GOD]** can see what disbelief does to the leaves, flowers and fruits of those who don't yet have **GOD** in their life.

A boy's first wet dream or masturbation to **orgasm** occurs when his body finally allows him to poetically consume the fruit of good [right testicle] and **evil** [left testicle]. This is the time of life when those soupy words gush out of the mouth of his **serpent** [penis] that otherwise hangs down "silently" from his tree.

This is the biblical description of the initiation into morality. *Morality* is the term for our relationship to *ourselves*. *Ethics* is the term for our relationship to *others*. The **creation story** of **Moses** describes a conversation every young male will have with his heart every time he ejaculates, an exercise in coming to understand the concept of **Eden [Heaven/Paradise]** that he'll recreate during intercourse for the rest of his life.

I think that's funny! I think that's hysterical! That's an example of **GOD's** sense of humor as described by **Moses** to the ancient **Jews** 3,400 years ago. What an outrageous way to describe **GOD** consciousness, goodness, morality [inner serenity] and ethics [outer peace].

GOD's sexual interpretation of life through **orgasm** is one that the orthodox **Jews** never came up with, surely because they don't have a sufficiently well-developed imagination and sense of humor [and, I presume, because most of them look like they're really **bad** in bed...]

All hyper-religious people, not just the orthodox **Jews**, get nasty when it comes to the topic of sex. They really don't like the idea of **GOD** having given us genitals in the first place. They'd rather we don't talk about them. And they'd rather not think about our parents having done "it" in order to bring us into this world.

That said, the orthodox **Jews** *do* know that **Torah** lives. Half of Tel Aviv is smeared with graffiti from orthodox **Jewish** youths who've scrawled just that on every wall they can shmutz up.

But the orthodox **Jews** think **Torah** lives for *them* alone, when the truth is that it lives for *everyone* through metaphor. **The Gospels** and **The Quran** live, too. And that's a **mystery** I'm going to reveal to you in this book.

Cain's story

When I told my interpretation
of the creation story to Maria,
She laughed her head off.
She thought it was the funniest thing she'd ever heard.
Then my ex-nun friend
touched my shoulder and smiled deeply.
Her eyes glistened.
And I felt like a young man again.

After the first story of **Genesis** [man and life] **Moses** relayed to us a second metaphor in the story of the son of **Adam**, **Cain**, who was on his quest for more of the **meaning** of life. **Cain** gave **GOD** a gift in appreciation of being alive. But Cain ended up killing his brother, **Abel**, because **GOD** approved of **Abel's** gift instead of his.

Cain was jealous [covetous] of his brother's sacrifice which was merely a copy of his. **Cain** could see that **GOD** preferred **Abel** over him. But **Cain** couldn't see why.

This second story in **Genesis** expresses the second stage of adolescence when the heart of the youngster [**Abel**] becomes a victim to his head [**Cain**]. This struggle for autonomy within us is something every young adolescent must go through and try to describe to his peers in his own unique way.

Thoughts [**Cain**] and feelings [**Abel**] fight one another in teenage boys who've experienced their first **orgasm**. What they're fighting over from a biblical perspective is **GOD's** love, even though the inexperienced, youngster has no idea why he's so upset with himself and therefore projects that upset onto those around him to figure it out *externally*, rather than looking for the answer *internally*. His inner world is still too dark and mysterious for him to ponder all by himself.

If the story of **Adam and Eve** denotes the passage out of childhood, then the story of **Cain and Abel** denotes an increase in the separation of our head and heart that leads to the murder of our feelings by our thoughts.

Adolescence is the stage in the change of the human operating system when the fight for love over death begins within each male. All the fights in childhood weren't nearly as important by comparison. The adolescent finally feels there's a way out of the problem of there being not enough love to go round.

Most adolescent boys go on a quest to make their way through outer **reality** without recognizing that they're traveling across a magnificent **rainbow** from the ages of 13-19.

That **rainbow** begins in their heart beneath their left nipple. It arches over to their **Adam's** apple, the keystone to their feelings, and ends in their right nipple which lies over their soul.

Most new adolescents don't even perceive the magnificence of the creation of their *cellphone* let alone the *boy-toy* they've just discovered between their legs. They wouldn't leave home without their phone, but they don't **realize** that everyone, male and female, is now looking at how they use their phone to determine how aware they are of the knowledge they're gleaning from their boy-toy.

This struggle between the thoughts in the young man's head and feelings in his still virgin heart **creates** fantasies about a pot of gold at the end of his **rainbow** because the teenager knows nothing about true love other than through **orgasm**.

Deep down inside, he rightly concludes unconsciously that he's now in debt to the adult world for having kept him alive for more than a dozen years, albeit it in ignorance of this deeper **meaning** to life called *love*. He couldn't be more **excited** in some ways, while indifferent in other ways. He also suspects he knows nothing about the **promise** of hope

in his dark heart. So, he does everything he has to, to conceal that ignorance from some by compartmentalizing his feelings.

Any child can tell you that there's never enough love to go round. But in adolescence, a boy realizes that he isn't **lovable** enough without someone to share his new-found love of love with him. He rightly fears he'll be inadequate in making more love than his testicles can produce because that would require knowing how to love his whole container [body] as well as the contents [**virtues**] within it.

If **GOD** loved **Abel** more than **Cain**, then who among us is *not* consumed with anxiety, worry, agony and even dread over whether **GOD** loves the next guy more than me? And if the youngster doesn't address this question with **GOD** directly through prayer, he'll surely live out these feelings through a feeling of failure with the entire human race for the rest of his life.

As simple as it sounds from a generic point of view, the first two stories of **Torah** address the basics about the **meaning** of life, a beginning that began in adolescence, not at conception, birth or in childhood. The **meaning** of life ends with the concept of murder. Every head [**Cain**] will kill every **Abel** [heart] out of jealousy and envy of what his heart can do that his head can't. That's what happened to **Jesus**. That's what will happen to you.

Therefore, the **creation story** and the story of **Cain and Abel** aren't in conflict with evolution. They actually make the evolution of man a spiritual endeavor that's awesome and mysterious. All it takes to pursue the **mystery** of life begins with the main metaphor of **Moses**.

Noah's story

Maria didn't laugh
When I told her about the hidden meaning
behind the story of Cain and Abel.
She thought back to her mother
who'd conceived six children
with a man who only showed up when he wanted sex.
She thought back to her life of bathing in Maine rivers
In summers and sponge baths in their cold kitchen
the rest of the year.
They had no indoor plumbing.
The only meat they ate
was when her brother would shoot a squirrel
in the forest.
The town they lived in
couldn't have had more than a hundred people
to talk to about anything.
And they were dirt poor.
Maria was the youngest.
When her siblings had all left home,
her mother finally found a man
who treated her nicer than her husband.
She invited him in and sent her husband packing.
But then she tried to push Maria out of the house
to start over by creating a new family with him.
Maria was just 15 years old at the time.

I think the problem with the orthodox **Jews** and all the other hyper-religious people in the Western world is that they don't know how to pray in color. This book will instruct you on how to do so, so you can teach others to do the same.

I'm certainly not going to try to do it! I've already tried **praying** with orthodox **Jews**, right-wing fundamentalist **Christians** and fanatical **Muslims**. I've prayed standing up,

kneeling down and prostrate on the ground. Now it's your turn to change their minds. I'm done!

There are a whole host of colorful feelings to explore in life, but love is universal. Love is like a **white** light **GOD** shines into our heart that's so magnificent that our heart has to refract it into the colors of the **rainbow**.

The more we develop **sincere** feelings for ourself, the more we can feel **GOD's** pain and suffering at how we're leading our life; dealing with others; and stewarding the planet. The more we can then feel **HIS** anguish at our ignorance.

The more we have feelings for what we're putting **HIM** through with our constant focus on the external world, the more we can express our feelings to **HIM** through prayer and through heartfelt communication with everyone over everything we do.

But I don't think claiming love is the answer is the whole answer. Love is the highest, most noble of all feelings. But until I discovered the shades and values of all my myriad feelings, I wasn't able to call myself much in the way of a *hue-man* in a **process** called being...

If you don't **believe** this to be true about your feelings, try **feeling empathy** for someone when you're depressed and don't give a damn about anything. I suspect you'll only be able to show them a modicum of *sympathy*.

You may be able to gather together enough pity for yourself to look down with sorrow at what the next guy is having to go through. But I don't think you always know what you're going through inside or how to associate your feelings with anyone else's suffering. You're without sufficient experience of yourself to fully know what anyone feels deep in his heart until you get out of your head and into your heart where a **rainbow** rises up inside you.

Teenagers are just beginning to **realize** that life looks entirely different when viewed from their heart. They know

that childhood is over, and innocence will never return. For that reason, **puberty** is a reminder to us all of the loneliest, most confusing time in our life.

It's only once a boy gets to the third story of **Genesis, Noah and the ark**, that he realizes he's entered a world of incredible awe and **mystery**.

Every adolescent can see that he's drowning in suffering, not a flood caused by a literal storm. Even if his father couldn't tell him what **GOD** told **Noah**, every boy instinctively feels instructed by his **FATHER** to build an **ark** late in childhood to hold all his animal instincts until the deluge of hormones subsides on the other side of adolescence when his storm will pass, and the sky will turn **blue** again.

In my generation, we were given a new **Moses**, a man who retold us the story of **Noah and the ark** in his own universal way. His name was Paul Simon. And his partner, Art Garfunkel, was his **Aaron**.

Together, they pointed us toward a new **DESTINY**, one that was individual and universal. They gave us the hope our parents couldn't give us. And they called it a "Bridge Over Troubled Waters."

But what that bridge was, in essence, was the **rainbow** given to **Noah** that then symbolized every heart on the planet. Every man, woman and child is awakened to the symbol of hope through a **promise** from the **Jewish** people to the **Jewish** people.

We each have an individual face and a body of our own. But with love, we have the potential to strive for a national, even universal, goal that's **greater** than anything we'd **learned** about in school.

When I was a teenager, we discovered a hope in our heart that ended with a **promise** in our soul. And we knew without being told in so many words that this was the answer we were seeking.

As such, each of us instinctively knew that there was a land of **milk** [love] somewhere over the **rainbow**. And even more **amazing** than that, there was a place much sweeter than **milk**! There was a place of **honey** [wisdom]. We were on an **exodus** from a slavery that had crushed us [childhood]. We were determined to get to a Destination [**Eden**, **Nirvana**, **Heaven**, **Paradise**] that would give us life everlasting.

This is what it meant to grow up in the 1960's **feeling** orphaned from our parents in a society crippled by money, power, prestige and greed. These were the impediments that were keeping us from making our way Home.

This is what it meant at the time to drop out, turn on and tune in. This is what "The Summer of Love" in San Francisco was celebrating. And this is the **message** my generation is still grasping tenaciously to with open arms today.

Once a youngster is on the other side of childhood; has gone through **puberty** [19]; and lives under his own roof in his twenties - he's finally free to let out his animal instincts two-by-two onto dry land. He's free to explore his feelings of lust without his parents interfering in matters of his heart. **Liberty** is finally within reach!

It's through clues to the emotional world within ourself that we learn to differentiate between our two worlds, a **magical** world within us and the realistic world around us.

Those youngsters who already became familiar with their emotional realm in childhood anticipated this change eagerly. But we all experienced a huge emotional shift after our first **orgasm** that we couldn't have imagined before we felt it.

This biological change **created** a difference between a mysterious **promise** of hope [internal] and mere optimism [external]. This, every imaginative, youngster can access and understand.

My tower to power

In the next story of **Genesis**, “**The Tower of Babel**,” the young adult male [20+] colludes with his peers to figuratively make his way up through the clouds of uncertainty to **GOD’s** heavenly realm to usurp **HIS** power at its source. He doesn’t **believe** **GOD** can be trusted since **HE** unleashed such monstrous feelings in early **puberty**. **HE** could do something equally diabolical again. Every young man seeks to usurp **GOD’s** power to claim it as his own.

He erects [stimulates] his penis like a tower which acts as a ladder for him to climb up to the height necessary to perceive, attract and possess a power inside himself he can call all his.

But because his head is really colluding with his heart over matters introduced by hormones, he doesn’t fully **realize** what he’s doing, even if he’s already overcome virginity by having sex with others.

Outwardly, he gets cocky. He gets arrogant. He gets belligerent, possibly even violent. He turns into a know-it-all who thinks he can feel-it-all. He becomes egotistical, competitive, pushy and determined to get *ahead* without reflecting on his need to get a *head*.

This level of juvenile development is one in which the young male becomes cynical, suspicious and distrusting after finding himself having been born into a world where there wasn’t enough love for him, let alone everyone else.

So, he decides to take matters into his own hands. The powerful feelings he’s experiencing in his heart rebel against his head that still insists on maintaining control over his actions. It’s as if his heart comes back from the dead to fight for its right to feel free. This produces a desire for **justice**.

**This is where Maria became captivated
with my interpretation of reality.
Her older sister had found her a position**

as au pair with a family in a town
so she could get out of her mother's house
and go to high school.

After graduating high school,
another sister got her, her first job
in the state mental institution in Augusta, ME.

Maria went from that job into the convent.
She had no interest in exploring the animals
down in her hull.

She decided to keep them in her ark.
She repressed her resentment against her mother.

She reached out to help others
rather than hinder anyone as she'd been hindered
on her quest for liberty and justice for all.

Young adulthood for many young men is consumed with jealousy and envy that may even erupt into violence. They're not only extremely sexually *attracted* to some. They're also extremely *repelled* by others.

If a young man today is a **Muslim** living in the Middle East, he becomes consumed with what **Jews** got that he's missing. If he's **Christian** in **America**, he becomes consumed with sex and guns. And if he's **Jewish** anywhere on the planet, he unconsciously becomes consumed with the concept of consumption...

You could probably say that these are stereotypes that are still normal at this age in this day-and-age. Young men can't stop coveting what they don't have until they discover what it is they hold inside that they can truly call their own. They have to get to know themselves from within to discover their own unique set of **virtues** and **vices**.

Adolescents don't usually want what **GOD** has to offer. They want what they could have that they feel has been withheld from them for a very long time.

A pedophile is only one example of an arrested child who seeks to force children through this passage of life to

adulthood to view his own passage through new eyes. We all have fragments of our psyche that were wounded in childhood and later scarred over in adolescence. We all need to go back to heal ourself by making our way over the rainbow of adolescence many times in many ways because the truth is that there's a pot of gold at each end of the rainbow.

My adulthood

The three patriarchs who are described next in **Genesis** personify the maturation **process** of every adult male as seen from the heart. By middle age a man can identify personally with all of them.

Abraham personifies fear [**yellow**].

Isaac personifies worry [**orange**].

Jacob personifies anger [**red**].

Abraham bargained with **GOD** out of fearlessness. He tried to give **Isaac** back to **HIM** [murder] as a way of placating his **CREATOR**.

Abraham wanted to sacrifice **Isaac** to **GOD** because **Abraham** suffered from a superiority complex.

1. Over the wellbeing of those living in Sodom, **Abraham** was willing to bargain with **HIM**.
2. He thought he knew better than **GOD** how **HE** should behave.
3. Over his **Ishmael's** life, **Abraham** thought he knew just what he ought do. He couldn't debate the issue morally from within.
4. And over **Isaac's** life, **Abraham** thought he should give his best to **GOD**. **Abraham** thought self-sacrifice began with sacrificing his children.

This is the initial position of every man who conceives of **GOD**. He thinks he needs to tell **GOD** what **HE** needs to do. Yet, he can't yet tell *himself* what he should do. And the ones who suffer the most from that delusion are his sons.

GOD begins the initiation with **HIM** in this way to produce doubts in men. Without doubts, a believer becomes certain that he always knows what **GOD** wants. He becomes

a **Hitler**. He has no doubts about killing anyone to advance **GOD's** cause, even his own son.

Isaac suffered a lifetime of angst over whether or not he was ever truly wanted. If his father had truly wanted a son, why had he tried to kill him? That's not how fathers are supposed to behave toward their progeny.

Isaac felt betrayed. He developed an inferiority complex. If the son must worry about whether his father will ever try to kill him a second time, the young man becomes the personification of anguish without even knowing it.

Isaac became so confused by what his father had wanted to do to him that he couldn't tell one of his own sons from the other. He lost so much insight by old age, that he was easily manipulated by his children. He couldn't see how they were using him. He became a doddering, old fool.

Isaac's son, **Jacob**, was angry at the world and perplexed about his reason for having been **created** in the first place. He felt the need to balance the external, playing field by stealing his brother's **[Esau]** inheritance to make up for what he didn't get from their father right from the start.

Jacob suffered from a superiority complex *and* an inferiority complex. He thought developing a clever mind would make him feel *superior*. But trying to solve the problems in his broken heart left him feeling *inferior*.

[Esau] and **Jacob** were fraternal twins born into a world where the firstborn received all the material [external] gifts from their father. This infuriated **Jacob**. This is why he tried to steal **[Esau's]** birthright. And this is why **[Esau]** had the law on his side.

But in the emotional realm, we can see that it's usually the sons who get all the love, and the daughters who gets all the responsibilities. If you imagine **Jacob** as being a fraternal, female twin, you can better understand the tension

between these two siblings as it's playing out in today's world.

The **Jewish** people are named after **Jacob**, whose name **GOD** changed to **Israel**. The **Jewish** people are **GOD's** first chosen people. We were the first to become enraged with **HIM** for what **HE** puts us through.

We'd expected **GOD's promise** to be delivered to us a long time ago. We always knew we held all the components of the **promise** of hope, but we had to discover the hard way that hope won't ever be delivered to us without everyone on Earth knowing what we know and **feeling** what we feel about this school we've all been enrolled in.

There's a spiritual evolution in progress that corresponds to the maturation of every individual that we must all experience for ourself *personally* before we can help each other *collectively*.

The problem today is that the orthodox **Jews** feel that the gay **Jews** are perverts of **GOD's** plan. And yet, all good people know that if you treat people like what comes out **brown** inside of you, it's because you're confusing your container [body] with your contents [**virtues**]. You're also confusing your **fate** with your **DESTINY**.

The state of **Israel** encourages its citizens to love anyone they choose. The orthodox **Jews** vehemently oppose that. This has become a fight between Jerusalem [the heart of **Israel**] and Tel Aviv [the soul of **Israel**]. This is the weakness the **Palestinians** are taking advantage of by worming their way into the hearts and minds of all men and women worldwide.

When **Israel** achieves marriage equality and joins the 37 civilized nations on Earth, the world will see that the **Palestinians** aren't fighting for a homeland. They're fighting to destroy the progress the world has achieved in denouncing homophobia. The **Palestinians** are fighting to destroy the progress the world has achieved in denouncing racism, misogyny and xenophobia. Until **Palestinians**

renounce their **hatred** of gays and **Jews**, there will be no peace anywhere on Earth.

The Crusades were a fight between **Christians** and **Muslims** over **Israel**. Today's **crusade** is a fight between **Muslims** and **Jews** over **Israel**. This is the **message** I bring to all students of life from our **TEACHER** in this one-room schoolhouse.

Peace will come to the Middle East when serenity comes to the **Jews** and **Muslims**. You can't solve external problems without solving the internal problems our **TEACHER** has given us all.

My dreams

The last story of **Genesis** is about **Joseph**, the son of **Jacob**. **Joseph** was almost murdered by his brothers; sold into slavery; and later imprisoned for a crime he didn't commit.

Joseph was the personification of the victim in the family dynamic model who has to use his power to dream of ways to escape his **fate**. Dreaming is a mysterious **process** that occurs by day or night, awake or asleep.

Most people in this school are dreaming in class. They're neither asleep nor awake. If you identify as a **Joseph**, you're what we call an artistic type. You hold a hope inside you that you're trying to express. You're seeking inner orientation by which to unite your head, heart and soul using your conscience as your guide. It lies between your heart and soul in your breastplate below the **rainbow** that shine above it in your chest.

When a boy discovers the **ecstasy** he achieves from his **orgasms**, he wonders why his outer world suddenly looks so different from his inner world. Childhood ended abruptly. The experience of **sublime** joy through physical sensations changed everything. Then he unconsciously began to wonder whether **GOD** loved his brother more than him. This felt excruciatingly ominous.

Every young man wants to know why he had to build an **ark** in **puberty** to contain his animal urges before he made his way to safe harbor at the end of adolescence. He questions what it really means to have let those animal urges off his vessel to replicate themselves in others. He wants to know why **GOD** would have given him a personal **promise** never to repeat that inner flood of feelings and sensations, while causing all sorts of **bad** weather patterns around him.

He especially wants to know why he felt banished to suffer feelings of superiority, inferiority and betrayal. And if

that isn't confusing enough, he wants to know why he's been treated so **hatefully** by so many.

These are a lot of questions for **GOD**. And they arise just from contemplating one's passage from childhood to adolescence.

The injustices of the world are perplexing for every generation. How can **GOD** be in charge of this world if there appears to be such confusion, rebellion and desperation in **HIS** ranks?

Life is complex. Man is complex. Only the hope of experiencing love lies there in the darkness within beckoning us onward.

Maria now suffers mild dementia.
She's 97 years old,
yet she hops in and out of my car
as though she was still 17.
She's got a smile on her face
that makes me feel like a budding blossom again.
She's through with this world and her work in it.
She's eager to move on.
She's ready to graduate this school.
She wants to shake hands with her Tutor, **Jesus**.
She doesn't consider the world's problems
her problems anymore.

Every man is a **tree of knowledge** unto himself. He was born in a grove [family]. He later discovers that he's actually one of many trees in an **orchard** [society]. And he spends his life lost in the woods trying to make his way out so he can go Home in peace.

Loving yourself is the carrot. Pain and suffering are the sticks. But loving yourself is anything but free and easy. It's so easy to love **Jesus** while forgetting to love yourself, as well.

Guilt, on the other hand, is free. The whole of **Torah**, the core of **Tanach** [**The Old Testament**] describes the creation of the **feeling** of **guilt** in the human psyche. For some reason, **GOD** felt **HE** needed to teach us the **feeling** of **guilt** before **HE** introduced us to the **feeling** of love. That may be why so many are **bad** and so few are **lovable**.

I see that as funny [odd], although hardly amusing. I see that as queer [unusual], but not gay. I see that as comedic, but still tragic.

For those who are willing to do the inner work of exploring **guilt**, they discover that *embarrassment* of their body leads to *modesty*. *Shame* of their character leads to *humility*. And *humiliation* before the **LORD** leads to *grace*, which is another way of saying that **loyalty** to **GOD** is the greatest of all the rewards of a life well lived.

I had to experience these three aspects of **guilt** before I was given my first taste of love. You did, too. And you passed those classes, although none of us have anything in the way of stellar grades to boast about.

In early childhood, we moved through the *embarrassment* of toilet training, feeding ourself and dressing on our own to achieve a modicum of modesty over our body.

Later in childhood, we experienced the *shame* of our character defects. That taught us how to behave respectfully in polite society, especially toward those older than us. That humility made it possible for us to learn from some others without expressing constant defiance at the world over the way it is.

But *humiliation* is a **feeling** that comes directly from our **TEACHER**. No one can anticipate when that lesson in life will arrive or leave.

If you've already experienced a terrible loss in life, you know the depth of this third aspect of guilt. Whether you related making your way through that loss to the grace of

GOD is yours to say. But you're still here in this school. And your final exam looms before you as it does for us all.

All the wisdom found in **The Old Testament** was useless to me until I discovered **Christ's** love. All the love I hold dear inside has left me **feeling** crucified on a cross of pain that's pulling me in one direction and suffering that's pulling me in the other.

That said, it wasn't until I discovered the secrets given to me in **The Quran**: the **loyalty** to life that comes through our desire to act **proudly**, that I could truly hold my head up high.

I had to wander for quite some time through this world like a **Jew** in my own, private diaspora.

I see **Torah** as built upon the main metaphor of **Moses**. And I see the **red** words of **The Gospels** as constructed using the body and blood of **Christ**. His words produce symbolism, the container/contents model needed to make love lovingly.

Torah explains the workings of our head. **The Gospels** explains the **working** of our heart.

And after these **lessons** of life, the good **LORD** brought us the 114 chapters of **The Quran**, which is erected like a tower that rises that extra mile. **The Quran** taught me how to operate myself from my soul thanks to its 114 similes for **GOD**.

Although I found a **rainbow** in the sky in whatever country I visited or lived in, I didn't find the **meaning** of the **rainbow** around me. There's no **rainbow** in any outer place that's more or less mysterious and **magical** than any other.

I had to seek personal **answers** to the outcomes of those heavenly lights *within*. It was only when I internalized the **rainbow** as a **message** of hope and a **promise** from **GOD** that was shining in the darkness *inside* me that I discovered the **meaning** of faith in all **GOD's** seven paths:

Indigenism

Hinduism

Judaism

Buddhism

Taoism

Christianity

Islam

[I don't see **Buddhism** as a faith. **Buddhists** don't believe in **GOD** or gods. I see it as a philosophy **GOD** squeezed in after **Judaism** and before **Taoism**.]

Like **Christ's** body and blood, I'm an "I" in an "it". I'm a holy symbol of **GOD's** creation and intention. Therefore, the secret to love must be sought within me with myself, for me to achieve something worthy enough to share with others.

Until I got out of my head by going on an **exodus** inside myself, through my stiff neck down to my heart, I couldn't discover the true value of love.

Until I made my way through my heart and into my soul, I couldn't discover the true **meaning** of life. Without knowledge of the **meaning** of life from my head [**Judaism**], heart [**Christianity**] and soul [**Islam**], I made mistakes that caused me great pain and suffering. The **outcome** of my life now hangs over my head like a Damocles sword. Death is still a **mystery** despite anything anyone might tell me to the contrary.

The stories I'm about to tell you are about self-bullying and self-abuse. They're intended to teach you the *facts* of life that your father should have explained to you a long time ago.

But I only seemed to have gotten the "*fax*" of life from my father. I was confused. I tried to do the best I could with what little he knew. I knew he didn't know enough about

anything. Sadly, I had to admit that my father was next to useless in explaining the **meaning** of everything to me.

I now know that if there are that many people around me making serious errors of judgment due to emotional colorblindness, then no one could have all the **answers**, given how little any of us knows himself.

If you can already agree with some of what I've said, I suggest you persevere despite any irritation and impatience you might experience from my retelling of the blatant truth in my own colorful way. This was a lot to unpack.

The last section of this book will be about the Book of **Ecclesiastes**. The Book of **Ecclesiastes** claims that life is all about vanity and meaninglessness. I strongly disagree with that conclusion. I think you will, too.

This world is comical, not meaningless. It's only the deeply perplexed who get so exasperated with life who come to the conclusion that nothing means anything. In truth, everything is meaningful. Everything comes from **GOD**. But if you don't have a relationship with **HIM** in which you can go to **HIM** with questions, you don't yet know the importance of **praying**. **Prayers** should end with question marks, not periods.

I tried to kill myself three times in my twenties. The reason for that was that I was exasperated with my life. I saw life as too confusing to be worth the bother. I also couldn't stand other people's vanity [although I had no problem in those days with my own].

If you have a slightly bewildered look on your face right now, that might be because you have thoughts that are in conflict with feelings that you can't **resolve**. Isn't that, when all is said and done, what makes us impatient?

I think life is really all about the **mystery** and magic we possess inside. If there's that much happiness to be gleaned

just from **orgasms**, just imagine what we might yet hope to achieve before we're dead.

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Her story

I met Deborah in 1987 by chance. We'd known one another **growing** up, but we didn't recognize each other when we met again as adults.

I'd decided to go to the gay **synagogue** in L.A. to see if I could meet a cool, gay **Jew**. I wasn't looking for **GOD**. I had no need of **GOD** at the time. What I desperately wanted was a boyfriend.

I got there early and was the second person to sign up as requested when I entered. The woman on the list before me had the same last name as distant family of mine, so I approached her. It turned out that my great uncle Martin had **married** her great aunt Esti.

In fact, Deborah and I had even cursorily known one another when she was a teenager, and I was child. I'd been to her mother's house for **Hanukkah** many times. Although Deborah was seven years older than me, I still have a memory of a Juicy Fruit wrapper necklace she'd made and hung in her bedroom.

Deborah was at the gay **synagogue** with her girlfriend, Jennie. They'd been in a relationship for three years by then. Jennie was five years younger than me. She was an electrician. She came from a religious, **Christian** home in small town PA. Deborah was a chiropractor.

They lived together in Healdsburg, a small town in the wine country of Sonoma County in Northern California. They were in L.A. visiting Deborah's family.

Deborah donated time to the Healdsburg city council to help poor, **Latinx** farmers who worked in the vineyards, and their families. She also studied yoga and would later open a yoga studio in Healdsburg and teach yoga principles. Deborah was the first person I ever knew with a three-legged dog.

The two of them owned a house in town and a 140-acre ranch 40 minutes west of Healdsburg in the rolling, forested

hills above Dry Creek Road. Jennie chopped wood for their furnace, maintained their water well and did a million odd jobs around the house along with her full-time job as an electrician.

They were pioneer women. They were a modern recreation of women who came out West in the 19th Century. In my day, the 20th Century was the 19th Century for lesbians who wanted to do right in a world that did so much wrong.

Her story and my story

Deborah is the youngest of three siblings. She has an older brother, Carl, who I fell madly in love with when I was 10 years old. Carl has a large scar on his face. He reminded me of one of the Three Musketeers when I was a kid. I thought he was handsome, dashing and strong.

Terry, the middle child, seemed loud, boisterous and needy. I remembered Terry competing with her mother for attention as soon as Terry came through her mother's front door at **Hanukkah**.

Their father, who I called Uncle Hyme, was tall, dark and handsome in a **working**-class sort of way. He had rough hands that he washed with a soap with pumice in it in the bathroom off their kitchen. He'd pick me up each year like a basketball and tossed me around the room, leaving me in peals of laughter.

Aunt Milly was a butterball who cooed like a hen laying eggs. Her feathers were easily ruffled, so she stayed in the kitchen most of the time. That was her nest, and her home was her coop. She only came into the living room to play the piano if she ventured anywhere outside the kitchen at all.

When I was 10 and Rina was 8, my mother had a terrible car accident. She was hospitalized for several weeks. Aunt Milly took us to the sanitorium to visit her. That was the first time I saw Aunt Milly outside her home. And it was the first time I saw my mother seriously bedridden.

Rina and I had been trained like show dogs. We were so obedient and well-raised that my mother agreed to fire the social worker who'd been assigned to us while she was in the sanitorium. My mother saw to it that we were provided \$10 a week for groceries. We'd already been making our lunches ourselves. Breakfast was cereal, and dinner I could cook for the two of us. I used to have dinner partially made by the time my mother came home from work anyway. My mother just arranged with a neighbor to take us food

shopping once a week. The rest of our routine continued as usual.

In those days, we couldn't go into the sanitorium where our mother was recovering because we were children, but we could wave to our mother from outside her window. Aunt Milly brought us there just to wave to our mother from the sidewalk. It wouldn't have been possible if there had had more than one floor.

Apart from the first time I tried to kill myself [by swallowing a whole bottle of Bayer aspirins {100}] and called Rina for help – those weeks alone with my sister when we were kids was probably the only time I felt a sense of protection, **loyalty** and connection to her as siblings.

Deborah and Jennie stayed in touch with me and soon became fast **friends**. The very thought that our families hadn't told us we had gay relatives sweetened our bond.

The next year, 1988, I drove up to visit them. In the car, I was singing, "We are family. I've got all my sisters with me." [Niles Rodgers, Bernard Edwards]

I fell in love with Deborah and Jennie and their country lifestyle. Deborah had made it out of the rat race. She'd gotten away from **Jewish** life in L.A. as well. She was a "doctor" in a small town during the week, and a rancher on the weekends. Her 140-acre estate had a garden and an **orchard**, although no livestock. Still, it was, to my mind, **Paradise** on Earth. Whatever it was Deborah had, I wanted it. I wasn't a **lesbian**, and I didn't want a woman to share my life with. But I wanted everything else she sought in life.

In 1989, I applied for and got a job teaching drama at Comstock Junior High School in Santa Rosa. I moved up to Healdsburg in June of 1989 as soon as my job as English teacher at El Sereno Junior High in East L.A. ended. It was a 20-minute ride to my job.

I was finally out of L.A. I'd come back to L.A. where I'd grown up after having lived in **Israel** and Holland for five

years from the age of 18-22. Then I fell ill to mental illness, exacerbated by drugs and alcohol.

After 14 years in L.A. in adulthood, I was dead-set on becoming a country boy. I couldn't have been happier about seeking my **DESTINY** in small-town **America**. I even thought of buying a trailer and living on Deborah's land. She loved the idea of having me even closer.

I was 36 years old at the time, and sick and tired of gay life in L.A. All my **friends** were from Alcoholics Anonymous or the YMCA where I taught aerobics. I'd had one live-in boyfriend for about a year whom I'd met from an ad he placed in a gay rag. But that relationship didn't work out. I had to move out of his apartment and start all over again.

He was a frustrated opera singer, and I was an ex-ballet dancer. It turned out we lived in non-intersecting fantasy worlds. He could sing. I could dance. But neither of us could talk to one another. I cheated on him. Then he cheated on me. Then we broke up.

When I was young and single, a **weekend** was more my idea of a long affair. I didn't know if I was too picky or whether there just weren't any good men left in L.A. by then. I finally saw no reason to give up my dream of country living.

I moved into an in-law unit Deborah secured for me in Healdsburg. It was located in the back yard of an old Communist from the 30's who'd been involved in the 1934 waterfront strike in San Francisco. I still think back to the Gravenstein apples **growing** in her backyard. They were the sweetest apples I'd ever tasted. [I **learned** that that's a variety developed in Sebastopol, another small town in Sonoma County.] I was drunk on the idea of being able to pick apples in my own backyard!

I was poised for the good life with my **lesbian** cousin and her lover in rural **America**. I'd found my gay family!

Suddenly, I decided there was a **GOD**. I didn't want to kill myself anymore. Everything was looking up.

I drove each day to work at the county seat, Santa Rosa, where I taught country kids about the magic of theater, having danced professionally in **Israel** in my late teens. I spoke five languages and had a European polish that set me apart from most men in rural **America** then. [Now I can see that most of that polish was pretentious.]

Sadly, the whole damn dream blew up in my face when the kids started to taunt me for looking and behaving as though I might be queer – and a hoity-toity European queer, to boot.

I discussed the matter with the vice-principle, but she only stared at me like a deer in the headlights when I told her I was gay and the kids were teasing me about it. Because she was of no use at all in solving my problem, I decided to just come out to my kids and force them to face **reality**. It was, after all, 1989...

Within hours, that disclosure caused a larger mushroom cloud than the bombs dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima. The whole county suddenly shifted measurably as though from an earthquake whose epicenter was in one of their public schools.

They were horrified to learn that their precious children were under attack by a pervert who was going to corrupt their hearts and minds... They looked at me like we look at school shooters today. They couldn't imagine the sort of **evil** I was going to fill their sweet, innocent children's heads with like bullets from a long gun.

Having started school in Buffalo, New York in the mid 50's, I was well aware of what it was like to have a horrible teacher. I called my first-grade teacher "Crabby Applesseed" after a character in a book my mother read to me.

But when I told a girlfriend of mine on our way home for lunch that I **hated** our teacher, Mrs. Johnson, she told me that she was going to tell her what I said.

I ran home crying. I was in an utter state of panic. I dreaded the thought of going back to school that day. I just wanted to die there and then.

That **feeling** of dread never left. Dread was what the cloud that hung over my head most of my life was made of. It engulfed me in a **feeling** of drizzle, fogginess and chill I felt down to my bones every day of my life until I **retired**.

Granted, the sun did break through to shine a little joy in my heart from time to time – but never for very long. So, I tried to deal with the **feeling** of dread as best I could until I **retired** and got away from **reality** as I'd always known it.

In my twenties, I'd attempted suicide three times to try to clear the air of clouds. I also took drugs and alcohol to recreate the **feeling** of sunshine artificially. Neither did any good.

And I lied. I lied about who I was; where I'd come from; what I'd done; and what I'd accomplished by having done what I hadn't done. I said I was British, not American. I spoke with an English accent. And when I didn't lie about my past, I was deep in denial about my future. I told everyone that **reality** just wasn't my thing.

So, when I came out as a gay teacher to my students, there really wasn't anything Deborah and Jennie could do for me. They had troubles of their own living a closeted, **lesbian** life in small town **America**. Deborah and her former lover had a thriving chiropractic practice in Healdsburg. [They say lesbians never divorce. They just add girlfriends like flying buttresses to their cathedral walls.] Either Deborah's patients didn't know she was a **lesbian**, or they turned a blind eye in exchange for the physical relief she gave them.

But as a female electrician in a man's world, Jennie was as exposed as I was to **hate** speech, prejudice and homophobia from small-minded Americans in those days.

My job as a teacher had turned into hell on Earth. I could only escape from it by going to retreats for gay men who lived in the country.

At one such **retreat** two days before Valentine's Day, 1990, I met Larry. He was a gay **Jew** from New York who'd moved to San Francisco soon after the Summer of Love. Although he was a cultural **Jew** like Deborah, Larry was angrier than Deborah. But they were both pretty angry people.

Because both my parents and older siblings had been **Holocaust** survivors, Larry was particularly interested in me as a gay, **Jewish** potential mate. He wasn't just interested in my body.

Larry never met a stranger. He was **popular**. He was extroverted. He loved basketball; played every day with his buddies, many of whom were straight and accepted him as gay. [While I was an introverted ballet dancer who came across as a snob. I didn't engage in sports. I only glided across the world stage as though an **angel** with wings.]

Larry owned a market research company that he ran from his kitchen. His business was a year old when we met. He had one employee, a **Jewish lesbian** who sat in his dining room. For her, marketing was a sport, like **hunting**. Every person she recruited was like game she shot and **mounted** like a trophy on the wall. I didn't understand their jobs, their relationship or their joy in **working**. I scorned the business world.

The two of them passed papers through a serving window between those two rooms in his one-bedroom Victorian apartment in Noe Valley, a suburb of San Francisco.

If Larry needed to send a fax, there was a shop a block and a half away on 24th Street. He'd just say he had a fax that

needed to go out, and Sue knew he was going to stretch his legs and would be back in 20 minutes. Otherwise, he was on the phone schmoozing with clients. He loved his job. And he soon came to tell me he loved me, too.

I quit my teaching job in Satan Rosa in the middle of the school year. There wasn't much left of my classes after the parents pulled their kids out of drama. It was only an elective after all. The kids didn't have to take it.

Then, the principal turned my classroom into a detention hall which he filled with disturbed teenagers. The students I was forced to babysit didn't need a gay, drama teacher who was persona-non-grata at their school. They didn't need to feel punished by having to face a faggot an hour a day. They needed a teacher who was properly trained in developmental psychology to help them to understand the challenges of growing up.

I had to get out of there! The Ides [15th] of March 1990 turned out to be my last day at Comstock Junior High. The union negotiated my exit settlement. The school district paid my salary until the end of the school year in exchange for me leaving immediately and not talking publicly about what had happened.

They'd saved their school from a faggot who was ruining their children's ethical perspective, but they didn't want me telling anyone my side of the story for fear they'd get backlash. Although I promised not to talk about the settlement to protect their hypocritical asses then, I don't give a damn about that anymore. Sue me now! I dare you.

Larry and I dated all that spring. I moved to San Francisco to live with him in June of 1990. He was HIV+. I was HIV-. It was a gamble whether he'd live very long and whether I'd catch AIDS from him. Such is love when you're young, bruised and yet mysteriously hopeful.

I had no intention of going back to L.A. And since I couldn't survive as a gay man in the country, there was every indication I wouldn't do worse in San Francisco, surely the

most diverse, accepting and civilized city on the face of the Earth in those days and, in my opinion, still.

I got a job teaching English and E.S.L. at Lincoln High School in the Sunset district at the west end of San Francisco. I'd landed on my feet in my chosen profession, and I'd hooked a boyfriend at the same time.

There was no **GOD** in my life then, so I just thought I'd gotten lucky. That and surviving three suicide attempts had just seemed like good luck to me! Finding Larry in the nick of time was my idea of having gotten lucky a fourth time. I was particularly pleased with myself, I remember.

Deborah and Jennie would come down regularly to visit us. Two years into our relationship, they joined our mothers with our mothers' second husbands and all our **friends** for our commitment ceremony. Good times she wrote...

Larry's business took off. We became rich and bought a house on a hill with a million-dollar view overlooking the Bay. Larry had known Harvey **Milk** and every other important person in San Francisco in the early days of gay liberation, so he used his prominence to help gay men as much as he could while he was having his day in the sun.

We were one of the first gay couples to become members of the Dolphin Club, people who swim in the Bay. We contributed to building their women's locker room. The Dolphin Club had been a men's club for more than a hundred years. When they allowed women in, they had to make room to accommodate them. There's a tile in the women's shower with our names on it.

We also contributed to the creation of the film "Paragraph 175," which chronicles the lives of gay men who were arrested by the **Nazis** for the crime of homosexuality under Paragraph 175, the sodomy provision of the German penal code that dated back to 1871. Between 1933 and 1945, 100,000 men were arrested under Paragraph 175. Some were imprisoned; others were sent to concentration camps. Of the

5,000-15,000 gay men sent to concentration camps, the death rate was as high as 60% due to brutal conditions, forced labor, and executions. [internet]

During the gay nineties, the city of San Francisco [and the nation] was dragging through dozens of gay deaths each week from AIDS. The obituary column in the gay rags was pages and pages long. Grief and misery were everywhere in our community. Castro Street looked like a hospital corridor with people walking with canes or pushed in wheelchairs.

The cloud of dread remained over my head, despite my good fortune. I lived in fear of getting infected with AIDS by Larry. I dreaded being outed at work for being gay. I had nightmares from childhood that still popped up in my mind like mushrooms **growing** in a damp field.

I couldn't feel any better than I did at that time. I didn't have any inner tools to speak of. I just did the best I could emotionally with the heart I had.

When Larry got full-blown AIDS, we'd been together about 10 years. I think it was then that he started to see his previous boyfriend behind my back. I'd been under the impression that we were in a monogamous relationship, but apparently Larry didn't find our safe sex satisfy. In all fairness, I didn't think much of it, either.

He missed the kind of sex he'd enjoyed at the baths. He missed the glee of having sex with complete abandon. If he was going to have to die in his late forties or early fifties, I suppose he decided he wanted to go out with a bang, not a whimper. Since his former boyfriend was HIV+, they could do it all!

We broke up in 2004 after a 13-year relationship. Deborah and Jennie broke up after we did. Deborah found a **Jewish** gal who swept her off her feet. But that affair didn't last long.

My relationship to Deborah took off after we were both single again. I felt she became my Ilana, my older sister,

who'd returned from my early childhood; someone I could confide in.

Deborah admitted to me that she'd never met anyone in her whole life before that affair with the **Jewish lesbian** who'd found her physically attractive. But that introduction to love only lasted a year. Still, it was the one time she experienced the **passion** of someone **lusting** after her. Who would want to miss out on something like that?

I was still emotionally fragile at the time, so I felt like I had an older sister to confide in. And although Deborah was emotionally fragile in her own way, it felt to me like she had a younger brother to confide in, too. She no longer had to be the youngest child in her family. She no longer had to feel unloved. She had someone to love platonically who was younger and needier than her.

Deborah and Jennie eventually got back together. They even got **married** a few years ago. They said it was for the health insurance benefits they'd get, but I know they **married** for love, even if love meant companionship to them.

Sadly, companionship for them doesn't include **passion**, something Will and I enjoy to this day. Their relationship involves a lot of arguing. There was one argument a couple of years ago that centered around how long to bake potatoes.

The subjects of their arguments are always meaningless externally, but it says a lot about the compromise they've made in not having to be alone in life. They're two women in a love/**hate** relationship that's teaching them the **meaning** of love and **hate** although these two feelings are so intrinsically combined for them that I don't think they can tell one **feeling** from the other.

Nothing is ever going to change about that unless they decide to pursue love with more vigor. That means from within. Their hearts were broken a long time before they met, but they don't know how to get out of them into their soul.

They don't know how to feel good and **evil** about themselves. That requires self-**empathy**. They think they can only experience love for one another, but that **creates** resentment. Consequently, they swing from one extreme **feeling** to the other. They're on a pendulum of emotions that passes through the midpoint [self-love] with such acceleration that they can't even say what love is.

I guess I should circle back to remind you that I was twice involuntarily committed to mental institutions. So, who am I to judge? I was not only psychotic. I was a psychopath who couldn't tell you what **guilt** was, let alone describe any of my other feelings in words.

The first time I was hospitalized, I was diagnosed as paranoid schizophrenic, which is much more severe than psychotic. The second time they chose a different label: manic-depressive, which is a psychosis. I was prescribed lithium, which I took for 25 years. I felt like the personification of hopelessness because I needed to be psychiatrically medicated.

I was **healing** anyway thanks to life, albeit slowly. I don't credit my medication for much. After my second involuntary hospitalization, I had that one-year affair with the opera singer. I think I **learned** a lot about my feelings while with him. I just didn't understand how much I needed **quality** time with people as well as **quality** time with myself.

When I was with Larry and he started to have night sweats, I suddenly realized we were going to have to go through his AIDS diagnosis and death together. And I knew there wasn't a pill on the planet that could save me from the suffering I was going to have to endure as he got sicker and sicker.

I didn't want to have to attempt suicide a fourth time after Larry died. I wanted to live, just not without him. But I intuitively realized I still couldn't feel as deeply as others. I

couldn't enjoy the **rapp**ort, connection and enjoyment of life that others looked like they were able to express that I knew I was still faking.

So, with my psychiatrist's approval and oversight, I slowly reduced my psychiatric medication until I stopped it altogether on June 21st, 2000. It was the first day of summer in the 21st Century. My doctor guided me through the **pro**cess while I held my sanity in my own hands in my late forties for the first time since I'd driven my car off a cliff in 1977.

That wasn't easy, but perhaps because I'd given up drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and caffeine in 1984, I was stronger in the year 2000 than I thought.

I've now been off psychiatric drugs for almost a quarter of a century and clean and sober for almost 40 years. In all honesty, I can't yet say I'm sane. But I am able to enjoy my own company even when I find being with Barry difficult to bear.

Feeling my feelings is still the greatest **mir**acle of my life. Even when I feel lost, depressed or confused, I can still remember the **fe**eling of **fe**eling. And that gives me hope. I'll never want to kill myself again so long as I can remember how much I've grown over my lifetime.

Being me in a relationship with myself has given my life much of the **me**aning I need. I'd rather suffer through the challenge of being an authentic fruit than the challenge of being with all the nuts out there who are only pretending to be themselves. I consider myself very lucky to be a tree like me, but only because learning to love myself has become my greatest reason for being.

Cleaning up my mind wasn't something I could do while still stuck in my head. I had to get out of my head and into my heart to clean out my head thoroughly from another place in inner space.

Once you can admit you've lost some of your mind, you can then **re**solve to get out of the thoughts in your head, in

search of the feelings in your heart and **beliefs** in your soul that will give you the spiritual strength you need. That may not take an involuntary commitment to a mental institution., as it did for me. It may only take **resolve** to feel better by doing more to learn to love yourself. Without your love, you're nothing.

If your heart has been broken, shattered and crumbled into pieces no larger than gravel that make a growling sound as you drive over it, make your way to your soul. In your soul, you'll discover your most cherished **beliefs**.

Once I could see that I was an anti-**Semite** who **hated Jews**; an anti-**Zionist** who **hated Israelis**; a racist who **hated** all those of other races; a homophobe who **hated** the **LGBTQIA+** community; a misogynist who **hated** women; a misandrist who **hated** men; and a xenophobe who **hated** strangers – I could begin the process of **healing** myself with self-love.

As someone who's lost his mind and had his heart stepped on repeatedly until I could only think of myself as a door mat - personal experience has proved to me that the place I most want to live in forever isn't my soul. It's my conscience. With my conscience as my guide, I can achieve the **miracle** of graduating this school with honors.

I think **GOD** likes those who are **soulful**. You'll probably like yourself a lot more if you treat yourself soulfully at all times, too.

There's nothing to compare to the wisdom in your head [**Judaism**], the love in your heart [**Christianity**] and the **loyalty** to life in your soul [**Islam**] if you're interested in seeking good grades from our **TEACHER**.

But in order to come to know **HIM**, I had to first come to know myself. I had to observe me. I had to discover my underlying assumption that in order to be **soulful**, I thought I had to be unhappy. I believed deep down in my soul that only unhappy people could be **soulful**.

Therefore, I was always unconsciously jealous and envious of happy people. The more unhappy I could make myself by having to be me rather than anyone else, the more miserable I could become. And the more miserable I was, the more I could explore soulfulness through a dark lens.

To give up the rose-colored glasses for clear lenses that would allow me to look at **reality** hopefully, I had to learn more about myself than I could find in **Judaism**.

I couldn't even find it in **Christianity**. I had to get out of my head and heart to explore the rest of my body from a spiritual, not a religious, perspective.

To become **soulful**, I actually had to make my way to my breastplate, the figurative location of my conscience. From there, I had to travel south in the direction of matters below my belt. There I could discover more about the **serpent** in my **tree**.

My first destination on that adventure was my navel [**Hinduism**]. From there I continued south to my genitals [**Buddhism**]. And then I circled back via my anus [**Taoism**]. These spiritual parts of me held the secret to tolerance, acceptance and admiration.

Tolerance of my **Jewish** mother was something I achieved by contemplating my navel. I couldn't feel happy about myself so long as I felt smothered by my mother.

All human beings have a scar on their belly from when they separated from their mother at birth. But not all people are trying to understand why that scar was given to them via that particular woman. **Hinduism** explores that question for us through contemplation of our navel. This is **GOD's** gift to humanity through that faith.

The **Hindus** have done that spiritual work for us by studying tolerance. All I had to do was incorporate their wisdom in with my own. I wrote a book just about that. It's called Hinduism, Health and Healing: How to believe in **GOD** by believing in yourself.

Acceptance of others is evidenced by the delivery device [penis] of the good and **evil** [testicles] I produce inside. This is a whole department in the school of life given to us by the **Buddhists**, who don't **believe** in our **TEACHER**. They follow the path of one man, the **Budda**, who made peace with his wants [-] and desires [+].

Once I understood that the **creation story** in **Genesis** was an introduction to the philosophy of **Buddhism**, I could make peace with my penis [**serpent**] in my own inimitable way. I didn't have to get stuck in my head or heart in an effort to avoid the importance of having been given the genitals I got.

Not only could I accept the penis I'd been given, but I could stop fighting inside over the entire container and contents I had.

I only have certain **virtues**. I wasn't blessed with all of them. My inner gifts from **GOD** mysteriously translate to physical attributes.

This spiritual work in accepting myself was given to me through the wisdom found in the philosophy of **Buddhism**. I wrote a book about it called Your Buddha Within: Inside Every Buddhist Lies an Anti-Authoritarian Who Yearns for Peace of Mind.

Admiration of the anus comes with using doors that open two ways. Having a hole in me that serves two functions [elimination and sexual **delight**] **creates** the manifestation of **paradox** [yin and **yang**]. This rounded out my understanding of my body as a figurative gift from **GOD** with spiritual outcomes.

Before that, I had trouble understanding why **answers** had to come from contradictory, conflicting and opposing directions. I had to learn to smile at how beguiling life can be. Just opening my heart to **Taoism** made the spiritual work of self-admiration mine, alone.

The wisdom of **Lao-Tsu** was **amazing** because it helped me admire my anal retentive and anal explosive nature, not

to feel ashamed of it. The book I wrote about that was called Lazy Susan: How Taoism Spins Paradox into Food for Thought.

Although I wrote about the **loyalty** to **GOD** found in **Islam** in a 7-volume work called, Quran, The Book of Lights before I made my way to the concepts of tolerance, acceptance and admiration found in the Far East, **The Quran** only really helped me to become **soulful** after I'd completed my spiritual trek around the world. I needed more experience of life to appreciate the **majesty** of **The Quran**.

I don't want to dwell on my relationship with **GOD** in this book or the seven faiths and philosophies **HE's** given us. **GOD** knows, I've said enough about those subjects in my other 28 books.

Until I discuss my interpretation of the Book of **Ecclesiastes** later on in this book, I'd rather just continue to talk about matters of the heart and leave it at that.

I had to come out as gay a second time in San Francisco at the age of 50 when Larry and I broke up. That was harder than the first time because I was no longer young and pretty. I felt like a grown man sitting in a little chair in a kindergarten class with my younger gay brothers. I was pretty uncomfortable.

I met Will seven years later. He's 12 years younger than me. We've been together for 12 years. Will is HIV- too. We enjoy a robust sex life with one another. We're monogamous. [Yes, Felicia, it is possible for two gay men to enjoy a satisfying sex life without cheating on one another. But it's got to include **passion**, or it will revert into a love/**hate** lesson of life like the one Larry and I unconsciously **created** with each other. I certainly didn't want to repeat that class in the school of life!]

For 12 years now, I've been somewhat surprised after sex with Will because I find our love-making so continually

satisfying. It's only been recently that I've realized sex with one person does get better and better, but only if the two people in the couple are both **growing** spiritually. When you're **growing** inside, sex gets more **intense** and rewarding. When you're shrinking inside, you may even lose interest in sex altogether.

Someday, when I'm a famous writer, someone will ask me publicly what I think about while Will and I are making love, and I'll tell them. But for now, I'm going to keep that little secret to myself...

I credit Will for much of our success as a couple. He taught me to give up on seeking love. He's told me he only wants to have a *like* affair, not a *love* affair with me. And now that we've practiced liking one another for 12 years, I have to say he was right.

But he was also wrong. I can't just like Will. I've come to love him. I'd love to only like him. **Believe** me, I've tried. Although there are times when I don't like him – like when he puts his coffee filters in the recycle bin; filling it to the rim; forcing me to take out the bag from the canister; tie the knot; take it to the compost can in the garage; and replace the bag with another – he's made me see how emotionally irrational I can be.

I can no longer pretend that the recycle canister is only for my banana peels. I have to share my garbage with him. And that's a challenge for me, literally and figuratively. I'm petty and spiritually still immature in many small ways.

Most of my life, I didn't like myself. Now that I've **learned** to like me, I've **learned** to like my boyfriend, as well. And since I've come to *like* myself so much that I can even admit that I *love* me, I also have to admit I *love* my boyfriend, too.

Everybody has his challenges. In a **perfect** world, I'd have garbage just for me. I wouldn't have to share my

garbage with my partner, and he wouldn't have to share his with me.

Despite the mental aberrations that still consume me, I love the guy. I'd prefer to consistently like him, but I can't. Sometimes I dislike him. Sometimes I like him. And sometimes I love him.

But I can't **hate** him because I can't **hate** me anymore. I'm through **hating**. I've had enough of **hate**. **Hating** is **black** and ugly. Now that I've passed all my classes in the school of life on **hating**, I'm free at last to like and love. And there's nothing in life that has given me more relief than that.

I **believe** that love is something I should give only to myself. I want to fill myself with love just as **Jesus** did. And I think everyone should do the same.

If you find your cup runneth over, I say to you [tongue-in-cheek] give your surplus love to your parents, spouse, children or to humanity from a saucer, not from your own cup. In this way you'll come to tolerate, accept and admire yourself more.

Like the whole world to the best of your ability. But for **GOD's** sake, don't love anyone other than yourself and **GOD**!

Love yourself more each day of your life and offer **GOD** all the love you have inside you. Any extra love that runneth over from your cup and spills into your saucer is for those you care the most about. Love **Jesus** if you're **Christian**. Admire Him if you're not. The guy got it right.

But don't make His mistake by trying to love everyone. The world will crucify you if you do. And **GOD** will agree to allow that to happen. **HE** told us **HE** is a jealous **GOD**. [**Joshua** 24:19]

Jesus only got one container. His **FATHER** has none. **Jesus** had only one content: love, although He seemed to have been blessed with a lot of it. His **FATHER** holds all

the contents of all the faiths and philosophies of the whole world.

Granted, **Jesus** was surely the greatest **rabbi** who ever lived. But the jealousy and envy of every **rabbi** since have only exacerbated the distance between **Christians** and **Jews**.

I don't let my own covetous nature get in the way of my truth anymore. I love the one I'm always with [me]. Then I love **GOD**, no matter what name others choose to use to call **HIM**.

GOD gave the **Jews** **The Ten Commandments** in which **HE** wisely told us to honor our father and mother. **HE** didn't say anything about loving them.

Granted, I loved my mother very much. I'm a gay **Jew**, for **GOD's** sake! I personify **The Madonna and Child** relationship even though I'm 70 years old and **Jewish**!

There came a point when I was about 12 years old when couldn't love my father any longer. It was then that I realized my **FATHER** had only asked me to honor my father, not love him. I'd made the assignment more difficult than it had to be.

But I can never stop loving my mother. The only thing I can do now is replace the on/off switch of her voice in my head with a dimmer switch. Now I raise and lower the volume of my **Jewish** mother's voice in me.

Although I honored my father by having a **Bar Mitzvah**, because it was important to him, I didn't even begin to respect him until he was long gone. It was only in old age that I began to see his **virtues**, not only focus on his **vices**.

My father was an incredible **Zionist** and lover of **Israel**. He just didn't get along well with his own family. Nor did he know much about **Judaism** as a religious in comparison to any of the other world faiths and philosophies. He was just **Jewish** in the way he'd been raised. He had a **Jewish** neshome [Yiddish: soul]. He never studied how to be a **Jewish** as I have. **Hitler** taught him most of what he knew

about matters of the heart. He had to become fiercely **Jewish**.

Although I loved my mother, I lost a great deal of respect for her after she passed away, I looked back on her life and reread her autobiography a fourth time. She made a mess of life in some ways, too. It was then that I decided to honor her for the rest of my life.

Moses told us to love our neighbor as ourself. [**Leviticus** 19:17-18] But the **Israelites** were wandering in the desert when **Moses** said it. They had no neighbors other than one another.

Jesus reiterated his words 1,400 years later. [**Matthew** 22:37-39, **Mark** 12:31]

But when **Jesus** said the same thing, the **Israelis** in those ancient days were colonized by the Romans and surrounded by two-faced Philistines and bad Samaritans. [The good Samaritan was an exception to the rule. That's why he was lauded.]

If you think that most of the ancient **Israelis** thought **Christ's** love was a good thing, I think you're incorrect about that. I think most of them thought He was out of his mind.

That said, the concept of love has caught on. Granted, the ancient **Christians** carried the wisdom of **Moses** and the love of **Jesus** in the **Bible** around the world without modeling either **message** very well. The truth is, in some respects, **Moses** and **Jesus** could have done a better job in explaining their positions.

That said, **Torah** is a precursor to the arrival of **Jesus**. There was no love in the words of **Moses** or the other **Jews** quoted in **Tanach**. Their words were filled with the wisdom they held in their head. Wisdom of the heart is a whole other matter.

GOD, for **Moses**, was like a psychologist who promotes everything in terms of reverse psychology. **Moses** didn't

know how to convey **GOD's** sense of humor and clever ploys to sharpen our wits because he didn't have a sense of humor. If you read his autobiography [**Torah**], you know there's nothing in it to laugh about.

That said, if you read the **creation story** from the heart as a metaphor, the whole of **Torah** becomes incredibly amusing and entertaining. It all becomes about **serpent** envy, and **GOD** made it clear to **Moses** that **HE** has the largest **SERPENT** of all...

It wasn't until **Jesus** came out of His head and into His heart that all **Hebrew** words were given the capacity to be interpreted symbolically from the heart as well as metaphorically from the head.

We just don't know the name of the first **Jew** who laughed when he realized his head and heart were going in opposite directions, and that **Cain** and **Abel** were his inner brothers when witnessed from within.

If you **believe Jesus** is a part of **GOD**, that's fine with me. **GOD** goes by many names: Brahma, Krishna, Vishnu, **Adonai**, **Jesus**, **Allah**, and there are more Gods if you include all the gods past and present. **Allah** is the **Muslims'** Tutor and **ALLAH** is their **TEACHER**.

But, for **GOD's** sake, tell me how you feel! Love **GOD** using any name you choose. But please don't love your parents, spouse, children or anyone else more than you love yourself. It will backfire on you. If you love your neighbor, just love him as you love yourself, no more, no less.

Make your love for yourself your highest standard. That will end your constant self-indulgences. That will fill you with ample, spiritual exercise for a lifetime. All escapades into the love of others will be rewarded with new ways to love yourself and like other people all the more for what they can teach you.

Now, you may think my advice sounds a tad extreme, or weird, or both. Or you may think it's just reverse psychology.

I have to admit I can't always follow it myself, although I try valiantly every day to do so. But I can say this. The more I love myself, the more I can honor others, even those I don't even respect. In fact, I've even found it possible to tolerate, accept and admire some others I never thought I could.

I think my philosophy of life will come in handy when I'm on my deathbed and have to take my final exam. I expect all the questions given will be on humor. If I can't leave this world with a smile on my face, I don't think I will have gotten enough out of life.

Oh! One more thing.

If life begins in **puberty** when a teenager experiences his first **orgasm**, that means that **GOD** was playing a trick on us right from the start. That means that if you interpret **Torah** as reverse psychology, you're expected to defy **GOD** in some ways and glorify **HIM** in others. That will develop your sense of morality and ethics. **HE** expects you to be good and angry at the way things started out for you and maybe even about the way things have turned out since.

I suppose that must be a part of **HIS** plan. Therefore, I suggest you laugh it off if you have a sense of humor and cry about it if you don't. But don't get angry at anyone. Everyone will get their just desserts. Don't you worry about that!

Childhood was all about learning the rules before playing the game. Once you were allowed into your inner world at the end of childhood with a **rainbow** bridge through **puberty**, all bets had been placed. Your challenge, crap shoot, contest, fight, game, match, race, roulette, sport, test, trial, or hunt was on. **Orgasm** was introduced to you as though it was a race with: on your mark [**Adam and Eve**] get set [**Cain and Abel**] and go [**Noah and the ark**].

Once you were a teenager among teenagers and adults, you were expected to act like an adolescent on the cusp of adulthood, not like a child anymore. You were expected to use the forces in your inner world in conjunction with the forces in your outer world to make the decisions you believed would be best for you, as well as **ONE** and all.

In that sense, nothing has changed since the beginning of time. The only question is, have you?

An outside opinion

Dear Ettie,

You met Deborah when she and I came to **Israel** in 2008. You and Ilan took us out for a fish dinner that was delicious. When you and Ilan were here in California the first time in 2018, you met Jennie, her wife.

Jennie stayed with us two nights three months ago because her niece lives in San Francisco. Jennie complained to me about Deborah while she was here visiting. It seemed like Jennie felt she was finally free to speak her mind because Deborah wasn't around. She told me the two of them fight like cats and dogs. [That was no secret. They do it in front of Will and me all the time. They used to argue in front of Larry and me. Some people just need to publicize their suffering.]

So, I told Jennie that she has a snarky sense of humor, but she uses it on Deborah when Deborah is angry at her. I told her to look more closely at her wife's character. Deborah has no sense of humor, especially when she's mad. Using a snarky sense of humor on anyone when they're upset is only going to be seen as provocative.

I added that I love the humor Jennie's developed over the years. I feel so much closer to her because of it. I, too, have a snarky sense of humor. But I told her that people without a sense of humor don't understand that a sense of humor is used to **relieve** emotional pressure. Humor only works on other people with a sense of humor.

My intention was to get emotionally closer to Jennie while revealing a character defect of hers that was getting in the way of her marriage.

I forgot to tell Jennie that a snarky sense of humor works best when used in the third person, not the second person. If people don't have much in the way of a sense of humor, I prefer self-deprecating humor to try to make them laugh.

I tried to water down my criticism of her to get her to change her behavior during times of marital stress. It's stressful for me to be around the two of them because their arguing is so frequent and pointless.

I could see that a lightbulb went off in Jennie's head. And she even thanked me for my insights. I thought the issue was over.

What I didn't realize is that I should have asked Jennie to repeat what I'd told her to make sure she understood what I'd said. That was my big mistake.

We went up to Deborah and Jennie this past weekend. We arrived on Friday late in the day and stayed until early Sunday morning. By then, the tension was so great that we couldn't wait to get away.

Friday night, I said a few words at the dinner table about how wonderful it was to be together again and how much their friendship means to me. Everyone nodded their heads in agreement and approval.

But oy ve! The next morning, while Will was sleeping, the two of them were having their morning coffee, and I sat down with them in the kitchen after making myself a cup of tea. Then, Deborah slowly turned to me and said in a horrifyingly mean tone of voice, "So, I hear I have no sense of humor." And then she let loose and let Jennie and me have it.

She called us both hypocrites. She told Jennie that she'd wasted her life by talking a good game but doing nothing to change the world. She told me I was a big talker because I write books but can't sell any of them.

Deborah seemed to have forgotten that I'd lost my teaching job because I was gay and Jennie had been tormented every day as an electrician amongst straight men in those medieval days before respect for women in the trades became de rigueur.

I don't think that was what was really in Deborah's heart. I think what she really wanted to say was that she was hurt because Jennie and I had gossiped about her behind her back.

I'd given Jennie a knife to cut out her unhealthy snarky humor from her arguments with Deborah, but she handed the knife over to her wife like some souvenir she'd brought back from San Francisco. And when Deborah felt it was just the right time, Deborah stabbed me in the back with it.

You can see that I'm extremely upset by all this, Ettie. I'm so livid that I'm accusing Deborah of being a conspiratorial type. I think she planned to wait until I was on her turf and alone to corner me. I now see her as emotionally calculating. I no longer think she's the kind of person who can tell you how she feels without name-calling and blame when she gets mad.

My half-sister, Ilana, was that way. Ilana never saw her mother after she was smuggled out of the ghetto into a **Catholic** orphanage where the nuns probably suspected she was **Jewish**. Even though she was eight years old at the time, Ilana had to learn to anticipate how others were going to treat her by calculating their feelings in her mind in order to keep her heart from breaking at having been separated from her mother and **feeling** desperately alone and abandoned.

I didn't consciously **realize** that about Ilana until she conspired with Rina to steal my inheritance from my mother and her husband, Lou. Only then did I come to see that Ilana, a child **Holocaust** survivor, had severe emotional issues she hadn't addressed. Rina appealed to Ilana to solve her problem with me having been selected as the executor of our mother and Lou's estate. Ilana's husband, Chuck, wrote up a new trust making him the executor. Rina got our mother alone and forced her to sign it. The new trust allowed Rina to charge the trust for everything she did for our mother. In that way, Rina drained the trust of every penny although our mother was a resident in the **Jewish** home. Apart from doing her laundry and meeting with the staff when needed, there

were no duties that would have earned Rina hundreds of thousands of dollars. It was a diabolical system Chuck, Ilana and Rina contrived to steal the money that should have been for all four of our parents' children.

Rina wasn't interested in initiating a discussion with me as executor of the estate about compensating her for the additional work she got saddled with by bringing our mother from Palm Springs to L.A. to live at the **Jewish** Home a mile from her home. That put more pressure on Rina from an emotional point of view that Lou's children and I didn't have to bear.

Rina wasn't interested in **working** out our family problems fairly. Rina, Ilana and Chuck simply went into their own family of origin dynamics. Damaged people solve problems in ways that give them the satisfaction they need, regardless of how unfair that might turn out for others.

I think I need to go back even farther into the past, Ettie. When our father was dying, Henry, Ilana and I were at his bedside. Rina said she couldn't come because her children were toddlers at the time, and she couldn't find a babysitter.

But there's a truth beneath that truth that only came out when our father, having the three of us around him, suddenly pulled out his penis and waved it menacingly in our faces. I kid you not!

That was his final comment to the three of us. Granted his heart was failing, so he probably wasn't getting enough oxygen to his brain. But what could he have been thinking?

My father kissed the ground beneath his feet every day of his life once he got out of Germany and into **America**. None of his children felt that way about this country. He may have expressed his patriotism with his penis. That's not how I want to have my patriotism manipulated. But he was a Republican, so that's why I think he behaved that way.

He wouldn't have done what he did if Rina had been there. She was his favorite. She was his pride and joy. He

loved her with a great **passion**, and she, him. She never would have understood his **message**, even though Rina and our mother, never voted once in their entire life.

Now I understand why Henry gave up contact with Ilana, and me after Rina got our father's entire inheritance. Now I understand why my siblings argue over everything. The topic of not enough love to go round has never been put on the table.

Now I understand why Henry accused all the **Israelis** as being thieves when I approached him about the land our grandmother had bought in **Palestine** before **Hitler** sent her to her grave. I think deep down inside Henry secretly blames all the **Jews** for killing his mother!

Just to flesh out the whole story, our paternal grandmother, Beile, was a **Zionist** who was generations ahead of her time. She was also a naturalist who cared deeply about her physical health. Her husband, our grandfather, Chaim, died in a spa in Bologna, Italy to appease his wife's desire to live a healthy lifestyle. He's buried there in Italy even though he was Lithuanian. I was told Beile rolled naked in the snow every winter. I was also told she was the brains behind the tobacco factory the family owned in Kaunas, Lithuania.

Ilan helped us recover the land we'd inherited from Beile in **Israel**. That's how I became **friends** with you and your children. I was instrumental in all of my family getting their inheritance.

I may not have gotten any of my mother or father's monetary inheritance, but I got their spiritual inheritance, while my siblings squabbled over the money. I may have gotten my paternal grandmother's financial inheritance, but I was able to appreciate her gift to me by becoming an even **greater Zionist**. My siblings got the money. I got the **honey**.

My mother wasn't a calculating person. Neither was her husband, Lou. They'd both survived the **Nazis** by escaping

confrontation as their defense mechanism, something I excel at, too.

I never realized that people older than me could be calculating and conspiratorial with their emotions until I saw it in Rina, Ilana and Henry, and now in Deborah. I was taught to respect people, especially family members.

It was only once I lost respect for my siblings that I could see that so many people in this world think that money makes the world go round. Only those of us who see life as a school with one **TEACHER** can say that **honey** makes the world go round.

When Rina took our mother to Denver to visit Ilana when our mother was in her 90's, our mother came back and told me she never felt so dishonored in her whole life. She felt more than just ignored. She felt the silent stink-eye from both of them.

And this, she said with great sorrow because she'd spent a whole extra year in 1959 with our father after promising not to leave Ilana with him until Ilan had **married** Chuck and was out on her own. Ilana repaid our mother by helping Rina steal our mother's inheritance. Very impressive sisters I've got, I have to say...

A few weeks after I was informed by the **Jewish** home that my mother had passed, I got a package from Rina with nonsense items my mother had collected. That was Rina's idea of my portion of the trust. Stanley and Grace, Lou's children from his previous marriage to an Indonesian woman he'd met while in the Dutch army, didn't even get souvenirs.

I still have no idea where my mother is buried or whether she's been cremated. I don't need to know. My mother lives in my heart, just as all the people I love live in my heart.

My gay family is now my only family. I've disowned my biological family and all their children and grandchildren who have no interest in their gay relation in San Francisco. Let them all learn about life their own way. That's what our **TEACHER** is for. I've written them off.

It was only after all the dust had settled that I understood that my father might have identified with **Abraham** and the **miracle** of finally having been given a child he could love, albeit it a fourth child, and a girl [Rina]. Suddenly I could see that all the love he couldn't give to Henry, Ilana and me, he'd given to Rina. Rina got everything the three of us had been yearning for. She was his **Isaac**. She was his beloved.

Such is life! Frankly, I think I've done very well without my father's love. His love wasn't what I wanted. I wanted his respect.

Our **TEACHER** has given humanity **lessons** since the beginning of time, but the **lessons** have been getting harder, even though the comforts we've earned for our body have made us softer.

When I was a teenager, they told us not to trust anyone over 30. Now I know not to trust anyone under 30, either. Now I trust people based on their behavior, not their age. I look at what they do, not what they say.

Lou had a **Jewish** father and a **Christian** mother. My mother had a **Jewish** mother and a **Christian** father. They were a match made in heaven for each other. I was so happy for them once I got through all my issues of jealousy and envy.

Now I can see jealousy and envy in everyone. Nobody got what s/he wanted. We're all making do.

When Deborah verbally attacked me, I went into family of origin dynamics. Deborah turned into Ilana in my heart. I just wanted to run away as fast as I could from her.

But I felt I had to rise to the occasion and do my best to stand tall and be strong. I knew Deborah was in a position she could never justify with reason. Her actions were based on something so personal that she had no idea how out of touch she was with her feelings. She sullied my reputation without reason. She reacted with a knee-jerk response.

What I failed to note was that my relationship with Deborah has been going downhill for years while my

relationship with Jennie has been getting warmer and better. I now see that there's a conversation I've need to have with Deborah that's long overdue.

Needless to say, the rest of the time with them that **w**eek**e**nd was ruined. Deborah didn't talk to anyone. She stomped around the house, slamming drawers and avoiding eye contact. She wanted to make it clear in body language and sound that she didn't want anyone getting close to her. She spoke in monosyllables and walked 25 paces ahead of the rest of us when we went out on a walk. The three of us felt like we were unwanted guests in Deborah's house. And Jennie is her wife! Jennie owns half that house!

On a separate walk to the **a**mazing community center in Ft. Bragg, Jennie confided in me that she's sometimes afraid of Deborah and doesn't know what to do to get her out of her moods. Jennie worried that after we left, Deborah would be mean to her.

Deborah can be like a harbor filled with mines. No boat can go in or out without getting blown to smithereens. Jennie is sometimes terrified that anything she says or does is going to make Deborah explode.

I can't be around anyone when they're like that! I'm a good person who doesn't break **The Ten Commandments**. If I say something that's misconstrued, I ask people to excuse me. If I say something that's offensive, I ask them to forgive me. That's what civilized people are trained to do.

But there are many uncivilized people in this world, and many of them have college educations. Any way you rub up against them inadvertently causes them to blow up. They're unstable. They're volatile. And this makes being around them feel dangerous.

I know I'm damaged goods. I know I exaggerate my feelings when I feel threatened. But I don't let that affect my actions. I strike in, not out.

But I'm not going to allow myself to feel intimidated any longer being in the company of people who can't control their temper.

The way I control my temper is by becoming **curious**. Interest in expanding and improving myself drives me toward good questions I pose within and without.

What I'm telling you in this letter, Ettie, is how I feel. It's not what I'd say to anyone.

I may be a Democrat, but I'm now beginning to think that there may be some Republicans out there who may be easier to talk to about **GOD** than my left-wing Democratic, atheist, **lesbian**, **Jewish** cousin! That's evidence enough for me to conclude that **GOD** has a sense of humor!

How do you **Israelis** do it, Ettie? How do you manage to live together in relative harmony mixed with horrendous cacophony given how many **Jews** you've got to deal with on a daily basis? I speak your language, but I don't understand how you say what you mean in **Hebrew**. Surely, you must know more about the **message** of **Jesus** than anyone else on Earth! I think that's hysterical!

Jennie still has no clue what she did that caused this situation in the first place. I didn't fully understand it either until I got home and thought about her collusion with Deborah and Deborah's conspiracy against me. Only then did I conclude I'd been enticed to come visit them only to be ambushed. At least that's how it all felt from my point of view.

Jennie has turned into a yenta, Ettie. She's turned into an old gossip without even having converted to **Judaism**! That's funny!

What's next? Jennie is a 65-year-old, **lesbian** **Christian** who doesn't realize she has an inner child who needs inner parents. I hope she learns to raise her inner child to become a righteous human being.

I filled Will in with the facts later that Saturday morning. I was so stunned by the upheaval that I just wanted to leave right there and then.

But he's a good soul who interprets facts very differently from me. He insisted we stay. He did the best he could to keep everything civil. He knows I'm a complex individual and so is Deborah. So, he went into **Jewish** doctor mode and just kept his patients comfortable.

I kept up appearances as Jennie and Will were doing, in the hopes that it would all blow over. I didn't want to start an argument by saying anything I'd later regret. But deep down inside I was furious in having been ghosted as a guest in Deborah's house.

When I was a kid, I only felt the flight syndrome, not the fight syndrome. I only wanted to run away from the bullies at school.

There was so much arguing in my family that when I was about four, I walked out of our house one day, left our front yard, and went to the end of the block that I'd never been to on my own. I was just about to cross the street and keep going when something inside me kept me from leaving. I turned around and went back to my family. The **feeling** of fear and flight subsided, so, I just went on with my life.

But over a lifetime, I've slowly been replacing that fear with anger. I have to admit I was **feeling** both frightened and angry at Deborah and Jennie. I felt like I'd gotten to the end of the block and just wanted to keep going.

Will helped me turn around and go back that awful **weekend**. But the conflicting feelings inside me have persisted.

As you know from your experiences with **Arabs**, Ettie, there's no way to reason with someone who isn't on speaking terms with you. You have to negotiate all your feelings by yourself.

What's going on in the Middle East isn't a land grab. It's about feelings of betrayal. **GOD** is bringing feelings to

Muslims and **Jews** that go back to **Ishmael** and **Isaac**, and neither of them are good at dealing with their feelings from my gay point of view.

Will, of course, wants me to forgive Deborah and Jennie because that's what **Christians** do. I can't forgive what happened because I won't be able to forget what happened. The only thing I can do is talk about it to get it out of my system.

Some wise **Jew** who survived the **Holocaust** said, "Forgive, but don't forget." I saw it inscribed at the **Holocaust** Memorial Site in Paris. "Pardonne, mais n'oublie pas."

That's a combination of wisdom and love, **Judaism** and **Christianity**. Surely, that's the response **GOD** wants everyone to achieve when they feel betrayed.

I still love Deborah and Jennie, but I really don't like either one of them very much right now. I feel **badly** burned.

Love,
Barry

Ettie wrote me back the next day, saying pretty much the same thing Will said. I'd sum up both their messages as, **Forgive them for they know not what they do.** [**Psalm** 22] [That's what **Jesus** was quoted on the cross as saying to **GOD**.]

It's funny how the **Jews** don't **believe** in **Jesus**, but they're very good at quoting Him... I hear a lot of people quoting **Jesus**, but I don't see a lot of them living a life of loving intention, especially when it comes to gays and **Jews**.

I'm writing this, my 29th book, about the Book of **Ecclesiastes** as my guide on how I don't want to feel by the end of my life. In **Hebrew** it's **Kohelet**, which means to assemble or gather.

My last book was about the Book of **Proverbs** [**Misle**] from the portion of **Tanach** called **Ketuvim**. And my book

before that was about the Book of **Psalms** [**Tehilim**] also from **Ketuvim**.

It feels as though **GOD** has guided me to **Ecclesiastes** [**Kohelet**], also from **Ketuvim**, this time to see whether I'm going to chuck all this up to vanity and meaninglessness, or whether I can find something deeper to say about the human condition, especially my own.

If you can't use **Tanach** to make sense of the world using wisdom as your guide, there's no point in just looking to **The Gospels** for universal love or **The Quran** for **loyalty** to **GOD**.

The basics in wisdom lie in **Torah** and, by extension, in all of **Tanach**. **GOD** gave us so much to learn about life that **HE** chose to divide **HIS lessons** in this school into separate departments in the West [**Tanach** for wisdom; **The Gospels** for love; and **The Quran** for **loyalty** to life].

It's only by thinking and **feeling** correctly that we discover the **meaning** that **loyalty** brings to our **beliefs**. All other attempts are always based on collusion and conspiracy of some sort.

Sadly, none of the **Abrahamic** faiths go further by taking into consideration the tolerance, acceptance and admiration of **Hinduism**, **Buddhism** and **Taoism**. Think how much better off the West would be if we tried to apply the **lessons** of the East to all three of the **Abrahamic** faiths!

It's time for every nation around the world to fly the **LGBTQIA+ rainbow** flag. For no straight man can find the **passion** to love his brother without loving himself.

I wrote Ettie back, saying:

I'm so disappointed and at a loss for words. It feels like loved ones dear to me just died. I grieve the death of Deborah and Jennie in some way. I fear our relationship has reached its expiration date.

Jennie

Here's the letter I would have liked to write to Jennie, the second most important woman in my life:

Dear Jennie,

I'd like to talk about what happened that infamous **w**eek**e**nd from the point of view of you having been the cause of the conflict between Deborah and me. I can imagine this will be a ticklish subject for you, especially in light of the fact that Deborah and I are also partially to blame. So, hold onto your butt. This may not be easy for you to hear.

When you came to visit us a few months ago, you complained about your relationship with Deborah as fraught with arguments. I tried to help by giving you a new perspective. I told you Deborah has no sense of humor. I didn't add at the time that the difference between Deborah and me is that I have a self-deprecating sense of humor. She has little-to-no sense of humor at all when it comes to herself.

What I did say was that I think you have an amazingly snarky sense of humor. And I stand by that claim.

I told you I've seen you walk around reasons to argue with Deborah using your snarky sense of humor to discharge tension. I remember even saying to you that I didn't think anyone had ever told you that before.

What I should have added is that being snarky is particularly funny when your words teach life-**l**ess**o**ns in addition to circumventing arguments. I should have mentioned that I see all forms of humor as a teaching tool, but the most successful form of humor for me is self-deprecating humor.

Deborah isn't devoid of wit, but she gets cynical, mean and accusative to the point that I feel my life is threatened when she gets upset. She can be very hurtful when she feels slighted. That's just her nature, and you and I both know it.

It's of no use to tell someone who's highly sensitive to criticism that you're trying to **relieve** the tension in your relationship using snarky humor. They're going to see you as acting cavalier. Your jokes are going to go over their head, and then they're only going to get more frustrated and mean-spirited. [Just look at public discourse in **America**.]

My intention at the time was to help you celebrate yourself while forgiving your wife for not being able to appreciate your wit. What I should have also told you is that you don't want to be hurtful to the one person you most want to really hear you and **believe** in you.

This is why you continually lose the intimacy and joy you two are seeking. You're letting your happiness slip through your fingers. It's become a self-fulfilling prophesy. You chase each other on a merry-go-round, but you're not getting anywhere.

Oscar Wilde told us that youth is wasted on the young, but so is a snarky sense of humor, Jennie. Deborah is simply too emotionally wounded to appreciate where you're coming from. Think of her as a tattooed guard dog. You can't pet her when she barks, without also getting bitten. You have to find other ways to get past her and into her house.

When I told you she has no sense of humor, I wanted you to see that each of us has **virtues** and **vices** different from one another. None of us is without both. To know your partner in life is to forgive her for her **vices**.

It seemed that your load was lightened by my revelation when you were here. You seemed to be more at peace with your marriage when you drove home, even though it's a failed marriage in some ways, like everyone else's.

I'm not sorry I said what I said, but I'm very sorry you repeated it to Deborah. I wish I'd warned you not to do so. If I had, we could have discussed my reasons for saying what I said in **greater** detail, so I could have made sure you understood my **message** and motive. That was my mistake, and it was a big one. I'm sorry about that.

But you're a 65-year-old adult, not a high school girl, Jennie. You should have known you were going to hurt Deborah by repeating your own rendition of my words. And you hurt her deeply, so deeply that she can't even tell you how **badly** she's hurting.

You played **SORCERER's** apprentice. You took a spell from my book of magic, and you ended up flooding the castle. The mess is yours. You made it. You own. Clean it up!

At some point when you got home from your visit here, I think you must have decided to share my revelation with Deborah in the hopes that it would **improve** your relationship with her in some way. You didn't consider what effect that would have on my relationship with her.

I should have realized that you're wounded in just such a way that you couldn't see what you were doing. You fall into this hole again and again. I should have seen that, too.

It was one thing for you and me to talk about Deborah behind her back with the best of intentions. It was quite another for you to return a part of my **message** about her without explaining why we were talking about her in the first place.

All the emotional bombs that went off that Saturday morning after you and I waxed poetic about **Jesus** and our affirmation of our loving relationship with one another, made Deborah feel left out and rejected. She even said as much.

I think she lashed out at us by calling the two of us hypocrites in an effort to express her feelings of hurt about our talk together in San Francisco. I think she was really saying she felt we'd ganged up on her.

But telling us we're hypocrites because of what we'd done with our entire lives was foolish, judgmental and just inaccurate on her part. When Deborah flies off the handle, she becomes irrational as well as mean. She'll throw

anything at the wall to see what sticks. She has no emotional sophistication when she loses her temper.

And you know what she does next. She just turns around and says, “That’s the way I am. Love me or leave me.”

She’s an emotional pyromaniac, Jennie. Give her a box of matches and she’ll burn the house down. But ask her to make amends for that, and she’ll just shrug her shoulders, and tell you to take her as she is.

Deborah can’t live in her heart with millions of colors to choose from the way you do. She just doesn’t know how. She suffers from red/green colorblindness. She can’t see her red anger at herself and she can’t see how green with envy she is at not being able to understand herself.

You worked as an electrician in a man’s world for many years, and then you worked as a psych. tech. for the rest of your work life. You’re no hypocrite. You’ve given the best years of your life to helping change the world for the better. That’s not how hypocrites behave.

I did nothing wrong in writing 28 books on spirituality. Not being able to sell my works doesn’t make me a hypocrite.

I was a ballet dancer, a teacher and a small business owner. I’ve changed the world in my way, too. Putting a price tag on art or literature doesn’t make it great. Either my work is intrinsically good or it’s not. Either it helps me evolve or it doesn’t. Selling it doesn’t prove a thing. Only consumers look at art commercially. Artists look at art spiritually.

You and I have suffered to be authentic and real. Deborah did, too. That’s why she has no right to accuse us of hypocrisy. We’ve all been to hell and back just by having been members of the LGBTQIA+ community in the 20th Century. If not for people like us, there would be no marriage equality. We gave our whole life to that cause! So did the 700,000 gay men who’ve died of AIDS in this country.

I'm sure you can see that the same emotional issues arise between the Democrats and Republicans, and **Israelis** and **Arabs**. There's just not enough love to go round.

I know your mother left your father with four children, only to get no sympathy from her parents when she came knocking on their door. She was between a rock and hard place with four kids in tow. In those days, a woman had to stick it out with her husband. There were no other options.

But what good did it do? You were the fifth child, and like Deborah, unwanted. Your father had girlfriends on the side, and your mother had no choice but to bear her suffering as women in those days had to do.

I see you as steeped in the color **orange**, Jennie. You're the personification of agony, worry and angst. I see all your worries about the material world as a manifestation of your worry that there'll never be enough love for you or anyone else. No wonder your humor is snarky and your attitude, sometimes cavalier.

We're all learning about the **meaning** of life. We're all making mistakes. And we all need each other's forgiveness.

The fact is that you and I love Deborah, even though she can be very unlikeable at times. But I love you, too, Jennie. What you've done with the little bit of love you were shown in your family is remarkable. Your emotional intelligence is **amazing!**

And I love myself, even though I find me very unlikeable at times, too. I don't like making mistakes. I don't like saying things that end up hurting people. That brings up all the self-**hatred** I've been spending my life putting out like a California fire. And as I age, those fires inside me seem to get ignited earlier each year.

But I never hurt Deborah. You did, Jennie. I gave you the knife to cut out your snarky jokes. You gave it to Deborah, and she stabbed the two of us with it.

Deborah is a hothead in a world desperate to learn how to chill out. She has no idea how much she's suffering

because she doesn't have enough love to love herself. She's typical of the type of person who gives all their love to others. They're too good to others and not good enough to themselves.

For me, this translates into the challenge of global warming when taken personally and perceived from the heart. For some, their inner, global warming is an unleashed wind of incredible strength that can move mountains. For others, it's a reoccurring flood that drowns them in violence caused by self-**hatred**.

For people like Deborah, global warming is a conflagration of unprecedented proportion when they can't take criticism personally enough.

My inner global warming is like a trip to the Second World War. **Holocaust** means "burnt offering" in Greek. I'm forced to make a burnt offering in memory of those who died in that War. For me, every argument with another person is a conflict between a **Nazi** and a **Jew** or a **Nazi** with a gay man.

When the American **Nazi** Party proclaims, "**Jews** will not replace us," I'd like them to think about their fear of losing their mind. I think they're terrified of having to live in their heart without their head guiding their feelings. I think they're terrified of mindless behavior, not of **Jews**.

The Democrats are fighting the **Jews**. The Republicans are fighting the gays. As an Independent gay **Jew**, I see my enemies on both sides.

For me, global warming is a sign of the end of the world. It's Armageddon here now. It's every seemingly final battle between good and **evil**.

That's what I go through every time the two of you start bickering with one another in front of me.

I remember when I was in the throes of severe mental illness, my mother telephoned me, and I found some reason to lash out at her. She retaliated by calling me a son of a

bitch. And I said to her, “Yes. You’re absolutely right. I am the son of a bitch.”

I **hated** my mother in those days, and I let her know it. I **hated** having been bequeathed her inheritance as the child of a **Christian** father and a **Jewish** mother. I **hated** having to find a way out of my head into my heart without anyone to help me. I **hated** my mother for trying to hide her pain and suffering, the cruelty she endured and the torture she’d been through.

But how can you not love someone who protects you from something like that? I should have only honored her right from the start. I loved her, instead. That was my cross to bear.

Years later, my mother told me that after she hung up on me that day, she started to laugh. She figured that if I could still have a sense of humor while insane, there was still hope for me.

The truth is, Jennie, my mother didn’t have a good sense of humor. Like you, she had a snarky sense of humor. But I loved my mother, and I love you. Both of you worry more about the material world because neither of you got the love you needed. You both did the best you could with what you knew about yourself in relation to this world and your part in it.

When you look back on the incident that **weekend**, I hope you **realize** you behaved **badly**. You should now be able to admit you inadvertently got between Deborah and me and ruined our relationship!

That **weekend**, Deborah was like the Wicked Witch of the West in a spell the two of you cast on me. You were her familiar.

Deborah now needs to have a few drops of **milk** sprinkled on her to remind her that we’re all here to learn to love one another, not **hate**. That will make her fume a little, but it won’t cause her to burn up, melt and wither away.

Water reminds us of the deluge at **puberty**. **Milk** reminds us of our mother's love. Deborah will get over the carton of **milk** I'm planning to figuratively dump on her when we speak.

I should tell you not to take yourself too seriously. What I'm going to tell you is just the opposite. Take yourself much more seriously, Jennie.

You're much more damaged by your passage through **puberty** than you think. If you faced menstruation before **orgasm**, there was nobody to explain it with wisdom of the heart. You were alone trying to make sense of your attraction to women at an age and in a day-and-age when you had to look for everything by yourself while alone in the dark.

You don't have to confess your **sins** to me, or anyone else. **Sin** in **Hebrew** just means "missed the mark." You aimed and missed. Try again.

But at your advanced age, it's time to start confessing your **sins** to yourself, Jennie. It's time to admit that you come from a family of very damaged relations. None of you can just shrug off your **guilt** in the way you're treating others.

You're like my younger sister, Jennie. You and Deborah are my only family. You're like Rina, a little sister to me, and Deborah is like Ilana, an older sister. I've recreated my family dynamics using the two of you. And just as Rina and Ilana colluded and conspired against me, so I now see, have the two of you.

It's O.K. to want to be Deborah's familiar, not just her wife. But next time, consider what sort of **black** magic she may unconsciously be thinking about getting into, and reconsider what you say and do. She doesn't have the emotional depth you have. She's smart. She's generous. She's good at heart. And she has a lifelong love affair with nature.

But she's like a one-eyed woman who's figuratively bumping into things because her emotional depth perception doesn't exist. When she gets mad, all bets are off.

Deborah can't handle too much emotional truth because it causes her to revert to Dale, her given name. She returns to her adolescence when there wasn't enough love to go round. She sees me as Carl, her brother, who got all their mother's love. And she sees you as Terry who got all their father's love. And then she takes out any knife she can get her hands on, and she figuratively turns into a killer.

Men may not call other men bitches unless they're gay, but all men collude and conspire, just like women. All men name-call and stab others in the back, even to their face sometimes. All men try to cast spells that turn their enemies from princes back into frogs. Who knows what **evil** lurks in the heart of men better than the **LGBTQIA+** community?

If you're going to develop your **White** magic, Jennie, you're going to have to learn how to use it more wisely. Calm yourself. You've been through so much. Love yourself. Tell yourself you're there for you regardless of who isn't. Just worry about your inner teenager who's going over a **rainbow** inside. There's a method to that madness that I can't go into now. Let everyone worry about themselves.

Don't take on the job of correcting me in the future and I'll stay out of your business, too. If you complain about your relationship with Deborah, I'll just say, "I'm sorry to hear that." I'm through fixing people.

Love,
Barry

Deborah

Here's the letter I would have liked to write to Deborah, the most important woman in my life:

Dear Deborah,

When you first moved up to Ft. Bragg you were under a lot of pressure after having left your previous home for 40 years in Sonoma County. I knew that in that move, you were going to a new place inside yourself, as well.

In **Hebrew** we say, "Change your place and change your luck." I was optimistic about the change in your life, but I'm not so sure anymore.

You may have gotten away from the extreme external heat from the fires of Sonoma County, but now it seems you're suffering from extreme, internal heat.

Global warming has figuratively followed you to Ft. Bragg. And you're burning up inside, even though the weather around you is much more pleasant at the California coast.

You confided to me in the car one time in Ft. Bragg that your relationship with Jennie has forced you to admit that she's never going to change. She's deeply damaged, and you now see that you can't fix her.

But you're deeply damaged too, Deborah. And Jennie can't fix you, either. You're both stuck with each other for the long haul. Neither of you wants to be alone, and yet each of you feels so terribly alone at times when together.

I began to see the damaged part of you in 2016, when you were still living on the ranch. We came up for Thanksgiving. You'd invited a lot of people, but the mood was very weird. Trump had just won the election against Clinton, and everyone was reeling inside with fear and disbelief.

The next day, we went out for a drive. Jennie was driving, and she recklessly passed a lumber truck on the two-

lane highway. You didn't think her maneuver was safe. Nobody in the car did, but we just gasped. We didn't say anything.

You and I were sitting in the back seat, and you kicked Jennie's seat and yelled at her. That was the first time I saw you express your frustration violently.

It was then that I realized that I wasn't the only person in the world with severe, emotional problems. I'm not the only one who's blind to himself when viewed from the heart. I'm not alone in **feeling** all alone.

That night, we talked politics. Jennie had gotten sick and had gone to bed early. Her friend from Berkeley [who does the same-sex ballroom dancing] said that she'd voted for Bernie Sanders, and you started yelling at her that it was people like her who'd caused us to lose the election. I couldn't **believe** you'd be so rude to a guest in your home – that is until that infamous **weekend** recently when you treated me [a guest in your home] even worse.

That was Friday night November 25, 2016. I had a nightmare that night, and Will woke me up because I was hitting him in my sleep. I struck back at you violently, the only way I could: while sleeping. But he took the brunt of it.

I didn't mention the incident to you until about six months later when you happened to be here in San Francisco to take a flight to Boston to clean up the estate of your dear, Syrian friend Helen who'd died of cancer. I didn't want you to know how deeply you'd upset me until we could speak about it in person.

But once I processed what I'd been through at Thanksgiving the previous fall, and you and I had time alone together, I told you that I'd been frightened and shocked by your behavior toward Jennie that afternoon and toward one of your guests that evening.

You seemed very sorry about how you'd treated Jennie and called her immediately to connect with her. But you

wrote off your accusations about the election saying that the gal completely understood where you were coming from.

Three years ago, when you lived on Harold Street, you accused me of being an orthodox **Jew**, I explained to you then that I'd studied **The Old Testament** with them, so I knew about their points of view from a religious perspective.

But just as I'd been thrown out of Comstock JHS, I'd been thrown out of an orthodox **synagogue** by the **rabbi** and congregants at their **Bible** study because I came out to them after the **rabbi** said something **hateful** about gay people.

I couldn't **believe** that the **Jews** would treat me as **hatefully** as the **Christians**. I was shocked. And I berated myself for having been so naïve.

I suppose there may be ways in which I'm more like a Republican at heart than a Democrat. My deep devotion to **Israel** is one of those ways. I can also see some financial matters from an employer's point of view. And I can see some racial matters from the perspective of a traditionalist who sees the opportunity for change differently.

I can see some things from a religious standpoint because there's only one **GOD**, even if the fundamentalist **Christians** don't acknowledge anyone who uses any other name for Him other than **Jesus**.

I fear **Muslims** who are as damaged as **Christians**. But I'm also deeply afraid of **Jews** because of my upbringing with damaged **Jews** and my experiences out in the world with damaged **Christians**.

A years after linking me with the orthodox **Jews**, you accused me of being an elitist. I explained to you then that I'm just a garden variety snob. I thought a little self-deprecating humor might lessen the tension you **created**.

But I can now see that it didn't help because you've never apologized for either comment. The tension has only been building inside us both ever since. Now you've called me a hypocrite!

Will blames the whole thing on the Trump administration that completely upended all traditions and expectations of civility in our society.

But the Republican Party attempted coup has changed the nation more than just politically. Something has been released from Pandora's box that we'll never be able to get back in it: **guilt** at how all of us are abusing our country and our democracy. And everyone is going to have to face that in his or her own way. Guns and abortion are just the tip of the political iceberg.

I guess you've concluded I'm an elitist, hypocritical, orthodox **Jew**, and nothing is going to change that until we have an honest conversation about what's happening to our relationship.

I see our relationship as having deteriorated since November 25, 2016. But my relationship with Jennie has been **growing** stronger since then. Now I can see that what Jennie and I have, threatens you. I'd **hate** to lose you because of it.

But this isn't about me. This isn't about Trump. This is about something that's changing inside you. And I'd love you to try to explain to me what that is.

I had the same issue with Ilana and Rina when I grew up. The more I leaned toward one of them, the more it affected my relationship with the other. There just wasn't enough love to go round.

Ilana was like a second mother to me when I was a baby and toddler. We were very close. And you were like that for me, too, all those years when I was slowly recovering from mental illness. I trusted you. I confided in you. And I held you very close in my heart.

But as my relationship with you has waned with disappointment, I've gravitated toward Jennie. I've begun to see **virtues** in her that I never noticed before. And that emotional movement has had a ripple effect on our dynamics as a gay family.

When I was a child, Ilana changed her name to Elaine. She thought she could dismiss the damage she'd been through in our family with a name change. It didn't work. Just because you changed your name to Deborah, you haven't dismissed Dale, either.

Deborah is the adult in you. But Dale is the very damaged juvenile delinquent that you haven't fully addressed. Dale came out and stabbed me in the back that awful **w**eek**e**nd, just as Ilana did by helping Rina steal my inheritance.

I told Jennie that you have no sense of humor in confidence. I did so to help your relationship with one another. She jokes in a snarky manner when you're upset, and I can see that it infuriates you. I should have said that to your face.

Jennie couldn't see how much she hurt you by telling you what I said. She had no idea she'd damage her relationship with me by doing so. That's just one of her blind spots.

The family dynamics between the three of us are very fragile because all three of us are so terribly wounded by our family of origin issues that were caused by a society that's only slowly beginning to admit how damaged everyone is. Every little change between us causes ripple effects in all three of us.

The two of you have no idea how damaged I am. But I'm damaged; not hurtful. I'm not seeking revenge.

When you two argue in front of me, I feel transported back to my childhood. I feel helpless. I feel threatened. And then I feel suicidal. I just want to run away from this world like my mother ran and hid from the **Nazis**.

That said, I'm also deeply blessed to have my father's virtue in loving the **Jewish** people. I feel a **loyalty** and love for the **Jews** that I can't dismiss. And that doesn't just translate sociologically into **Zionism**. It translates psychologically into a desire into **healing** myself so I can

help heal the people I love. I'm a **Jew** worthy of love. Nobody can tell me I'm worthy of less love because I'm gay.

I now know that I can't get into your or Jennie's Spiritual Operating System [S.O.S.] and turn the dials to fix you to my liking. But I can change our gay family dynamics by becoming more truthful with you two about who I am and who I'm not.

The times have changed around us and within us, haven't they? We're so much older and more capable of embracing our truth without hurting ourself or others. We're not youngsters anymore.

Perhaps it's time for the three of us to express a level of honesty we wouldn't have in the past. But I'm certainly not going to apologize for my opinion or how I used it. If you're looking for an apology, I suggest you go to Jennie who must now know she poisoned the well the three of us are drinking from. She's the one who said something she shouldn't have said. She's the one who hurt you, not me.

You accepted me once I finally began to feel my feelings all on my own and could speak more coherently about what was going on inside me. But you seem to have taken back that permission. You seem to be tolerating me now, nothing more.

Are you afraid of what I'm **feeling** for you? Is my opinion of you more important than you'd like to admit? If so, let's talk about that. You have many **virtues**. But I don't think humor is one of them. But to tell you frankly, I'm not a humorous person, either. No suicide survivor is!

I'd be happy to be more candid with you about everything, but only if you can assure me that I won't have to suffer your name-calling, bullying and ghosting [silent treatment] anymore. I refuse to go through that again.

I'm not responsible for **healing** the ills of the whole world. I refuse to take on that responsibility. If that's why Atlas shrugged, then that's why I'm shrugging, too.

What happened that awful weekend felt like an ambush not an open invitation to come up for a good time. I felt you trapped Jennie and me. I felt you were torturing me.

I'm afraid to spend time with you again if we're going to have to go back to the way things were.

You used to be like Ilana, and Jennie used to be like Rina. We used to be able to enjoy our family dynamics by sweeping our most intimate feelings under the rug.

I don't want to recreate my family of origin dynamics with you two any longer. I think that after 35 years of investing in our love for one another, we can all do better.

As it is now, it feels as though we've been through a second Civil War. Our relationship mirrors the tension we see all around us in this country.

If the LGBTQIA+ community is prone to the same problems everyone else is going through, Deborah, surely America's problems are universal. If we could just work out our problems between the three of us, we'd have something of value to share with others that I believe everyone in America desperately needs.

Nightmare #1

When I was in the first grade, Peggy Ann Trout [like a fish] lived in an apartment on the tenth floor. We lived on the third floor. Rina gave her the expletive [like a fish], and it stuck. Rina was very precocious for her age [four]. But I was six and was already humble enough to learn from my younger sister when it came to using name-calling from the bully pulpit.

One day, on our way home for lunch, I confessed to Peggy Ann that I secretly called our first-grade teacher, Miss Johnson, “Crabby Applesed.” I told Peggy Ann I **hated** our teacher.

Peggy Ann, who probably didn’t like me associating her last name with a fish, snidely told me she was going to tell the teacher on me when we got back from lunch.

Needless to say, I went into a panic. Because the two people I loved and needed the most [my mother and my father] hit me for every little thing I did wrong, it wasn’t hard for me to imagine that Miss Johnson, a total stranger until a few months prior, would beat the crap out of me and humiliate me in front of the whole class for what I’d said about her.

My mother tried to quell my fears, but it was useless. The people who frighten you the most aren’t going to be able to help assuage your fears when you need them.

Peggy Ann didn’t follow through on her threat. I came back from lunch, and school was like the sea after a storm. All evidence of rough weather had mysteriously vanished.

That left me without a proper ending to the lesson I’d been given on name-calling. It also taught me to keep my **hateful** thoughts to myself.

But deep down inside, I also felt gleeful because I’d gotten away without getting ridiculed, punished or killed for what I’d said about my teacher.

Unless you get killed for something you say that's wrong, how are you really supposed to learn from your mistakes?... I know at the time, I didn't think I'd **learned** a thing from mine.

I've **hated** lots of people in my life. But most of them I've **hated** on the inside without telling anyone how they made me feel.

I **hated Black** people for their skin tone and dialectical differences in speaking English. I **hated** them for their taste in fashion and color preferences. And I **hated** them for being poor. I thought anyone who was **Black** was dangerous.

But much more than that, I **hated Black** people because my father **hated** them. I was always afraid of the ridicule, scorn and derision he spewed about **Black** people behind their back.

I **hated** fat people for not turning me on sexually at first glance. I **hated** them for taking up more space than me. I **hated** them for jiggling in places where I was firm. And I **hated** them for eating anything and everything when I was always hungry.

But much more than that, I **hated** fat people because my mother **hated** them. I was always afraid of the ridicule, scorn and derision she spewed about fat people behind their back.

I **hated** the physically disabled for looking funny when they walked, when they talked or when they used their extremities. I thought their physical range of motion was totally unacceptable. I thought they should know better.

But I never bothered to associate mental illness with physical illness. I didn't **realize** I'd come to **hate** myself because I'm a member of the disabled community. You just can't see how limited my range of motion is my head, heart and soul.

I **hated** tall people, small people, people who talked too loudly and people who talked too softly. I **hated** people who sounded childish, girlish or overly confident. I **hated** very thin people. I **hated** very light-skinned people and people with thin lips, even though I recently noticed that my lips happen to be thin. I **hated** people whose nails were round and not elongated.

In truth, I fear people I don't know well. I really only **hate** strangers. I think whatever people have that I don't like is catching, especially if they're blind or deaf.

I used to think those disabilities were particularly contagious. I really got nervous if I got too close to a blind or deaf person. I was certain they were **evil** people who deserved the punishment from **GOD** they'd been given.

In my forties, I volunteered to run a bowling league for the Rose Resnick Lighthouse for the Blind in San Francisco. I did that for four years. Now that I'm more honest about my feelings, I can admit I was probably attracted to that volunteer job out of fear.

I probably unconsciously felt **guilty** about getting old in middle age because I was still so fearful and didn't know why.

I thought men were supposed to become brave over time. That certainly hadn't happened to me by my mid-forties. Learning to love the blind took a lot of hard work. I'm not ashamed to admit it. The blind terrified me until I got to know some of them personally.

At the time, I seemed to have needed to prove to the arrested child in me that blindness isn't contagious, and my feelings about disabled people aren't unwarranted, even if they're irrational.

Similarly, I needed to move through my fear of **Black** people, fat people and my fear of parts of the human body. I had a lot of work to do in middle age, and I did it. I just didn't know what I was doing at the time I was doing it.

Naturally, I didn't talk about any of this before now. Why would I? I'd already **learned** to keep my opinions to myself thanks to Peggy Ann Trout, Deborah and Jennie.

Because the dear **LORD** hadn't put me through any trauma **greater** than what I'd been through that **fateful** day in the first grade, I didn't learn any more than I had about myself for many years to come.

I was a first grader in the school of life most of my life. The **TEACHER** didn't test me. **HE** just brought me lesson after lesson through classroom discussions of other people's fears.

I really didn't learn my lesson until I'd gathered enough information about the subject of differences in human nature to be able to speak about them logically, rationally, reasonably and sensibly. In other words, I **learned** to talk about the forces within me from my head [logically], heart [rationally], soul [reasonably] and genitals [sensibly].

It wasn't until I could speak about how I felt from my heart that I began to learn about myself and how imperfect I was when viewed from this second place in inner space.

It wasn't until I could listen to myself speak from my heart, not my head, that I could hear who I really was inside and ascertain how old I was emotionally. Discovering you're an emotionally arrested child when you're in middle age is quite disconcerting...

Learning to listen to myself think-and-feel was harder than it looked because there was nobody inside to censor what I was telling myself. I could say anything I wanted without moral regard for how I was putting myself down just by expressing **bad** opinions about others in the privacy of my mind. That's because there was no one in there to stop me. My **hate** speech would have gone on and on inside myself, ad nauseum, if I hadn't started to talk to myself critically in loud.

The homeless talk to themselves critically out loud. The spiritually homeless who know they're very far from Home

have to start talking to themselves in loud. At least, I did to feel that I had a shot at achieving my **DESTINY**.

Is it any wonder people get eaten up with cancers and have their brains blown out with strokes? Is it any wonder hearts are literally attacked from within, only for that person to discover that s/he has a **bad** heart in the emotional and poetic sense of the word that their body is expressing physically? There is **justice**, but sometimes it's poetic **justice**. If you're only a literalist, you're going to miss the poetry in motion that comes with **emotion**.

If I end up in a lot of pain in old age because of all the suffering I've put others through, I want a doctor to open me up, look inside and cut out the problem, literal and figurative. I want a doctor who can diagnose my inner world in addition to what s/he literally finds beneath my skin.

Sadly, medical doctors aren't schooled in what I'm talking about. They're not doctors of poetry in motion. They can only see what's literally wrong with a body, not what's figuratively wrong with a soul. And they certainly don't talk about their spiritual insights with their patients. They only discuss what they see on x-rays and such. Their gifts lie in a whole other realm than mine. Doctors don't have the kind of vision I have, and if they do, they've been trained not to use it.

Life slowly leads to a higher and higher spiritual education whether you have a high school diploma, or not. Life becomes tutelage in a university with one **TEACHER**, so different from what you find if you've been to college or university. In life, you get to vote on what classes you're going to take. You just don't get to vote on what you're going to learn from them.

I chose to become a ballet dancer when I was an adolescent. And boy did I learn a lot about myself in having made that decision! Too **bad** most of what I **learned** about

me was negative. And yet, it all turned out well once I could see the big **picture**.

Life was easy when I was a kid. I had one teacher in elementary school. Each year, my teacher tried to make me feel welcome in class by encouraging me to take ownership of my **lessons**, so they'd be more interesting.

It wasn't until I got to middle school and had more than one teacher each day that I realized **growing** up was real, and I was going to have to face **reality** whether I liked it, or not.

High school was even more **intense** because at the age of 16 I discovered how to achieve **orgasms**. ["Better late than never," as they say...] It took me forever to connect the dots to make my body sing because I didn't know how to become sexually **curious**. Sex requires that you're **curious** about your body. I had to develop that skill. I didn't **realize** after 15 years being me, that there was anything new about my body that could come along.

Once I realized how much adult life is like a college education, you'd think that would have changed the way I prepared for class each day with the **TEACHER** who we all have to answer to.

But none of that seemed to matter to me. I wasn't just disconnected from my feelings [heart]. I was disconnected from my sensations [penis]. Once I reached **orgasm**, I fell in love with my body. I fell in love with ballet. I fell in love with falling in love.

Most of my life, I behaved like I was in high school, middle school or even elementary school depending on how **intense** the emotional pressure was on me.

Not even **orgasms** changed me enough from within at first because I didn't know what sex would mean to me as a spirit in a vehicle on a **journey**.

When I reached my twenties and could see I'd become very sick inside; when I realized I was losing my mind and would never be able to go back and retrieve it – I finally realized I'd have to forge on by struggling to become

mindful. I realized I'd better look into my heart for **answers** to how I behaved. Wisdom of the heart was going to have to become my major in the school of life. I had no other choice. I was an **Isaac** who suffered from P.T.S.D. I had a father with a superiority complex who behaved like **Abraham**. I was figuratively blind, deaf and dumb. My life was going to be dedicated to **healing**.

When I realized I don't have everything I started with, I became a member of the recovery community. My life became all about reclamation; salvaging and rescuing what I could from the great flood. Like an arrow in a bow, I needed to pull back to shoot forward.

Even though most of the pupils in my classes in the school of life have been **Christian**, and I was one of the few **Jews**, I persevered. So, what if you're a minority?

Sometimes I felt like a **Black** girl breaking the segregation barrier. Sometimes I felt like the crip. or the Special Ed. kid allowed to take that class.

I knew deep down inside that all I wanted was a spiritual education, so I could figure out what I was missing, and why. I wanted my life to feel like one long **orgasm**. But memorable **orgasms** were, alas, few and far between.

I never fully realized that death is the **outcome** of every life. No one has any idea what death means to the person involved.

But through experience, I discovered that death is a terrible loss to the loved ones left behind. The only thing any of us can do about death is grieve our loss.

But I hadn't been taught to grieve in practical ways that would change the world around me, let alone my world within. The **Jews** hadn't taught me that, and the **Christians** and **Muslims** didn't have any idea how to do it, either.

I thought of death like meat and poultry you buy that's already been killed, cleaned and wrapped up for you. I didn't know death personally. I'd only been given an intellectual introduction to it until I attempted suicide. Now I can say

that I'm very familiar with death. Now I'm no longer cavalier about anything, anymore.

I tried to collude with Peggy Ann against Miss Johnson. But Peggy Ann threatened to conspire with Miss Johnson against me. That shocked me. I never expected Peggy Ann to retaliate at all, let alone in that way.

It was my mother who'd called Miss Johnson "Crabby Apple Seed." My mother wanted to **relieve** my anxiety over having to go to school. So, my mother is actually to blame for teaching me that it's O.K. to call people names, even if the accusation only *feels* true.

The **TEACHER** has a way of helping us change our mind for us. **HE** helps us transform our heart. And **HE** helps us transcend our conscience with **lessons** we usually conclude are unjust, unfair and undeserved. We usually reject having to become **soulful**.

None of us gets to vote on the way life turns out. I'd say that the majority of people raise their fist to the **TEACHER** in defiance of their grades and how harsh the **lessons** of their life can be. But what can any of us do about it?

What's a mediocre **student** in the department of the heart in the school of life to do? How do you do the hard work to transcend your soul if your head and heart have been arguing with one another since you were a teenager? How do you make up the **lessons** you never **learned** by heart so you can **improve** your grades? How do you make your conscience your guide?

Life is all about **orgasms**, and it's got nothing to do with **orgasms**. And that's a **paradox** each of us has to solve in our own way.

Nightmare #2

I had a nightmare last night in which a child slipped into a pool because there were no stairs at the shallow end, only a declining slope that descended quickly toward the deep end. That child [my inner child] almost died.

In my dream, I had to decide if I was going to sue the establishment where it took place. Although I didn't want the settlement money, I knew the owner of the place had to be made to pay for his irresponsibility in not having built stairs when he put in the pool.

If people aren't punished financially, they come away gleeful at having gotten away with making mistakes without it having cost them a thing. And that only exacerbates everyone's problems.

My inner parents now understand how important it is to protect my inner child. But there are many inner parents who aren't yet aware of the enormous spiritual charge they've been given and how to carry it out.

You may have to drown in your own sorrows. But you don't have to allow incidents and accidents to ruin your mood. Your attitude of gratitude can be raised to a higher altitude. You can learn to look down on your past with disappointment and grief gilded with humor. You don't have to settle into your sorrows for a lifetime.

If you're **curious** about yourself, you can look down on your inner child with soulfulness rather than rage. Your inner parents can become an inspiration by providing your inner child with a **rainbow**.

I didn't know this until I started to talk to myself. It was only when all that had gone unsaid got said that I realized how important it is to talk out loud in loud.

There are those who look as though their inner child died of fear a very long time ago. They look forlorn and forsaken. They look like they're grieving the death of a loved one. Life

seems to have drawn out the worst in them. They seem to have lost interest in why they're still here.

What can we do about this? There's no way to resurrect a child, let alone an inner child. If you discover you feel alone in this world, so be it. But you must be reminded that you're not alone in **feeling** alone.

Just do what I do, which is not get overly jealous of other people's container or envious of their contents. You may be alone, but if you're in good company within yourself, you may be far better off than others who are only in the company of other people, behaving like empty cups sipping from others' empty cups.

My mother wasn't **popular** in school as a child. She told me her only friend was a girl with polio. And she added that the little girl only liked her because my mother was a fat child. When my mother was thrown out of school for being **Jewish**, that only exacerbated my mother's **feeling** of being unlikeable, not just unpopular.

I was never **popular**, either. But my mother tried to put pressure on me to make **friends** and spend time away from home with others. I, on the other hand, am a homebody. I've always preferred to be at home. Going out of the house is a celebration. But coming home is even a **greater** reason to celebrate.

Because of my mother's pressure on me to make **friends** and influence people, I always felt **guilty** about being by myself. I used to walk around the quad during lunch at school trying to look like I had somewhere to go, so the other kids wouldn't notice I didn't have any **friends**.

On TV, they often talk about the perpetrator of crimes having been a lone wolf. The fact is that I'm like a lone dog, even if I'm not a lone wolf. I'm the puppy I never had. I'm man's best friend, the dog I never got to have and hold as a kid.

Nightmare #3

When I was a kid, Deborah's given name was Dale. She changed it to Deborah when she became an adult.

That awful **w**eek**e**nd, I don't think Deborah was angry at me. I think Dale was angry at Carl, her biological brother.

Milly [their **Jewish** mother] doted on Carl as though he was the prince of peace who returned after a 2,000-year absence. Hyme [their **Jewish** father] doted on Terry as though he was king of the world, and she was his little **Jewish** princess.

Dale was a mistake. She wasn't a planned child. She wasn't wanted. I think Dale concluded that with a simple name change, she could dismiss the lack of love that always hovered over her head like an ill wind. I think she thought she could eventually make her way to a place over the **r**ain**b**ow where her life would become more to her liking.

Like **Dorothy**, who was sucked up by a tornado and taken to Oz, Dale always ends up in a place where Milly is the wicked witch who's trying to get Dale's **red** shoes.

Hyme is always reduced to a flying monkey in a band of flying monkeys [men] who do Milly's bidding. And Terry acts out the roles of Dale's Scarecrow, Tin Man and Cowardly Lion all wrapped up into one lifelong friend.

Dale, however, is unable to see who she is and where she is when this happens. She just wants to go Home. But **lesbian Jews** don't talk like that. I'm putting L. Frank Baum's words in her mouth.

Jennie and I know what Dale wants. But when Jennie and I speak philosophically about going Home, the very idea enrages Dale. I think she turns me into Carl. I become her **evil** brother who got all their mother's love. I become the wizard who's trying to manipulate her into doing his bidding.

Dale can't talk about why **GOD** would have left her **feeling** abandoned in a world as cruel as this one. She can't

associate the people in her life with phantasmagoric characters who are teaching her life-**lessons** if she'd just pay attention to what they represent and not what they say.

At times, this world is similar to Oz for everyone. But if you don't have the imagination to see yourself as a friend of **Dorothy's** [loyal to the **LGBTQIA+** community], you aren't going to recognize what it means to fly over the **rainbow** like a **blue** bird. You aren't going to see your mother as a witch who wants to steal your greatest treasure. You aren't going to see that your **red** shoes are a token of your righteous rage.

You're going to limp through every fractured fairy tale you read without a clue what it could mean to you. You're never going to take the stories of life personally.

Or you're going to emulate a wizard – a humbug who tells others how to live their life while you're stuck having to create an artificial image of yourself as an angry god who frightens everyone away.

There's a Scarecrow inside us all who yearns for brains. There's a Tin man who reminds us we need a heart. And there's a Cowardly Lion in our soul who seeks **courage**.

L. Frank Baum was a *righter* as well as a *writer*. He and I are spiritualists describing **reality**. We're both masters of metaphor. **Moses** may have been the first, but **GOD** has **created** many masters of metaphor since **Moses**.

“The Wizard of Oz” isn't a story, any more than **Adam and Eve** is a story. They're both extended metaphors about the way things are. Don't take either of them literally. It'll ruin your life.

Nightmare #4

My mother was a saint... But like every other saint, she was also very human. She was flawed. And although she had attributes that were godly, she also had attributes that were devilishly mean and demeaning. [I feel **guilty** just saying that...]

As a child, I couldn't stop wetting my bed. I went to bed every night listening to my father and mother arguing viciously in the dining room. That was my nightly "lullaby." And so, I think I wet my bed in an unconscious effort to put out their flames.

One day, my sainted, **Jewish** mother came up with a plan. She told me that because I wet my bed in the middle of the night, I was only suffering having to sleep in a wet bed half the night. So, she decided to wet my bed for me before I got into it with a pitcher of cold water. That way I'd have to sleep in a wet bed all night, not half the night.

I've come to **believe** that my mother **hated** children since she'd had to grow up as a **Jewish** child in **Nazi** Germany. I don't think she ever really wanted kids. She and Lou used to wax poetic about how glad they were that their kids were grown. They vowed never to have kids again if they'd ever have to return to this place.

What my mother really wanted was an infantile/adult, childlike/adult, juvenile/adult and a grownup/adult to keep her company. And that's just what she got with me. I always tried to present the adult side of me to her. Those other sides of me I repressed.

She **hated** her marriage to my father so much that she couldn't contain her bitter disappointment in watching their marriage go down the drain. So, she turned me into her husband.

I was trained to behave like an adult at all times to replace my father as the man in her life. That's the sort of

training that will get you involuntarily committed to a mental institution.

For at least 50 years, I went to bed every night and got up every morning as though I'd slept all night in a wet bed. I woke up in the morning **feeling** chilled. I felt clammy. I felt damp regardless of the season or the weather. I felt there was nothing I could do to dry off and warm up. And even on those few mornings when I'd wake up **feeling** well with the world, I still felt dirty inside.

You aren't going to get a **perfect** upbringing from your parents. And if you're a parent, you aren't going to give your children a **perfect** upbringing, either.

But you can train them more gently than my **Jewish** mother trained me like a lion. You can enter your child's room without a chair and a whip in the back of your mind.

Educate your children about the school of life to the best of your ability, especially when they reach adolescence and need to know that they're not the first **Adam** or **Eve** to go through the experience of eating forbidden fruit. Teach your children the way **Moses** taught us with metaphor. Teach your children the way **Jesus** taught early **Israelis** with symbols. Teach your children the way **Muhammad** taught early **Muslims** with similes. Embrace figurative speech, don't deny its importance to you and **GOD**.

My mother yearned for a son so she could teach all men through me how to treat a lady. She also wanted a daughter so the two of them could look in the mirror together and ask, "Who's the fairest of them all?"

My mother was so *oppressed* by the **Nazis**, and I was so *suppressed* by her, that I *repressed* myself until I was so deeply *depressed* that I wanted to die.

My mother and my sister, on the other hand, spent a lifetime in competition with one another to determine who was the fairest of them all. And the more our mother

acquiesced to Rina to make Rina feel that she was the fairest of them all, the worse Rina behaved toward her. It was a nightmare the two of them relived over and over that they never resolved.

For me, jealousy and envy followed wherever I went. I just wanted to wake up in another container and with different contents. I didn't want to have to be me inside or out.

I had to force myself to love me. It was only when I knew that about myself that I was able to laugh at all I'd wanted that it hadn't been my **DESTINY** to achieve.

I think people ought to develop inner parents who train, coach and **educate** their inner child as s/he goes through **puberty**. The inner teenager in us needs guidance. Parents ought to reflect upon themselves soulfully to discover who they are and who they're not. Children with **soulful** parents becomes **soulful** parents to their inner children.

When I was a young adult, I should have observed the ways in which I interacted with my houseplants, pets and **friends**. Therein lay the secret to the inner parenting skills I'd have to offer the teenager inside me.

Many adults don't know this much about parenting. They look at their teenage kids as though they're mirrors of themselves instead of **windows** out onto a part of the world they never knew. They don't discuss the mirror/window issue with them because they think that much truth would stunt their children's spiritual growth. Quite the contrary. It would enhance it.

If you want your teenage children to understand why they have a navel, you're going to have to contemplate your navel with them. You're going to have to look at the "apron strings" you were tied to, and why.

You have a navel because you come from a mother. She was your main tutor in the school of life for a few short, but

impressionable, years. And then you got more tutors to expand your knowledge of the **meaning** of life.

Sooner or later, we're all introduced to the concept of the **TEACHER**. Then we see an opportunity to trade the umbilical cord that was knotted for us for a relationship of inner parents to our inner teenager in **GOD's** school. Life is deeper and harder than it looks.

There's no way I was able to ask the **TEACHER** questions and get timely and useful **answers** until I achieved the tolerance to **embrace reality** as it is. With the **greater** patience that comes with difficult **answers** to what the "universe" was asking of me, I was then able to accept and even admire myself in a few, select ways.

Life is a school with a **TEACHER**. I'll remain in this school until I graduate. But what I choose to learn is up to me. And what I think about the education I'm receiving is also up to me.

You don't have to **believe** in **GOD** to develop a healthy relationship with yourself. Inner attachment to yourself and outer detachment from others may even be useful in managing loved ones who are under stress.

If you'd like to **improve** your relationship with yourself, I suggest you develop a sense of humor that you can share with your inner parents and the **TEACHER**. Nobody else really needs to laugh at what you find funny. And making jokes when others are upset is something Jennie has now **learned** the hard way not to do.

When I see how jealous I am of other men's bodies and envious of their relaxed relationships with one another, I have to laugh at the depth of my insecurities. Now that I can see how profound a sense of inferiority I suffer from, I can laugh it off. **GOD** made me this way to teach me to **embrace** myself.

You don't have to strive to be funny with others unless you absolutely feel your **DESTINY** is to be a comedian. But I don't recommend you try to become a professional comedian or professional ballet dancer if you can help it. Being funny or graceful is only a great way to make a living if you're willing to lose bits and pieces of your mind. That's my experience anyway...

It would be a shame if you ended up cynical, bitter and mean-spirited. It would be a shame if you made up your mind to exist in an inner world of darkness without hope. Many do! But most of them don't end up as **Jewish** comedians or **Jewish** ballet **dancers**.

There's a **rainbow** glowing inside everyone. But to see that **rainbow** shining in the darkness of my own heart, I needed the help of the **TEACHER**. I couldn't do it alone. And even though I'm "just" a gay **Jew**, I got **HIS message**.

If you want to **improve** your grades in the school of life, I suggest you **improve** your attitude about having to be in this school learning about yourself until the very last day of class. How in the world do you expect to do well on your studies if you resent the concept of being a **student** of life for as long as you live?

This is a challenge for straight, **White**-Americans, too. This is a universal challenge that can be achieved with or without **Jesus**. The name you give to our **TEACHER** or to your Tutor to express your faith in **HIM** isn't relevant to your challenge in developing faith in yourself.

Nightmare #5

After my mother left my father in Buffalo, NY in 1959 and moved us to Ventura CA, she bought a 1952 Studebaker. Then she **learned** how to drive. And then she got up the **courage** to go out on the highway with it. But she'd stay so far in the right lane that she often exited the highway by mistake. Sometimes she got off the highway so many times because of hugging the right shoulder that it would have taken less time to go where we were going using city streets.

The thought of going into the middle or left lane terrified my mother for years to come. But by the time she reached the age of 80, she was resolved to drive her age. Each year as an octogenarian, she drove faster and faster. By the time she was 90, we had to pry her hands off the steering wheel and put her in a home before she killed somebody.

When my mother left my father, she was 39 years old. She got her first job in California at the juvenile delinquent division at the courthouse in Ventura. Sometimes, we'd drive to Santa Barbara to enjoy Sundays in the "big" city.

When we were on the highway going to Santa Barbara, she made both of us sit in the backseat while she was on the highway. There were no seatbelts in those days, but she realized that if she got into an accident at high speed, the two of us were more likely to survive in the back seat. There were no bucket seats in those days, so there was plenty of room in the car for all three of us to sit in the front seat in town.

Unfortunately, there wasn't enough love to go around in our family. So, putting Rina and me into a confined space in the backseat of a 1952 Studebaker was like putting a mongoose and a snake in the same cage. We always ended up in a fight.

My mother would threaten us and even reach back and hit us. But she couldn't make us understand how difficult driving was for her at the age of 40 in 1960 after having had my father chauffeur her everywhere before.

So, she came up with a plan to teach us a lesson. On one of our escapades to Santa Barbara, while Rina and I were waging war in the back seat, she drove off the highway onto a dirt road. [In those days, there were no shoulders on highways, just ditches.] She simply drove onto a dirt road and stopped the car about 200 feet from the highway, kicking up a great deal of dust in the process.

She stopped the car and told us to get out. She got out of the car, too. And she calmly told us that she was going to Santa Barbara without us. We were going to have to stay there in that field. She'd pick us up on her way back.

Since I was already a practical person who didn't see how it was going to be possible for her to find us in a field in the countryside on her way back from Santa Barbara traveling at high speed, I started to think about how I could get my five-year-old sister across the highway so my mother wouldn't have to search the fields on the opposite side of the road as she was making her way back to Ventura later in the day.

Then my mother got back in the car and started to drive off. Rina yelled out in horror and began running after the car. And, as you can imagine, even though I was all of seven, I got caught up in the emotionality of the moment and started crying and running after her, too.

Our mother "kindly" stopped the car and told us we could get in if we promised not to make any more noise in the backseat ever again.

I stayed quiet for about 40 years until Larry admitted he was having sex with his former boyfriend. And then, as though by magic, I suddenly found a voice inside me to tell him he was toying with my emotions. I also let him know in no uncertain terms that I was enraged.

But when I look back on my break-up with Larry now, I can see that I felt more like a seven-year-old whose mommy had shrewdly threatened to abandon him.

A part of me didn't want Larry to abandon me. I felt betrayed. I thought it would kill me. Another part of me didn't want him to have to stay if he wanted to leave me. And yet a third part of me was infuriated by the feelings he was putting me through.

People will threaten to abandon you because they know that nobody has been properly trained to care for and love themselves. But this is just a ploy to get you to do what they want or hurt you for something you did that probably wasn't all that serious in the first place. People who are really mad at you, just pick up quietly and leave.

Once you let people know you're familiar with the feelings of abandonment [and aren't we all?], you can find the voice inside you that best corresponds to this distasteful form of manipulation.

I compare my mother's abandonment trick when I was seven with Larry's abandonment of our vow of fidelity in our late forties. And I'm also comparing both of these incidents with Deborah's implied threat of abandonment using ghosting on that infamous **w**eek**e**nd.

Fortunately, I'm now too old to fall victim to the feelings of abandonment by those who "love" me. I've **l**e**a**r**n**e**d** too much about the games people play to be willing to let them overwhelm my heart with unpleasant feelings I've been through before.

Will says I'm exaggerating. But that only makes me feel all the more alone. What I feel is real for me. And even if there are other ways of interpreting **r**e**a**l**i**t**y**, from the heart is my go-to method.

The **T**E**A**C**H**E**R** allows us to get ambushed by the **f**e**e**l**i**n**g** of abandonment again and again in the school of life. And to each of these tests, we have to find different **a**n**s**w**e**r**s** that make us stronger over time.

The only one I know who abandons me now is me. That's what it means to be a suicide survivor. That's my

emotional base line. All other forms of abandonment don't threaten my life.

When you face your final exam, you may feel abandoned then, too. But if you've been through this lesson of life with conscious awareness and reflection on what you **learned** in your past, you may be able to smile – that knowing Mona Lisa smile, that says, “I never feel abandoned when I'm with the **TEACHER**. I always feel safe and secure with **HIM**. Death doesn't bother me. I can laugh off anything after what I've been through.”

When I reread the above paragraph, a part of me wanted to puke. It sounds so fundamentalist **Christian**. But because it's so true, I left it in.

Nightmare #6

Rina was a finicky eater. I was not. The only time I wouldn't eat my morning cereal was the one time my mother had to tell me to drink my **orange** juice. I didn't want to drink my **orange** juice that day, so I cleverly decided to pour my **orange** juice into my cereal and swallow it all together.

Needless to say, the **milk** in my cereal curdled, so I didn't have to finish my breakfast that morning despite my mother's previous command to do so.

But Rina was a finicky eater. My mother swore if Rina didn't drink her **milk**, she'd wear it. Rina just didn't quite understand what that threat meant, and I didn't want to have to explain it to her.

One day, my mother grabbed Rina's arm with one hand and the glass of **milk** with the other and marched her into the bathroom. I followed behind half out of fear and half out of interest.

Our mother picked Rina up and put her in the tub, and then she poured the glass of cold **milk** over her head. Rina howled like the dickens! And the stink-eye that emerged on her face has never left it.

When I was a young adult, I stayed out of politics. I didn't get between Democrats and Republicans. I couldn't yet see the difference between my mother and father or my mother and sister. So, why would I have wanted to get between two rival, political parties?

I also stayed out of romantic relationships. I met plenty of men who wanted to screw me, date me and put a ring on my finger, but I couldn't trust any of 'em. I couldn't decide if they were more like my father, mother or sister. The chance of them breaking my heart was too great.

I didn't want to argue with anyone because I saw in my own family what happens to people who do.

I can't exactly call myself a hero, but I'd love to be able to pass on to you how to make a difference in this world by avoiding arguing with others.

I didn't want to get **milk** poured over my head when I was a child. I didn't want to be left by the side of the road. And I certainly didn't want to go through the terror again of having my teacher come after me in my imagination for calling her a nasty name behind her back. So, the only way I know how to be a hero is by saving my own skin.

If **milk** is liquid love and there isn't enough love to go around, I didn't want to spill **milk**. And I didn't want **milk** spilled over me.

It wasn't until I met Larry that he helped me see that the land of **milk** [love] and **honey** [wisdom] is an inner land that has less to do with **Israel**, the **Jewish** nation where I'd lived out the last two years of my adolescence. The land of **milk** and **honey** is the land of love and wisdom we forge within ourself.

Larry helped me see that not all **Jews** are like my family. It's possible to become loving and wise using **Israel** as a model of my intention to do the right thing.

You don't have to live there to be loyal, loving or wise. You just have to embody for others how to live and let live unless people try to kill you. That has informed my political perception as an Independent. Although the Republicans are doing their best to help with the survival of the land of **Israel**, the Democrats are doing their best to protect and secure all that **Israel** stands for within ourself. I wish someone would tell the Republicans and Democrats that. It would help to end the wars with **Muslims** everywhere on Earth.

Nightmare #7

One time when I was a child in Buffalo, my mother sent me to my room. She came in some time later and asked me if I was ready to apologize. I said no, and she slapped me so hard across the face that I bit my tongue and suffered a bloody mouth.

From that lesson, I assumed she'd reached her punitive, outer limit. I couldn't imagine her hitting me any harder than that.

Another time at about the same time in my life, my father told me not to suck my thumb. But I couldn't help myself. He'd enter the room; I'd take my thumb out of my mouth. He'd leave the room; I'd put it back in. All the snarls on his face and verbal threats didn't move me to stop sucking my thumb. If anything, they only made me suck it harder.

One night, after the two of them were through with their scream-fest in the dining room, my father must have decided it was the right time to march into my room to see if I was sucking my thumb. With his suspicion confirmed, he slapped me hard across the face. I woke up to a much bloodier mouth than when my mother had slapped me. Plus, I was shivering out of fear in having been accosted in my sleep.

I tell you this because one day when I was about five, my mother told me to do something, and I refused to do it. Normally that meant getting hit by her. But I didn't care anymore. I wasn't afraid of what she'd do to me. I'd already determined the extent of her strength, and I decided I could take it.

But what she decided to do that time was nothing at all. She simply told me to wait until my father came home. I had no idea what that might mean, but I could already sense at the age of five that that didn't sound good.

When my father arrived back from his day at work selling shoes at Sadler's Department Store, he was never in a mood for family matters. So, when my mother told him

what I'd done, he said nothing. He simply removed his belt from his pants and beat me with it. That beating was my mother's way of telling me that I could never know the extent of her ability to hurt me.

I consider myself a survivor of post-traumatic stress from my parents. I've always been running away from something. I've always used my imagination to punish me for something I did wrong. I've never known the free-and-easy attitude I've seen in others.

I can't, in good conscience, blame my parents. They were survivors of post-traumatic stress from **Nazis**. So, I'm stuck with situation given to me by **GOD** that I can't work my way out of without **HIS** help.

When I moved to Holland from **Israel**, I took off the Friday before a two-week vacation because I could only find a charter flight from Brussels to visit my mother in L.A. on that day. I didn't ask for the day off without pay, and I didn't have any more vacation time to dip into.

My boss at the bank where I worked used that excuse to fire me. Lying about being sick and taking a day off of work was the reason stated on the governmental form I got a copy of.

The bank knew they couldn't fire me for my work habits. My job performance was outstanding. The real reason they fired me was because I condescendingly looked down at everyone on that job. I thought **working** in a bank was just about the lowest level of hell anyone could sink down to. So, everyone around me had to feel my **distain** from 8:00 in the morning until 5:00 at night, five days a week. They only got an hour's break when I went to lunch every day.

That's why I was fired. They couldn't stand me looking at them that way any longer. It must have brought up feelings of how deeply *they* disliked *their* job. If I'd been the boss, I would have looked for any reason to get me out of there, too.

Once I was fired, I had to sell my houseboat because it was tied to a loan I'd gotten from that bank. I could see that I wasn't going to be able to get another job in Holland without a job reference, so I realized I'd have to leave the country after having lived there for three years.

Granted, I was obstinate, ungrateful and manipulative, but at the time I didn't think I deserved to be beaten with a "belt" by my job like my father had done to me as a child.

But such is life. The **lessons** get harder. And that's true for everyone. If you don't learn from the traumas that you've been through, you're going to see yourself as a *victim*. And if you believe in **GOD**, you're going to see yourself as a *martyr*.

When your parents can't explain to you in words why they'd like you to do what they ask of you - and with a good attitude - it's going to lead you in the direction of obstinacy, moodiness and even manipulation.

Unless you learn to negotiate in good faith for what you want with a **sincere** smile in your heart, you may have to accept emotional outcomes others don't have to go through that are harsher than you would have otherwise expected.

You may become hostile and even unpleasant about that. The underlying question in your life might be, "Why me?"

Such is life! Life schools everyone because life is like a school. And you're like its pupil, whether you like it, or not.

That's why we have so many mass murderers in this country. "Guns don't kill people." People with resentments against **GOD** for giving them the parents they got kill people.

If you don't like what happened to **Jesus**, don't make love to gay **Jews** like Judas. That was the only mistake **Jesus** made, if you ask me.

Oh, I'll bet that statement isn't going to sit well with a lot of fundamentalist **Christians**. But if **Jesus** wasn't a gay **Jew**, was He a fat **Jew**? Was He a hooked-nosed **Jew**? Was

He a **Black Jew**? Was He a **Jew** with Asian eyes? Or was He the kind of **Jew** who you can't tell from an **Arab**?

I'll bet if you ask most **Christians**, they'll tell you **Jesus** was more like a Scandinavian with **white** skin, **blond** hair and **blue** eyes... They'll swear on the **Bible** that He wasn't gay.

But I say that it doesn't matter what **Jesus** did or didn't do with the **serpent** in His **tree**. I don't think His container matters in the least. I **believe** it was the heart **GOD** gave Him that mattered.

The orthodox **Jews** have an unconscious urge to unite all the **Jews** worldwide in denouncing this one **Jew**. The **rabbis** don't **realize** that they're consumed with jealousy and envy for what **Jesus** accomplished by interpreting **Tanach** that they haven't been able to achieve since. If they'd just learn to love themselves, they'd admit **Jesus** got it right when it comes to wisdom of the heart. They could **embrace** the **mystery** and **mastery** of all **GOD's** intentions without having to try to prove that they, alone, are right.

That said, if **Christians** could only learn to love like **Jesus** taught them to, they wouldn't be obsessed with converting the world to their religion. What good is using intimidation to change people's **beliefs** if your goal is to promote love?

Many get caught up in the messenger and forget the **message**. If you're gay or **lesbian** and therefore can't help loving who you love, then try to help others learn to love themselves. They need our help. The religious can't do this without us.

Men loving men is not a **sin**. It's a preference. It's not a question of whether the glass is half empty or half full. It's about what's in the glass to begin with!

Nightmare #8

Hitler knew that Germany was one of the few religiously divided countries in Europe. The Germans in the north were **Protestants** and the Germans in the south were **Catholics**. He knew he'd never get **Catholics** and **Protestants** to work together to build one nation unless he could provide them with a common enemy.

Hitler was a **Catholic**. He had a devout **Catholic** mother who made sure he was baptized. Although he began with a favorable view of **Christianity**, he became anti-**Christian**, but also anti-atheist. **Hitler** declared himself “Not a **Catholic**, but a German **Christian**.”

This made it possible for him to net **Protestants** and **Catholics** alike, and not just in Germany. This made it possible for him to put his nationality before his religion.

Putting nationality before religion was a new idea **Hitler** used to unify Germans. And he used the **Jews**, gays, disabled and political rivals to do it.

Hitler was born in Austria, became stateless and then became a German citizen. He thought of himself as a German in the way that **Blacks**, gays, **Jews**, **Latinx** and **Asians** think of themselves as Americans.

If you admire **Hitler** and would like to become a **Hitler** unto yourself to unite your inner nation from any emotional divisions your heart may be suffering from, you're going to want to find enemies to vilify. That will give you the impression that you can unify your faith in yourself. The two scapegoats that will always bring people together in **hate** are gays and **Jews**.

That makes it possible for the **hateful** to deal with disappointment, regardless of how **reality** is unfolding around them in a way they can't stand. That makes it possible for homophobes and anti-Zionists to **believe** any lie they're fed.

In becoming that **Hitler** unto yourself, you're going to want to be practical about it. You're going to want to starve that **Jew**, queer, "n" or crip. to death. And the best way to do that is, of course, by overworking them. That's the exaggerated "**Protestant** work ethic" that's been in place by the leaders of industry in this country since its inception.

Once you've weakened those you vilify to the point that they're no longer able to serve you as their slave, then you can keep them *oppressed* by keeping them *suppressed* by their family, *repressed* by themselves and *depressed* for the rest of their life.

Once mad assassins have killed as many people as they can around them, they generally kill themselves. And if they get away, they usually wish they were dead by the time they get caught.

I tried all that with myself on a small scale just by going crazy and attempting suicide. Because I didn't succeed, I had to try again and again.

When I finally realized that my suicidal attitude wasn't helping me, I had to give up drugs, alcohol and cancer sticks to prove to myself that I wanted to live.

I caved. I turned myself in. I went to A.A. and got clean and sober. I resolved to spend my life going the other way just to see how things might turn out if I pursued self-love instead of self-**hate**.

Many use food to accomplish the weakening and spiritual starvation needed to kill their inner enemy slowly. But some prefer ruining their life with obsessions like alcohol, drugs, gambling or sex.

Today I'm still faced with food and sex that consumes my imagination. I substitute food for thought with cake and cookies. And I stare at handsome men wishing I was them instead of me.

Whatever your method, of escape, death and destruction of your inner nation is attainable so long as the **Hitler** in you

never gives up his determination to retaliate for the misery you cause yourself out of ignorance of what we're all here to do.

What was a German error of judgment in the 20th Century perpetrated by the **Nazis** has since been expanded into a universal predisposition perpetrated by a **Hitler** who's alive and well in each and every one of us, albeit it to varying degrees.

Don't bother to call anyone a **Nazi** anymore. We're all like **Nazis**. We're all **guilty** of the kind of self-hate released upon the world by the **Nazis**, only now we do it to ourself in the privacy of our own mind and body if we can't get others to do it to those we **hate**.

Don't bother to try to wipe **Israel** off the map. **GOD** will see to it that you do to yourself what you want to do to gays and **Jews**. Each of us is a land of **milk** and **honey** that we don't appreciate nearly enough. We're wiping ourselves off the map in myriad, destructive ways. Global warming will only complete the job we've started.

In the 21st Century, anti-**Semitism** has been universalized as anti-**Zionism**. Not even **Jews** are exempt from such feelings. Homophobia has been replaced with self-hate. Not even the **LGBTQIA+** community is exempt from such feelings.

"Forgive, but don't forget." Do so by taking the **lessons** of your enemies to heart. If you've amassed too much self-love to let yourself become a victim or a martyr, it's because you care about yourself more than you may **realize**.

When you've achieved the **empathy** to be able to imagine how the **Jews** in Germany felt betrayed, abandoned and rejected by their own countrymen, then you'll be able to understand how minorities feel in this country. You'll be able to feel how the **LGBTQIA+** community has had to suffer to be free. You'll be able to feel how the **Jew** in you feels when you do things that are **hateful** toward yourself.

Don't bother to consider yourself an empathetic person unless you can go way beyond the sympathy we see and hear all around us. **Hatred** of gays and/or **Jews** is the bottom line. When **Palestinians** can understand that in their heart, they'll convince **GOD** and man that they're ready to receive their dream.

Please don't tell me you're going to pray for me. I have a sufficiently developed faith in **GOD** to pray for myself. Prayer isn't a popularity contest. The person who gets the most **prayers** doesn't win a thing.

Don't tell people you send them your thoughts and **prayers** when their loved ones are gunned down by mass murderers. They don't need your thoughts or your **prayers**. They can think and pray for themselves. They're not intellectually challenged or religiously crippled.

What they need is your **empathy**. Strive to give the needy **empathy**, not sympathy! Do something to change the way this country operates by affecting every person you meet every day of your life.

If you don't, be prepared for a level of **guilt** that will haunt you for the rest of your life, and, in my opinion, long after.

Nightmare #9

The queer baiting of the 1950's, 60's and 70's was a straight ploy to follow the **Bible** literally to cure people like me of our "illness." Little did straight society **realize** that what they were doing was playing god.

You shouldn't tell people what to do with their genitals. That part of the body is private. Does any child want to share his favorite toy? Would you like someone sticking their hand in your pants to adjust your boy-toy for you? Would you like them to kick you in the groin for getting an erection?

The pedophilia, rape and sexual aggression in this country is appalling. Rape and sexual assaults occur at the rate of once every 1-2 minutes. [internet] I hold the institutions of religions accountable for this because of their literal interpretations of the **creation story** in **Torah**. This is what led to the command for Jews to kill gays, adulterers and children who disobey their parents in **Leviticus** 20. Use your head! Use your heart! These are terrible ways to express your belief in **GOD**.

Living a life filled with dread makes life unpleasant. When your go-to **feeling** is dread, it's especially hard to find **courage**. And **hateful** people know this and use it to keep those they **hate** *oppressed, suppressed, repressed and depressed*.

Half a million **Jews** survived the 1940's in Europe. Most of the gays survived the 1950's, 60's and 70's in **America**. But in the 80's and 90's we, too, fell like flies. But that was from an epidemic that the religious right prayed for and sincerely believed they'd received as an answer to their **prayers**.

They didn't want to have to kill us to appease their **GOD**, as the **Nazis** had tried to do with the **Jews**. They hoped **GOD** would do it for them with the AIDS epidemic. I guess the recent pandemic has proved them wrong once again.

My mother had a miscarriage before she became pregnant with me. It was a boy. She wanted two children, a boy and then a girl. Her mother had had a boy and then a girl, but my mother's brother died at the age of seven when he fell to his death in a freak accident.

My grandmother and mother both lost their firstborn sons, just as the ancient Egyptians lost their firstborn sons in the 10th Plague. Was that the wrath of **GOD** or **GOD's** way of teaching them a lesson? Everyone takes loss personally, especially pharaohs and mothers.

I was my mother's second son who should have been her daughter, and my sister should never have been born at all. Perhaps this is how my mother unconsciously held her two children in her heart.

I turned out gay, and Rina felt unwanted, by our mother. Our father felt very differently about Rina. He didn't want any more children. He'd already been saddled with three, only two of which were his own. [My cousin Ellen was orphaned in the War and raised in our home.] My father loved his daughter, Ilana, and his first wife probably loved their son, Henry.

But our father felt obliged to give my mother the children she wanted. He realized his two children from his first wife had been so damaged by the **Nazis** that there was no way he could ever retrieve them from their nightmares. What he could never admit was that he was irreparably damaged, himself.

But when Rina was born, something happened in him. He was overcome with joy at her presence. It was a **miracle** of sorts. In my opinion, it was like the **feeling Sarah** had when she gave birth to **Isaac**. My father got to experience the feminine side of **Torah**.

Children who aren't wanted before they're born sense it for the rest of their life. And children who are deeply wanted feel that, too. It's very possible that your parents feel very differently about you.

Children who go through the passage of adolescence to become sexually different from their parents and are rejected for that difference feel that betrayal for the rest of their life, too.

During the 1980's and 90's, the religious right played **GOD** and watched us die as they glorified **HIS** mysterious ways! We had to wait for **angels** in disguise to come to our rescue.

Now the religious right is **praying** for **GOD** to give them complete control over women's bodies. They don't want women to be allowed to have sex outside marriage. They don't want women to have contraception. They don't want them to be able to get an abortion. And they don't want them to be able to divorce.

They want every straight man to be a pharaoh and every woman to be his **Israelite** slave. That's their nightmare for everyone in **America**. That's what they even want to use **America's** military might to achieve worldwide.

In order to **realize** that sick fantasy/nightmare, they'll have to kill everyone in the **LGBTQIA+** community. They'll never be able to stand the thought of themselves being in conflict with **GOD's** words so long as *we* live. They'll justify their actions just as the **Nazis** justified theirs.

But we won't go gently into the night they're creating. We won't concede to literal interpretations of **GOD's** words that don't include the incredible length, width and depth of **HIS** plan.

What will they pray for next? **GOD** knows they've lost every fight against modernity since the world began. How long are they going to play the martyr card while leaving a trail of victims in their wake? There's no reason in the world why anyone needs a gun unless they already have a plan to use it!

Without contraception and sensible gun control, people are only proving that they're suicidal. They refuse to use **empathy** as a guiding force in their conscience.

Surely the losses of the **hateful** won't end when they're dead. **GOD** must be using the spiritually insane to unite us in civilizing humanity.

I see the political right as suffering spiritual constipation. They're holding something inside that they can't let go of. I find that psychologically interesting, albeit frightening.

But I see the political left as suffering spiritual diarrhea. They're letting go of something inside that they should hold onto. I find that equally psychologically interesting, albeit terrifying.

I've heard that a lot of people have a bowel movement after they're dead. I suppose they can finally relax the muscles inside that have been tense all their life once they have no ability to hold on to anything inside any longer.

Although I've suffered much more from physical constipation all my life, I hope I'll be able to let myself go into **GOD's** arms spiritually rather than have to embarrass myself physically when I'm dead.

I'd rather go through an embarrassing accident socially while I'm still alive than have to make a fool of myself once I'm dead.

Terry

I've turned the relationship between Deborah, Jennie and me into one that reveals Deborah's sibling rivalry with Carl and my sibling rivalry with Rina. Here's an imaginary letter I've written to Terry about "our" relationship to Dale as though I were Carl, their brother.

Dear Terry,

As you can see, Dale is blaming me again for a family dynamic that I didn't have any conscious choice in creating. Nor did you.

What Milly and Hyme did to you and me was not our fault. Milly loved me. Hyme loved you. Neither of them loved Dale. But I don't have to tell you that we aren't to blame for that! That's just the parents the three of us were given.

Dale should know by now that she was an unwanted child. She should have been given up for adoption when our parents found out they were pregnant and neither of them wanted a third child.

There was no way you and I could have made up for what our parents didn't give Dale. It was hard enough for you and me with what little they could give to the two of us in the way of a solid preparation for life. Our lives haven't been easy, either.

We were only kids then. How could we have substituted as Dale's parents, especially with Milly and Hyme always behaving meshuga [crazy]. If they'd died suddenly, Dale would have gotten a second chance for parental love. We could have given her the loving attention she never got. But at the time, it was out of our hands.

It's not up to you and me to make sure that our little sister always feels beloved now. Dale should look at the truth in being unloved, whether she wants to, or not. She should let go of her enmity over being alive.

Dale may have a good relationship with you, but she wants nothing to do with me. And I don't know why that is. I didn't break any of **The Ten Commandments**. Her issues with me are petty, in my opinion.

I think she demonizes me because she's envious of me. She nods her head when people speak about a world where we're all brothers and sisters, but that leave her still **feeling** like an unwanted outsider.

This is what happens when people feel **guilty** about having abortions instead of **feeling guilty** about not using contraception. Milly and Hyme refused to do what was in their heart in order to do their duty to **GOD**. Dale is how teenagers turn out who feel unwanted from the day they're born.

Lesbians have the additional reputation of being called man-**haters**. But when Dale paints me into a corner, I'm **curious** to know whether she **hates** all men for what she had to go through because of having had parents who didn't love her?

Do you think she **hates** me for being straight? Do you think she **hates** me for being **Jewish**? Or does she just **hate** me because I'm her brother and our mother loved me more than her?

I suspect Dale doesn't just **hate** men who got all their mother's love. I think she **hates** everyone who got the parental love she missed out on.

Maybe **GOD created** the **LGBTQIA+** community for us to look at ourselves in a vanity mirror, up close and personal. Maybe we can't see ourselves except through their eyes. Maybe that's why the **LGBTQIA+** are so detested worldwide. Everyone seems to **hate** them.

I say, thank the dear **LORD** for anything you were given and make do without the rest! Nobody was blessed with everything.

I don't think Dale loves Barry any more than she loves me. I think she's deluding herself so she can move closer to her inner dialogue. I think she's deeply disturbed by something we should all be deeply disturbed about. But because nobody is talking about sibling rivalry in this way, problems don't get solved.

The sibling rivalry between **Ishmael** and **Isaac** is the cause of all the problems in the Middle East. It's not about land. It's not about religion. It's about half-brothers who couldn't get the love from their father [**Abraham**] that they needed. And here we are, thousands of years later, and we're still at each other's throat.

Well, I'm going to call it as I see it. I don't have a brother. I'm not interested in being **hated** by my sister. I'm not interested in being put down just for being a straight man. And I'm not interested in dealing with other people's family problems.

Love,
Carl

Dale

Here's an imaginary letter I've written to Dale as her distant cousin Barry and dear friend for 35 years.

Dear Dale,

I know it must hurt for me to call you by the name your parents gave you that you abandoned decades ago. But Milly and Hyme abandoned you, and now I think you've done the same to Deborah.

I don't think you behaved like the Deborah I know that infamous **w**e**e**k**e**n**d**. You behaved like Dale. And Dale unconsciously reacts to the worst aspects of Milly and Hyme having abandoned her.

I'm not going to sugarcoat your behavior. My thoughts on what's happened to our relationship are even worse than just what happened that **w**e**e**k**e**n**d**!

You demonized me. Your **hatred** of me in the moment exposed me to what my parents had been through with the **Nazis** and then put *me* through. I relived their trauma and my own because of you. That's how **bad** you made me feel!

My upbringing was shaped by five **Holocaust** survivors who were fighting constantly with one another! Every argument I hear today is a fight between a **Nazi** and a **Jew**. I didn't have any other way of looking at things from my heart until I came out as gay. And then I saw **Nazis** on both sides.

I know your ambush that **w**e**e**k**e**n**d** wasn't really about me. It was about the way you, Dale, needs to tell the world what you went through as a teenager when you left the innocence of childhood and had to face the complexity of adulthood all on your own.

You should take your behavior that **w**e**e**k**e**n**d** with me very seriously! After a childhood of emotional and spiritual neglect, you were pushed out into the world biologically, emotionally and spiritually to fend for yourself. You made

me your witness to that. That's what I took away from your behavior that **w**eek**e**nd.

But you're 76 years old now, Dale. It's time you learn how to parent your inner child and inner juvenile delinquent. It's time you and Jennie both learn to keep your problems to yourself. I'm not going to be a punching bag for the two of you anymore.

If you two would like me to help you with your marital problems, you only need to ask. It pains me to see how you argue with one another over issues of love that neither of you can **r**es**e**l**v**e within yourself. You don't have to inflict your inner issues on each other.

What I'd do to help you is tell you about my struggle with failure. I've always chosen the side of winners because I didn't want to have to face failure. Now I can see that I projected my fear of failure onto winners. My **l**oy**a**l**t**y to them was out of **e**mp**a**th**y**. I didn't want to see them lose. I had a deep investment in their success.

I'm no longer caught in that projection. The reason I can let go of the feelings I invested in winners is because I know more about the fruits of good and **e**vil than I did before.

All that's good goes in the direction of love. All that's **b**ad goes in the direction of strength. The Democrats are good. The Republicans are strong. What we need in this country are Americans who are good and strong. But when you look at the political spectrum, you see that the Democrats and Republicans have never been farther away from one another.

This is what's happened to us. I no longer see you as a winner. In fact, I see you as pathetically weak. You may be good, but you're not strong.

You may not have chosen to kill the messenger [Jennie] when she delivered that **m**es**s**age about me you didn't like. But you didn't question your messenger [your wife] for why she would bring such a painful **m**es**s**age like that to you in the first place!

You simply melted like the wicked Witch of the West when Jennie poured water all over you. Well, I guess Jennie, like **Dorothy**, can say she didn't know what she was doing and what would happen to you.

Calling the two people you should love the most in life hypocrites is not how adults behave, Dale! That's more like a vicious game between high school girlfriends. You should be behaving more maturely than that by now!

I'm very sorry I told Jennie what I thought of you that I couched in the topic of humor. Clearly, if you'd asked her why she revealed something that personal about you, you would have **learned** something valuable about yourself. But you chose not to explore the topic with interest. You chose to denounce it with name-calling.

When your psyche gets overwhelmed with enemies, only you can come to your rescue, Deborah. Being frightened turns you back into Dale. Behaving like Deborah, the inner mother of Dale, would be the adult thing for you to do from here on out.

Most people need to love and appreciate their parents. But most people I find myself attracted to as **friends** need to turn down the volume of the voices of their mother and father, and turn up the voice of their inner parents to control their inner adolescent.

That's what I've done with my mother and father. But I did it after both of them were dead, so I wouldn't be tempted to hurt their feelings while they were alive, especially when they got old and frail.

That was weak on my part. But that was a level of self-love I needed to find my own way at my own time. I can't reconcile with my parents. It's too late for that. Neither can you. But it's high time your inner parents reconcile with you, Dale. You're not behaving like a young lady. You're still behaving like a juvenile.

You and Milly took the opportunity to heal your relationship when she agreed to live under your roof in

Healdsburg for a few years before her death. I'm sure you two worked out many of your issues peacefully before she chose to move back to L.A. to die. But you still have a lot more work to do.

I suggest you figuratively replace the voice of your **Jewish** mother and father with your own inner parents. Milly and Hyme need to go. Carl got all of Milly's love and Terry got all of Hyme's. You only got occasional leftovers. That's your **reality**! Face it. Move on!

My mother loved me. My father loved Rina. I treated all three of them respectfully. Life is a school. That's what I see on my report card with regard to my family of origin. Their grades aren't going on my report card, and neither are yours.

You can't just tell me to forgive you when you get out of sorts. You can't ruin a whole **weekend** by telling me you need time to compose yourself. The time to have composed yourself was before we came up with a phone call, not during our visit after we drove four hours to get there.

Your inner teenager is still a wild child. Dale is still taking over your life from time to time, and you, like an untrained parent, don't have a clue how to handle her.

Your temper tantrums are unacceptable. My father had temper tantrums all the time. But he was a survivor of Dachau. I excused him because I could see that his inner infant was orphaned. But I won't allow you to treat me that way ever again.

Your ambush of me shouldn't have happened, and it won't happen again.

Let me assure you I have no desire to give up our friendship because you're not funny. I don't find your mood swings amusing. If you had a sense of humor, you could have laughed off my opinion of you. You only made my point for me.

You tried to embarrass, shame and humiliate me for something I said that you couldn't even address honestly and directly.

I've seen you getting more uptight with me for the last few years. I can see that you've become more of an extreme left Democrat and I've moved to the center of the political spectrum. We share our goodness when it comes to being gay. But our differences on **Israel** have alienated us from one another.

You have no idea how brutally my mother treated me. But she was a **Holocaust** survivor. I forgive her for how she needed to act out her trauma. But I don't think you'll ever be able to understand how hurt I felt when Rina stole my inheritance with Ilana's help.

It wasn't about the money. It was about the disrespect of my mother and Lou's wishes. It was disrespect of them having chosen me over Rina to be the executor of their estate.

You may not know it, but Rina was molested when she was nine years old by one of our mother's boyfriends. He took Rina and me to the drive-in together when our mother had to work late as a secretary during tax season.

He suggested I sit alone in the front seat to give me more room. But I didn't know he took out his penis and forced her to touch it while he and Rina were together in the back seat.

It was only the next morning that all hell broke loose when Rina told our mother. Then I realized what had happened. I had to stay with Rina all day that day while our mother was at the police station. But I didn't know what to say or do for Rina! Yes, I was her brother. But I was only 11 years old at the time and she was only nine.

I think Rina still blames me for not having been there to protect her. The woman is now in her late sixties! It's time for her to get over her insistence that her brother fit into some stereotype that society has constructed for boys.

I can see how she must have felt then, and I can feel for her even now. That's because what I've been through in life has left me with **empathy** for other people. What most people have to offer others is just *sympathy*. They offer a few

words of condolence and may even offer to pray for them, but that's about it.

Maybe most people had a mother who was only schooled in sympathy. Maybe they can show feelings for small animals and young children. But most women who become mothers can become really mean and nasty at times. Most of them aren't sufficiently experienced mothering their inner child and teenager to know how to mother a real child.

To learn **empathy**, you have to figuratively usurp your mother's throne and replace her power with your own. You have to become good and strong. That's what it takes for a princess to become a queen. You should try it!

Your mother never needs to know that you're now sitting on your own throne, with her crown on your head and scepter in hand. Just honor [amuse] your deceased mother in your imagination. She doesn't know you've replaced her by becoming a parent to your inner child.

Your mother won't feel abandoned, betrayed or rejected. She's only alive and well in your heart. What you have to do in order to take over the job of parenting your inner teenager is none of her business wherever **GOD** has her now.

This argument with you turned out to be my way of dealing with my older sister issues. Ilana may be older than me, but she has no more power over me. I've disassociated myself from both my sisters, and I'm doing the same with you.

That **weekend** I had to endure with you dealt with that sibling issue. I can now politely tell anyone who treats me disrespectfully that their behavior is unacceptable regardless of their age.

Most people are consumed with status. They want to feel respected. They don't realize that sibling rivalry is the underlying cause of their hunger for respect.

I didn't allow Ilana to treat me that way after she conspired with Rina to steal my inheritance. I walked out on

her. I walked out on Rina. I walked out on Henry when he told me he sees all **Israelis** as thieves. And I'm describing my struggle with my family of origin to you because you're distant family.

I don't treat you like Ilana. You're not like an older sister to me. Our relationship is one of **friends**, not family. I've been through my issues of sibling rivalry with all three of my siblings. They're dead to me. I only need good **friends** in my life moving forward.

Will may serve as a father at times and a brother at other times, but not even that seems like a healthy idea anymore. He and I are **growing** up. We don't treat each other disrespectfully. There's enough love in our hearts to break old patterns.

My mother was terrified of men, but who could blame her? She couldn't even trust her parents who'd never revealed their religious backgrounds to her. **Hitler** brought that truth home to her.

I'm terrified of everyone, **Jews** and **Christians**, alike. I'm a **Jew**, but I see the potential for everyone to treat me like a **Nazi**. Because I tried to kill myself three times, I even see how I've treated me like a **Nazi**. But I've found creative ways to get through my thoughts, feelings and **beliefs** so I can leave this school with a transcript I'll be proud of.

I'm not who you think I am, Deborah. I've helped myself considerably over the past 35 years. My relationship to me, myself and I has grown enormously. You don't know me. I'm not the me I used to be.

Now, I only want what I've hidden from me. I'm jealous of my body and envious of my spirit. They hold secrets that I wish to earn. I wish the same for you. I wish the same for everybody.

Love,
Barry

Will

Will has no family. Neither do I. And so, my gay family [Deborah and Jennie] was a **GOD**-sent to him. But now he's worried that we're going to lose our gay family, too. Here's the letter I would have liked to write to the most important man in my life:

Dear Will,

I'm not you, Bubbe. I didn't lose a lung when I was six years old. I didn't suffer a childhood fill with pneumonia, asthma, allergies and sinus infections.

I lost my father at the age you lost your lung. I gasped for air through most of my early childhood, too, but figuratively, not literally. And when you were out skiing in your twenties, I was locked up in looney bins.

I'm more like Diana Troy than an Eskimo like you who's living in an igloo on a tundra somewhere north of Fairbanks, AL. You've spent a lifetime dealing with your feelings by putting them on ice. You've lowered the temperature of your heart to minus 50 degrees. There are hurricane-force winds around you within you, but you're snug as a bug in a rug in that self-made ice chest in your heart where the temperature is a balmy 10 degrees all year round.

It's only when you get close to the fire you've lit inside that you ever feel burned. But I can see the smoke wafting out of the top of your head. I know there's a fire burning inside you.

I'm an empath. I open myself to everyone in the hopes of experiencing **greater** intimacy.

But people become like a **bad** L.S.D. trip for me when I have to confront a part of myself that I don't recognize during my intimacy with them. I freak out. I get frightened. I feel like a canary in a mine field. I feel like a **Jew** in **Nazi** Germany.

I wish I didn't have to live exposed to the emotional cold of the external world and ignorance of my world within. I wish I'd been given more than the lean-to I got from my parents to live in. They were wandering **Jews**. I guess I'm lucky I got the shelter I did.

I grew up in a jungle like an ancient **Indigenist**. The dangers were all around me, not within me. So, I huddled in that hut in my heart until I could use my education to better my inner circumstances. The only thing I ever wanted was to learn about myself – that and survive.

You dealt with your life differently because your challenges were very different. We're partners because our differences match together so well. That's why we have a *like* affair in which opposites attract. Our Venn diagram doesn't have to overlap completely. What we share is simply astounding. I've never met anyone who understands me like you do.

I like how you're solving the problems of your life. And apparently you find me endearing for the ways in which I'm dealing with mine.

We both have a sardonic sense of humor. It's deeply dark, but we don't bite one another with it. We know how to ring the bell, stop punching and go back to our corners. We know how to separate until we can get back in the ring using punch lines to make one another smile again.

That's how men behave who *like* one another. We don't hit each other below the belt because we both know how that feels. That's what separates gay men like us from violent, straight men.

We enjoy touching, licking and kissing each other. When we make love, we do it with **passion**. We'd never want to screw each other over.

Straight men, like **Cain**, want to kill their brother. But what they don't **realize** is that they really want to kill **GOD**. We weren't made that way. We'd rather make love to **GOD**

than kill **HIM**. That's what makes us so endearing. That's why we're so much more peaceful than straight men.

When we first met, you were my Roman boy, and I was the **Jew** who loved you. We were exploring the 1st Century A.D. Italy in my imagination.

Even though I've **learned** so much about **Jesus** from your actions, there's no way I can simply forgive Deborah and Jennie and go back to the way things were before. But there's no way I'm going to arm wrestle two women, even if they're lesbians, and win that fight in the court of public opinion.

I don't want to hurt their feelings, even though they hurt mine. I just want them to know my truth because I **believe** my truth might soften them somewhat inside.

Because I've now got my emotions contained in an inner skyscraper separated by many *stories*, I have the ability to go from one floor to the next to look out on my circumstances from different heights and directions. I can see **reality** from these varying elevations and outlooks to determine the best means to get my spiritual needs met from all sides.

Naturally, it doesn't need to be said aloud that I'm not going to act on my feelings of revenge externally. But because my inner weather can be so extreme, I do have to go through a great deal of pain and suffering to build the next floor upon the uppermost ceiling of my inner abode to get a higher view. I have to endure suffering rather than cause more of it.

I **believe** in **GOD**. I **believe** life is a school, and **GOD** is my **TEACHER**. Because I care about how **GOD** feels about me, I want to find a way to please **HIM** without hurting myself or others.

But that will take time. That's why longevity is a reward, not a punishment, unless you find yourself stuck in this school learning nothing about yourself for a lifetime.

Every day I hope to learn something new about myself that'll bring me more hope. I revert to the feelings of a toddler all the time. I demonize others and have hissy-fits. But I keep those thoughts and feelings contained inside. My inner parents make sure of that.

To achieve that agreement between my head and heart without hurting others, I need to know what the lesson is for me in everything I go through. **GOD** couldn't be putting me through all this just to help others out! At the bottom of every experience is always another character defect I need to face. I just can't see it before I can see it.

I'm not primitive or savage. But when people treat me in ways that are primitive and savage, I want to remind them that I'm not only a human being. I'm a **Jew**. I come from a people with a very long history with **GOD** as our **TEACHER**.

And I'm a gay man who has a proud history, too. I understand how gays and **Jews** have been treated up until now, and I want to help the world learn to behave differently towards us.

That, of course, includes lesbians who come from a **Jewish** culture like Deborah and their spouses like Jennie who comes from a devout, **Christian** background.

Everyone is here to learn. And everyone is going to learn something about life, whether with carrots and/or sticks.

I may be in the generation that was born to **Holocaust** survivors. I may see every confrontation as between a **Nazi** and a **Jew** or between a **Nazi** and a gay man. And I know that your generation, Will, doesn't see it that way. But there must be a reason why **GOD** **created** me, too.

I don't think carrots would be good for Deborah or Jennie. But I don't think sticks would be helpful, either. That makes this challenge more about tolerance [**Hinduism**], acceptance [**Buddhism**] and admiration [**Taoism**] than

about wisdom [**Judaism**], love [**Christianity**] and **loyalty** [**Islam**].

I feel like the **Israelis** with the **Arabs**. I feel like there's little possibility for hope at this time in our history. Until everyone grows up, I think we need to maintain distance from one another.

I'm now grieving over the death of a 35-year relationship with my cousin. But I need to prepare for a new and different relationship with everyone, including you, Will. I have to become more responsible for my wellbeing. I have to lean a little less on others and stand up for myself more from within.

In other words, I have to go from good and **evil** to loving and strong. I have to meld the fruits from the **tree of knowledge** to become a **tree** of self-love.

When Lou died, Rina insisted that Lou be given a **Jewish** burial, even though he wasn't **Jewish** according to **Jewish** law. Not even my mother wanted that for him. But Rina insisted. Deep down inside, I think Rina had to turn him into a dead **Jew** so she could insist that his fortune was meant for her. But to do so she had to get me out of the way as executor of the estate.

Rather than fight Rina and Ilana over family money matters, I decided to let them have the **GOD**-almighty dollar the two of them were in pursuit of. Money isn't something I'm willing to fight over, especially not with family. Not even my mother was willing to fight Rina after I explained to my mother what Rina had done. We both felt there are more important issues than money in this world. That united us in a way that I can see has bestowed her crown upon me. This is the feeling that brought me out of being a **Jewish** princess to becoming an Esther unto my people. I'm one of today's **Jewish** queens.

Rina and Ilana behaved like juvenile delinquents. So did Deborah, although Deborah is far too spiritually mature to

fight over money. When she and Jennie broke up, Deborah made sure Jennie didn't walk away from their relationship **feeling** she'd been financially cheated.

I was taught to respect my elders, and Ilana is my elder. So is Deborah.

But that's one more adage I'm ready to throw out the window. Respect for people older than me has to be earned. I'm not just going to give people who are older than me a pass for their age. I **believe** I've earned the right to come to that decision.

My truth is that wisdom mixed with **Hindu** tolerance produces love. Wisdom mixed with **Jewish** wisdom produces love. Wisdom mixed with **Buddhist** acceptance produces love. Wisdom mixed with **Taoist** admiration produces love. Wisdom mixed with **Christian** love produces love. And wisdom mixed with **Islamic loyalty** produces love.

But I have to go back to my **Indigenist** roots in order to change. I can't skip any steps in the spiritual **process**.

The whole world is indebted to others who bring messages from our **TEACHER** that are very different from our own.

Yet it looks to me that everyone expects to die and receive a reward from **GOD** for excellent work exceedingly well done. I think that's unrealistic.

I think it would be better if we all admit that wisdom didn't exist as a conscious gift from **GOD** until **Moses** earned it for **Judaism**. Love didn't exist as a conscious gift from **GOD** until **Jesus** earned it for **Christianity**. And **loyalty** didn't exist as a conscious gift from **GOD** until the Prophet **Muhammad** earned it for **Islam**.

We're all learning from one another without appreciating each other's gifts or admitting the source of our **virtues**. We all claim to tolerate, accept and admire others, when we haven't got a clue how that's even done from within. Enduring people isn't the same as learning from them. But

learning from people requires **empathy**. And **empathy** requires facing their failures as though they were your own.

Granted, the **Israeli/Arab** conflict requires money to perpetuate their positions, while Deborah and I are financially independent of one another. She and I are in a position where we can afford to burn bridges intellectually and emotionally.

But the **Christians** and **Muslims** have been burning their bridges with one another and with the **Jews** throughout history. Today is the day for **Jews** to burn bridges with one another. Any **Jew** who opposes the existence of the State of **Israel** is our enemy. Anti-**Zionism** in **Judaism** must go.

When Deborah and I went to **Israel** together in 2011, we went on that **Christian** tour that I'd planned on taking you on. The night after we were at **Yad Vashem** [the **Holocaust** Memorial Museum], Deborah got irritable. She started to treat me unkindly. When I asked her what was bothering her, she admitted she was still upset about what she saw had happened to the **Jews** in the Second World War that day at the museum. We hugged and cried together. I was so relieved she wasn't upset with me.

But those feelings in her dissipated. She's become more pro-**Palestinian** and less pro-**Israel**. For a **lesbian**, a **Jew** and a woman, that's simply suicidal. Her conscience isn't guiding her. Her inner operating system is in need of repair.

There's a line between self-sacrificing and masochistic. You just know that after that sadistic way she treated me, she's perverted, warped, twisted, sick, corrupt and unhealthy.

The sons of **Ishmael** and the sons **Isaac** of are not in a position in which either of them can afford to burn any more bridges spiritually. They need to unite their scriptures. The fight over land is ridiculous. Removing the spirituality from their relationship is what's perpetuating their problems. If

they could work out their family of origin dynamics, they'd see that **Ishmael** and **Isaac** only came together once in all of **Torah**, at **Abraham's** funeral. It's time for them to come to each other's funerals in an effort to seek inner peace.

It's time the **Arabs** and **Israelis** use their own impending death to unite them as foolish brothers who became that way because of their father. **GOD** knows why **HE's** told **HIS** story this way. It's time for the world to discover how progress in our inner world **defines** the outcomes in our outer world.

The wars in the Middle East aren't about us against *them*. They're all about us against **HIM**.

Discussing the failed relationship between a **lesbian** and a gay man makes me feel **hopeful** that straight **Jews** and **Muslims** will be able to see their own failures. They're both so spiritually broke and in debt that it may be hard for them to admit they're emotionally bankrupt. But don't get me started when it comes to **Christians!**

I don't see a lot of mature behavior on any side. The only difference is in degrees. The **Arabs** are literally killing innocent **Jews**. The **Jews** are figuratively tortured innocent **Arabs**. And the **Christians** are busy selling both of them arms.

The gun problem in the United States is a **Christian** problem. Every man has an AR-15 in his pants that he's **excited** about playing with like his boy-toy. Every woman has a pistol in her pants that she fondles. And they both have more than enough ammunition to keep the war of the world continuing.

If they think that **Jesus** approves of this and plans to reward them for their love of guns, they have no idea what it feels like to be crucified for your **beliefs**. They're not empathetic to **Christ's** pain and suffering.

I like to be complimented, Will. You **hate** compliments. I know this about you. I know you feel infantilized when accolades are thrust upon you.

I want your admiration. But you often offer sardonic jokes about my inability to express my wisdom in a way that reaches you.

When are you going to get serious about our relationship? When are you going to ask me to marry you?

When people offer me interest on my investment in them, I take it as a compliment. When you get such dividends, you see them as bribes.

When it comes to that awful **w**ee**k**end we spent with Deborah and Jenny, I have to commend myself for copying your behavior. You distanced yourself sufficiently from them to maintain a position of cool neutrality.

I'm proud of me for giving myself the time to reposition myself from within. I needed to get out of my heart and into my soul that **w**ee**k**end. I now need to find ways to look at my relationships with everyone from a fourth place in inner space: my conscience.

I compliment me for keeping you around... You're a great guy! I *really* like you. If you don't want to put a ring on it, that's fine, too. I'll love you always.

Barry

Update

I call Maria every day and visit her once a week.
We usually take a walk to the dog park
a couple of blocks from the home.
For the most part, I talk.
She listens.
But from her laughter and the intonation of her voice,
I can easily tell if she agrees or disagrees with my ideas.
Last week, while we sat on a log
waiting for dog walkers to come by
with dogs for us to pet,
I told Maria that she was a nun
who'd had many priests in her life.
I asked her if she ever imagined
ending up with a friend
who's her own personal rabbi...
I asked her how many nuns
can claim to have achieved something like that!
Last year we joked about age.
She was 96 and I was 69.
We asked each other if we'd like to trade.
Neither of us did.
This year, our conversations have been
more about time and space.
Everyone is given a certain amount of time and space.
And over time,
everyone runs out of time.
Only when you realize that you're running out of time,
do you also realize
that you're going to leave this place
once and for all.
You can't have space without time.
The two of them come together
and leave together.
No one knows that better than someone in their nineties.

Will got a text from Jennie a week after the incident:

“I have been thinking about how last **w**ee**k**end turned out to be so difficult. As for me, I was way too ready to argue instead of listening with compassion and curiosity. I interrupted you at dinner and that's not ok. You and Barry are very important to me, and I love you guys. Please forgive my insensitive behavior. We are living in quite stressful times, and it is even more vital than ever to be kind and respectful with those we hold dear, which I was not doing in that moment! I truly am interested in knowing your opinions and perspectives. I am very sorry that I interrupted you. It was rude and set a negative tone for what I had wanted to be a fun, relaxing **w**ee**k**end for all of us. Please forgive me. I really want to do better! ♡”

Will wrote back:

“Good morning, Jennie. There is nothing to forgive. You are right. Times are stressful, and it is difficult to stay positive at times. I love you guys too! You are pretty much the only family I consider family!”

I texted Will:

“Beautiful from both sides. You two are an inspiration to me. She's partially right, or course. She does have a tendency to lecture. We all need to learn to listen with compassion and curiosity. But that's not relevant to what happened that **w**ee**k**end. We can both forgive her for that character defect. But, in my opinion, she's missing the point. It was her cruelty to me that I want her to recognize. Your reply was **p**er**f**ect.”

I actually think Jennie's apology to Will was absurd. She did nothing to hurt his feelings. She should have apologized to *me*, not *him*.

Although Jennie is prone to talk more than listen, so am I. I have to tell myself to be quiet when watching TV because my thoughts interrupt those speaking on the screen. I end up watching programs in a way that becomes so personal that I

can't relate my experience to anyone else's. Will says that we're not watching the same program. It's very true!

Talking to myself when I should be listening to others is a self-defense mechanism. It's a way of building a wall so no one can get to me. It's my way of running away, just as my mother did during the war as a **Jew** trapped in Germany.

Now that I've **learned** to talk to myself, I've since had to learn to tell myself to shut up... All our **TEACHER's lessons** come right when they should.

I'd really like to know whether Jennie told Deborah about this text before or after she sent it. And I wonder whether Deborah let Jennie fall on her sword before Will in the hopes that would quell my anger at Deborah.

Since I see Deborah as a conspiratorial [calculating] type, I wonder whether she's trying to get me to cave so we can just go back to the way things were before. That would leave me **feeling** like Americans today after the coop perpetrated by the Republicans on our democracy.

Will doesn't agree with me. He says that I'm the one who's seeing conspiracies in Deborah. I'm the one who sees her calculating how to respond before she acts. He sees her as emotionally simple, in the sense of noncomplex. I see her as deeply disturbed.

Even if the complexity of her feelings lies in her unconscious, I saw her actions as hurtful. And I'd like to discuss her feelings, even if she can't access them in her conscious mind without prompting from me.

But what difference does all this really make? **GOD created** the two of them. Let **HIM** deal with them! **HE** knows how to lead everyone to his or her own rendition to a land of **milk** and **honey**. It's all a combination of carrots and sticks on this **journey** of ours. Everyone gets what they **deserve** in the end, even if that's not obvious along the way.

What I have to deal with are my feelings, not Deborah or Jennie's. Whether they see things my way or not, it's my feelings of neglect and abandonment I have to face. It's my

family of origin issues that dominate my curriculum in the school of life, not theirs.

Therefore, I need to detach from the **outcome** of the discussion we're going to have. I need to protect my reputation from me, not them. **GOD** will judge me for what I learn in life about myself, not about others.

I may **believe** in **fate**, but I also **believe** in **DESTINY**. So long as I do the best I can while **growing**, I have high hopes that this skirmish will work out well for me because I'm putting the thoughts and **prayers** into it that it needs. My goal is self-love. I'm not seeking the love of Deborah, Jennie or **Jesus**.

I'm too old

A few months ago,
Maria fell and broke her wrist.
It happened on a Thursday,
the day of the week I visit her.
So, the home called me to cancel my visit.
I rushed to my kitchen,
grabbed some cookies Will had baked the day before,
and ran out the door to get to the hospital.
When someone who's 96 years old
ends up in the hospital,
they usually leave with a toe tag...
But Maria was only there for a few hours,
and then was brought home.
I, on the other hand, was a hot mess all day.
And it's not because Maria might have died.
It's because Maria was in pain.
I'm very squeamish about pain.
I'm not squeamish about death.
My squeamishness has a lot to do with guilt.
I feel guilty about not having used my time
wisely enough in life.
Because I didn't understand the depth of Torah,
I didn't understand that **GOD** was beside me
on my journey right from the start.
I didn't realize what an important clue orgasm is
to my understanding
of the promise of eternity.
Consequently, I didn't know
how to use my time meaningfully enough from within.
I'm too old to be anybody other than me.
I'm more authentic, at last, than I ever was before.
I'm not going to give up my authenticity
to be the hypocrite I once was.

When I was young, I didn't know that I was too good.
I thought I wasn't good enough.
It's only now that I'm old
and have been around me long enough
to see the truth
that I can admit that I've always been
as good as I am.
I rarely suffered from not being good enough.
I've usually suffered from being too good.
I've generally gone overboard.
And I've been severely punished for that,
let me tell you!

Because I never had any grandparents, Maria has been an opportunity from **GOD** to experience that kind of love.

But because of the overly strict upbringing I had, I'm also always two steps ahead of everyone else. I'm late if I'm only five minutes early. I'm going too slowly if I'm only way ahead of the pack. I tell myself I should be even further ahead by now.

I'm the baton twirler ahead of the boys in the band. I'm at the very front of the parade. I'm so far ahead of the floats as the crowds watch the parade pass them by that I've turned a corner and see no one ahead or behind me.

Thanks to being too good, I'm now ready to slow down, and I don't care if people think I'm just another old man who doesn't care that other people have somewhere to be on time.

I once had to be somewhere, too. And now that I **realize** I missed the *present* because I hit the pedal to the pedal in an attempt to make my way into the *future* long before it arrived, I've decided to slow down no matter what anyone behind me thinks.

I'm too old to worry about the fact that I **hated working** for a living. I didn't know how to be in my own company without always **hating** something about my life in those

days. The truth is that I didn't know how to work with myself.

Now that I **realize** I'm going to have to be with me for the rest of my life, it's more important that I get down into whatever I **hate**, so I can fathom the **meaning** of being in my own company.

I love myself when I love myself, and I **hate** myself when I **hate** myself. Nothing I've ever told me has been more instructive than that.

People are always going to accuse you of something. They're always going to declare you're the cause of their suffering. They're always going to make you feel like a **Jew**, a queer or a cripp.

Because I'm all three, all I can tell them is, "It's not **working**. Find someone else to put down. I've been inoculated against your worst inner fears!"

I'm a neurotic who gets upset when the squirrels in my garden stop eating the peanuts I give them. I think they don't love me anymore. Will tells me it's because it's springtime, and they've got much more to choose from. That's the way my mind works verses his.

I don't worry as much about what I see on the 6:00 o'clock news! Their problems aren't my problems. They aren't going to end up **hating** me because of anything I do.

We have elections to vote representatives into office to deal with our nation's grievances. Therefore, I have to tell myself that the world's problems aren't my problems. Most people's problems don't land anywhere near mine.

Until Americans elect representatives who'll face **reality** without religious convictions that use **GOD** to conceal their **hatred** of themselves, our country won't be safe for children to go to school to learn, and nobody will be safe to use life as their school to learn. For me, nothing could be more obvious.

Sometimes I cry over what I see on the news. But I'm now old enough and lucky enough to have the problems a

neurotic suffers over leftover peanuts squirrels don't finish. I can now see that I've attracted mice and rats. I've stopped feeding the squirrels altogether. That ends my neurotic need to worry about nonsense.

I've upgraded my problems in life over many years. And all because I was too good to get stuck with the problems people who aren't good enough get stuck with.

I taught adolescents and young adults English for ten years. **GOD** gave me the opportunity to relive my adolescent leanings as a teacher, not a parent. In doing so, I discovered the **mystery** and **magical quality** of **Genesis**. That wasn't something I was looking for. That was something **GOD** chose to show me.

Don't till your garden, even though Voltaire told us to do so in Candide. I say hire someone to do it for you. Just feed the hummingbirds in your garden. Become a St. Francis unto yourself in your own inimitable way. **GOD** is watching us all.

I wish my parents had told me I was too good. I had to discover that for myself. They probably didn't want the truth to go to my head. But frankly, it's always better to know the truth. When you know the truth, you can be more realistic.

Now that I know that I'm too good, I can act accordingly. And that sometimes means letting people know that I don't have **answers** to their questions or solutions to their problems.

I only have **answers** for people who are *as* good as me, neurotics who are jealous of other people's bodies and envious of all their inner wealth. I don't know what to tell people who *aren't* as good as me.

Be better so you can *do* better. What else can I say?

Unstable people

Unstable people on the right think **GOD** is extremely concerned about men putting their penis in a man's anus. They see this as *moral* offence that ruins your relationship with yourself and an *ethical* offence that ruins your relationships with others. They see morality and ethics through this dirty lens.

This is what they think **GOD** cares about. They used to be consumed over **Church** teaching that the **Jews** had killed their God. Then they were consumed with the **Church's** teaching that **Israel** was theirs. They had one Crusade after another to steal **Israel** away from the **Muslims** who still think the same thing. Then they claimed that Africans were less than human and therefore could be enslaved. Now the **Church** wants to end contraception.

Unstable **Muslims** want the **Jews** out of the Middle East and **Israel** destroyed at all costs. The **Muslims** who run the **Mosques** don't care about their people's standard of living. They don't care about the spiritual needs of the world. They just don't want the **Jews** to spread any more hope.

It seems to me that all the religious institutions in the world need to ask themselves more difficult questions about what constitutes **sinful** behavior. If men get to have guns to kill anyone they like, it seems reasonable to me that marriage equality for gays is far down on the list of moral and ethical issues for those who claim to be sane.

If the **Mosque** advocates that men and women have the right to strap bombs onto themselves to kill innocent bystanders in order to teach the gays and **Jews** a lesson, even if innocent **Muslims** have to die in the **process**, I wouldn't expect the **lessons** of most people's life to get easier anytime soon.

If the right wants to use guns and bombs to interpret the **Bible** and **Quran**, the left will continue to use sex to reinterpret **Torah**. It seems only fair that everyone should do

what they want, and then decides whether they prefer guns and ammunition to penises and semen.

Deborah has no problem agreeing with me when it comes to criticizing **Judaism** and **Christianity**. But she'd never say a **bad** word about **Islam**. She'd agree with everything I said in this chapter about the **Church**. This window out onto the world is easy for her to peer through.

But when it comes to her own feelings about **Israel**, she's facing a rock wall [a **Wailing Wall**]. I don't think she can see how prejudiced, **hateful** and mean-spirited she is. We had to agree not even to talk about **Israel**. Isn't that a sad **outcome** for two **Jews**?

Life is a school for everyone, not just the people on the left or right. The people on the left have a lot to learn about themselves, even if their *moral* view of others is more in focus.

The people on the right have a lot to learn about **GOD**. Their provincial, narrow-minded, **hateful** view of those who employ other names for **GOD** is a sign of how deeply damaged they are. These are deep *ethical* issues.

That's why I think this school is such a fun challenge for our **TEACHER**. That's why **Israel** is morally and ethically important for us all. If we can't all feel **empathy** for the **Jews**, there's no hope. We're like one family. Our inner dynamics affect everyone.

But if you don't also have **empathy** for the gays, you **hate** yourself. You have sex with yourself. That's a homosexual relationship, whether there's another person in the room doing it with you, or not.

If you haven't been taught to love yourself, you're going to suffer as deeply as those who haven't been taught to love others.

We've all been given two worlds, the world within us and the world around us. And just because it's easy to see the mental, emotional and spiritual instability of the people

on one side of the political spectrum doesn't mean that that instability doesn't exist for people on the other side, as well.

Sometimes you see the external curriculum of people. And sometimes you see their internal curriculum. We all have the same **TEACHER** teaching classes in both our worlds.

The world is a **mystery** because you can't know tomorrow's **lessons** today. The **TEACHER** has the discretion to create tomorrow's curriculum based on how the class is performing this day. Tomorrow will be the result of what we all do now.

One of my dearest friends doesn't **believe** in **GOD** because there are sick children in this world. He doesn't want to **believe** in a cruel **GOD**, so he doesn't **believe** in any **GOD** at all.

He wants a world of carrots without sticks. He refuses to see how we've removed so many sticks ourselves. He refuses to give us credit for what civilization has accomplished. He just wants to be rid of sticks. Could he be yearning for more self-indulgence than he has now? Could he be unwilling to complete his spiritual elementary classwork and face a world of secondary lessons that lead to university coursework in the school of life?

We have no control over time and space. We must move through both morally and ethically as best we can. Those who come to class prepared having done their homework from the day before will address the **lessons** of the new day in a way that others won't be able to. They'll be able to make connections that others won't see. They'll be able to prepare for unexpected circumstances in ways others won't.

Until you know yourself, like yourself and love yourself, you aren't going to be able to know, like and love others as much as is needed. This is the **message** of **Jesus** the **Jew** that I've reworded in a modern way. But it's always been the same **message**.

There *is* **paradox** in life. I **learned** some things as a child that I had to reject as an adult if I was going to grow up after I'd reached my full, physical height. **Virtues** don't change as you age. But other **virtues** do eclipse the ones that shined before.

You may need to reject what is now a vice that you once saw as a virtue. That may be a very painful lesson from the **TEACHER**. But I assure you, that will vastly **improve** your grades.

There's no other way to become **soulful** other than to face paradoxes. That's what **GOD** wants all of us to do, even if that includes the paradoxes about our **virtues** because we can't achieve all **virtues**.

This is the lesson given to us through **Taoism**. This is the **yin/yang** of two fish that create a **perfect** circle. When the Chinese give up their nonsensical love of Confucius, and go back to his teacher, **Lao-Tsu**, they'll embrace their **Taoist** roots.

Confucius sought control over society. **Lao-Tsu** sought control over himself. This has become the great schism between the East and the West. To bridge the two, you need to understand the difference between the world around us and the our world within.

GOD's intentions are much **greater** than teaching us not to have anal sex with members of our own gender. It would be easier for straights to enjoy vaginal sex if sex education included figurative interpretation of **Genesis**, contraception, marriage equality and divorce, so straight people could enjoy **orgasms** more responsibly. They're the ones who have to worry about not creating life, not us.

And as for **Israel**, give it up guys! The **Jews** are here to stay. The **Palestinians** will have to join the modern world to deal with **reality**. We're not going back to the past.

Today, I called Maria
And when I asked her how she was doing,
She gave me the usual response.
“I’m just sitting here doing nothing.”
So, I said to her,
“Maria, you’ve spent a lifetime helping other people.
You were extremely sociable, as well.
You have friends who’ve been in your life
for 30-40 years.
Every person you met was a good book
that you studied like the **Good Book**.
And from them, you learned secrets
about **GOD**, humanity and yourself.
You’re not doing nothing, Maria.
You’re now deeply engaged by yourself
in being yourself with yourself.
If you could teach people what you’re doing these days,
you could help the world enormously.
You already know about **GOD** and man.
Now you’re discovering who you are
in the sacred privacy of your own mind.”
I ended my discussion by telling her
that she and I are lucky
because we didn’t have any children.
Children are just for practice.
Once parents have raised their children,
they get to work on shaping their inner child
like clay in their hands.
That’s the master artist’s occupation.

The spiritual marketplace

I found a book agent a few years ago who lives in Tennessee. She told me I was a genius. She even gave me specific examples from my writing to prove her point. But she also told me that she wouldn't represent me. She said there's no place in the literary marketplace for one such as me.

She didn't say it as bluntly as that. What she said in essence was that the American people were addicted to pop culture, and if I don't produce books that fit into mainstream American mentality, she won't be able to sell what I write.

I know I'm just a tributary making my way back to the sea. I'll never be mainstream. This book is my 29th self-portrait. But all my books are portraits of me. What she was saying was that she didn't think the **picture** I painted of me would be of interest to anyone.

When I can't have what I want I become sour [angry], bitter [disappointed] and artificially sweet [cynical]. I throw salt [wisdom] over my shoulder. I assume the worst in others.

I say this because Deborah and Jennie are a match made in **Heaven** that they insist on dragging to hell. They're made for one another, just in a very unpleasant way. I saw the same thing with Larry. When he and I decided we'd had enough of hell on Earth, we split up. We agreed to seek **Heaven** in someone else's arms.

Deborah and Jenny don't have a sexual relationship. They gave sex up altogether. They aren't looking for **Heaven** [**orgasms**] as a way of fulfilling their relationship to one another. Thankfully, Larry and I weren't willing to compromise in that way.

I don't relate to the temporary **brown** contents that's making its way through me. The food inside me isn't me. I relate to life as a spirit in a sexual vehicle on a **journey**, not to pieces of **brown**, partially digested food making their way

through a tunnel with a light at the other end. I'm literally what I eat, but I'm *not* figuratively what I eat. People who associate my literal contents with my figurative contents judge me unfairly.

I spend my life inching toward death. I keep my **eternal** Destination always in plain sight. I'm here now. I live in the present. I awaken more than once every morning.

I see myself as in high school, surrounded by teenagers. I see myself as the adult in the room. I see myself as a teacher who's intelligent, sensitive and faithful to his mission. Sometimes, I see myself in the teacher's lounge with other adults who appreciate our one and only **TEACHER** among so many instructors, educators and coaches on our **journey** together with **HIM**.

I wish I could have longer chats with my colleagues, but I always seem to have to go back to the teenagers who can't carry the kind of conversation I can hold with adults.

There are aspects of spiritual life such as architecture, art, cooking, interior decorating, music and sports that other teachers are teaching. Their expertise on those topics relates to my expertise on spiritual linguistics. I'm interested in everyone's curriculum in this school. But I've had to lecture the other teachers in the teacher's lounge about the five similes of life:

1. Life is like a school.
 - A. There's one **TEACHER**.
 - a. Some call **HIM ELOHIM**.
 - b. Some call **HIM FATHER**.
 - c. Some call **HIM ALLAH**.
 - B. There are three T.A.'s.
 - a. **Adonai**
 - b. **Jesus**
 - c. **Allah**
 - C. The **TEACHER** is around us.
 - D. Our T.A. is within us.

- E. We're all here to learn.
2. Life is like a hospital.
- A. There's one **DOCTOR**.
 - B. There are three male Nurses
 - a. **Adonai**
 - b. **Jesus**
 - c. **Allah**
 - C. We're all here to heal
3. Life is like a prison.
- A. There's one **WARDEN**.
 - B. There are three Guards
 - a. **Adonai**
 - b. **Jesus**
 - c. **Allah**
 - C. We're all here to carry out the sentence for the crime we were convicted of.
4. Life is like a game.
- A. There's one **OWNER** of the team.
 - B. There are three Coaches
 - a. **Adonai**
 - b. **Jesus**
 - c. **Allah**
 - C. We're all here to win.
5. Life is like a nation.
- A. There's one **LEADER**.
 - a. There are many people in government who do the bidding of the **LEADER**.
 - b. There are many neighbors who love their neighbor like themselves.
 - c. There are many family members who love each other like a father and mother love their children.

B. We're all here to advance civilization.

I can only know what I know about myself. I can't know what I don't yet know about me. But I can observe the outcomes around me that are the result of what I know about life. Those outcomes reinforce what I know about me, and they awaken me to feelings I haven't felt until now, specifically feelings of **guilt** in not learning, **healing**, paying my debt to society, winning and advancing civilization.

If I want to grow and change, I have to see everything I go through as a **mystery**. That's the only way for me to experience the magic of life. Just because the kids didn't want to pick me to be on their team at school **growing** up doesn't mean that I'm not a card-carrying member of the human race.

I can't sell my books because people don't yet **believe** that a gay **Jew** is an interesting oxymoron. I can't sell my books because people are addicted to formulaic outcomes that I refuse to insult their intelligence by promoting. I can't sell my books because the **PUBLISHER** wants *me* to buy my ideas. **HE**'s not yet concerned that *you* buy them.

People think that happy **endings** refer to **orgasms**. They don't identify happy **endings** with death. They don't look at sex as the primary clue to the **meaning** of life. If they did, they'd treat the **LGBTQIA+** community with much more respect.

We're the only tribe that puts sex above all other reasons for joining our team. Most people don't dare care to strive for relationships that mirror their amazingly complex relationship with themselves. If they did, they'd see everything happening inside themselves as a form of masturbation. As RuPaul says, "If you can't *love* yourself, how in the hell are you gonna *love* somebody else?"

All my life I yearned to discover the feminine side of myself. Deborah and Jennie inspired me to do so. But the results were astounding.

When I was a young boy, my mother was my *mother*. When I was a young man, my mother turned into my older *sister*. But when I got old, and my mother was near death, I turned into her mother and she turned into my *daughter*.

This is what I **learned** from lesbians that makes me identify with lesbians. I love the mother, sister and daughter in me.

I give myself credit for the enormous success I've had in **growing** up. I admire me. This has made it possible for me to admire others. "If you can't *admire* yourself, how in the hell are you gonna *admire* somebody else?"

I don't see most people as admirable. I see them as hypocritical. They often say one thing and do another. They sometimes put others down thinking that will raise themselves in their own esteem. They talk without listening to themselves. Ergo, they don't become wiser. How can you increase your wisdom if you can't criticize and commend yourself?

Moses started **Torah** with the words, "**in the beginning**," which can be loosely interpreted in **Hebrew** as "at the root of it all." That's ironic given that his first story is about a metaphoric tree.

The beginning of **Genesis** is really about the end of childhood and the beginning of adolescence. It's about the sexual shift that takes place in everyone that changes our life forever. So, every *beginning* starts at the end of something else. And every *ending* ends with a new beginning.

If you can't actualize that much of the **meaning** in **The Old Testament**, you're not going to get very far in using **The New Testament** and **The Quran** wisely. Our **TEACHER** isn't giving each **student** separate **lessons** and tests in class. **HE**'s giving us all **lessons** that are based on everything **HE**'s taught us up until now.

Life is like a school that everyone will graduate sooner or later. Just getting an A on a few tests on the topic of love doesn't make me a Ph.D. candidate on all aspects of life.

Love without wisdom becomes a short story with a punchline. That's hardly novel material. It's been done to death.

If I don't remind myself that **GOD** gave **Torah** to **Moses** tongue in cheek, I'm missing **HIS message**. If I'm not becoming more aware of my tendency to be bitter, I'm not ripening. The whole point of forbidding fruit is to defy **GOD** by becoming as sweet as fruit on a tree. If you aren't paying attention to how fruit [the **LGBTQIA+** community] are becoming sweet, you're not learning from us about the **meaning** of **Torah**.

Torah begins with a boy's first wet dream. The story of **Sodom and Gomorrah** is the story of the importance of anal and oral sex in addition to vaginal sex. The death of the main character in **Torah** [**Moses**] is an attempt by the author [**Moses**] to get us to reflect on all beginnings, middles and ends.

The **Jews** were never wrong to denounce **Jesus**. He turned over the tables of the moneychangers because the system was corrupt. He did what **Jacob** did to **Esau**. **Isaac**, **Rebecca** and **Esau** all condemned **Jacob**.

Jesus brought **Torah** to life the way that He brought **Lazarus** to life. He did so figuratively. **Lazarus** wasn't literally dead. He was figuratively dead. Nobody literally comes back from the dead. **Jesus** breathed new life into **Torah** by bringing us out of our head into our heart. That's what He did for **Lazarus**. What good would that have done **Lazarus** if he didn't continue on his **journey** by seeking peace from both his head and his heart?

Does that make **Jesus** a God? In my opinion, it doesn't. It makes Him an **amazing** man who brought a **miracle** down from **Heaven** to Earth. I think we all need to seek the humanity in ourself, not the perfection in **Jesus**.

The arrested adolescent

Here's the email I sent to Deborah and Jennie.

Dear Deborah and Jennie,

I love you two and would rather avoid arguing over he said, she said, and she said. I forgive you both. 'You make me feel like a natural woman...' [Carol King] But I'd like to talk about what's changed in our relationship over the years. And I'd like to have that conversation separately with each of you. Choose who'd like to go first and contact me to set up a time when we can talk alone together.

Love,
Barry

I spoke to Jennie a few days later. We spoke for an hour and a half. We spoke from the heart. We spoke respectfully by honoring each other's feelings.

She apologized for gossiping. I told her she needed to apologize to Deborah, as well. She acknowledged that. She told me she loves me. And I believe her. Our conversation was a piece of cake. It left me feeling sweet and satisfied inside.

I spoke to Deborah a couple of days later. We spent twice as long as I was on the phone with Jennie. We screamed at one another, but I yelled louder. I cried as well. I told her that I didn't give a damn about anyone in this world except my family. [My father had once told me that's how he felt.]

I remember the time I was involuntarily committed to Bellevue Mental Hospital in New York when I was auditioning to get into American Ballet Theater and the Joffrey Ballet, and neither company wanted me. I was so mad that I couldn't contain it any longer. They had to put me

on a locked ward in a mental institution for almost two months!

The only time I felt I got any help from the staff there was one time when a **Black** administrator was coming out of the ward office, and I went up to her and pinched her on the rump.

She turned around with such fury, such a sense of injustice and outrage that I could see it in her eyes. They were like daggers pointed straight at me. I could see my blood in her eyes. I could see tears filled with betrayal and defiant indignation swelling up in her eyes.

I don't remember exactly what she said, but I remember her words sounding like my mother when she told me to wait until my father got home.

She helped me! She was real with me. She helped me see that people can let down their pretense and show a sick gay-**Jew** that he isn't going to be able to dance around his problems forever.

I wanted to help Deborah see that I didn't break the 9th **commandment**, by bearing false witness against her [gossip]. I didn't break the 7th **commandment**, either. It's not about sex outside marriage [adultery]. It's about breaking your word. I never broke my **promise** to love Deborah. I still *loved* her, but I didn't *like* her anymore.

At the time, I thought the best way to show her that I loved her was by getting angry at the thought of losing her. I wanted to make her see that she'd been surrounded by family who were severely damaged. And I wanted to make her see that she was severely damaged, too. She couldn't admit that in loud to herself. But I thought I could make her admit it out loud.

I even told her that I thought her parents should have given her up for adoption her rather than torture her as they had by making her feel like an unwanted child. She just glibly replied, "I turned out pretty good under the

circumstances.” She does have a sense of humor after all, even if it’s a gallows humor. Maybe that’s what I have, too.

But the angrier I got, the calmer and more collected she responded. I didn’t see that her silence was a sign that she didn’t like me, either.

When Rina stole from me, I only felt like a **Jew** who’d had all his possessions stolen from him by the **Nazis**. But when Deborah ignored me when I was a guest in her home, it felt like she stole my reputation out from under me, not my money. That was much worse!

When I used to unconsciously give my reputation to others to hold for me, I kept getting frightened. I’ll never let anyone hold my reputation for me ever again. It must always be in my hands.

I now see that our screaming was a sign that our friendship had ended. Nothing got resolved that day on the phone because nothing that mattered got talked about. Deborah **hates Israel**. I love **Israel**. Deborah **hates GOD**. I love **GOD**. Deborah doesn’t want me to talk to Jennie about **GOD**. I don’t want to stop talking to everyone about **GOD**.

The **fate of Israel** lay in the balance the day I tried to reconcile with Deborah. We were fighting over behavior over **Israel**, not over her behavior toward me.

The **Jews** haven’t stolen anything out from under the **Arabs**. If you accuse us of breaking any of **The Ten Commandments**, you’d better have your ducks in a row. The same **GOD** who’s watching over you is watching over us.

I’m not an arrested adolescent anymore. Even though psychiatric medications arrested my ability to change, transform and transcend who I was, I didn’t have a clue who I could become after I got off them. I only knew I didn’t have any reason to try to kill myself any longer. I finally had good

enough external reasons to plod on, even if I was still prone to self-cruelty.

But I'm not a sadist or masochist. I'm not even will to be self-sacrificing anymore. I've sacrificed enough in life. I now know why **GOD** had to teach us to sacrifice animals for more than a thousand years before we were ready to sacrifice ourselves for **HIM**. We don't need a **Temple** any longer. Now the **Muslims** need to learn about the value of self-sacrifice.

I yearned to discover good internal reasons to live. To do that, I had to find my own language, so I could communicate with myself. Just speaking English fluently because it's my mother tongue didn't make it my mother tongue.

My mother tongue is *body* language. I unconsciously went into ballet to rediscover the intimacy I'd lost with my body. Maybe if someone had told me that about dance right from the start, I could have **learned** more about myself when I was a young man striving to solve the **mystery** of life through dance and classical music.

After that, I should have faced the fact that I'm a hoarder. I don't hoard things. I hoard feelings. It's as though I'd wanted to give all my feelings to **GOD** when I die. I didn't want anyone to have to suffer **feeling** my feelings for me or with me.

I'm like Maria. I kept all my animals onboard my **ark**. I wouldn't let them off one-by-one or two-by-two. I insisted on thinking I was all alone in **feeling** as I did. I now know that I'm not alone in **feeling** the way I feel.

Although I'm now fluent in expressing myself through improvisational dance, that's not all the self-expression I'm capable of.

I'm now more **devoted** to words than I am to body language. I could live without my arms and legs. I could never live without my vocabulary.

After having watched Lou go through Alzheimer's and my mother go through dementia, I now **realize** it would be

terrifying for me to lose my ability to speak. I feel I was imprisoned in my mind long enough for having tried to kill myself. I never want to go back to that cell. I know the **WARDEN** knows this. I think this is why I strive to be a model inmate.

I need to talk to myself because I need to communicate with me in order to grow. I can't live without building my relationship to me. **G**rowing is paramount to my being, and **f**elling is paramount to **g**rowing.

Therefore, language is my fertilizer, water and sunlight. Without my relationship to myself, I'll die long before I'm dead. I was born a **tree of knowledge**. My goal is to die a tree of self-love. It doesn't matter if I die a stump or having to endure a winter of bare branches. What matters is my connection to my roots. Without wrapping my roots around **GOD** who is my **ROCK**, what can I hope to become?

A more supreme court

The Supreme Court had been accused of being made up mostly of **White** men. Now it has four women on it.

It was also talked about in ethno-religious terms. It now has a **Latinx Catholic** woman; a **Jewish** woman; an **Evangelical Christian** woman; and now a **Black Protestant** woman.

In total, there have been 116 Supreme Court justices. Six of them have been female. Eight have been **Jewish**. Three have been **Black**. Sixteen have been **Catholic**, although one of them converted to **Catholicism** after his tenure in the court. Two were **Latinx**, although one of them was a Portuguese **Sephardic Jew**. All the rest have been **White**, male **Protestants**.

The age of the Supreme Court judges throughout our history has risen to about 69.

In my opinion, despite the diversity, the Supreme Court is still a straight **Christian** Court. Almost everyone on the Supreme Court is **Christian** and everybody is straight. The **Jewish** exceptions to the rule don't change the rule in my eyes. The Supreme Court serves us as their final **Christian** word on being straight.

If it weren't this way, the Supreme Court would be set up with a **Hindu**, **Jew**, **Buddhist**, **Taoist**, **Christian** and **Muslim** judge, as well as a judge from our **Indigenist** population. It would also have a gay and **lesbian** judge. That would be a court that would represent **America** past-present-and-future, as well as the highest court in the world. What we have now is still a straight **Christian** court that I watch arguing over how many **angels** will fit on the head of a pin.

When the world looks back on **America** in the 21st Century, they're going to call it the "modern" Middle Ages. They're going to wonder how people during our time in **HIS** story could have been so ignorant of themselves, humanity and

life generally, to say nothing of their ignorance of their relationship to **GOD**.

What we call **freedom** of speech in this country is hardly free because it doesn't include world views that have been in place for thousands of years everywhere on Earth. What we're used to in this country is a very narrow view of free speech.

Anti-**Semitic** speech isn't free. It's very costly. I'm talking about the **freedom** to call **GOD** by all **HIS** names. Just listening to **Christians** as they wax poetic about **Jesus** isn't good enough. Just listening to **Muslims** fill the world with **hate** speech about **Israel** is far from **hopeful** for anyone who believes in one **GOD** who **created** us all.

GOD gave us seven traditions, but the Supreme Court of the United States of **America** doesn't reflect our population or our history in becoming more humane. It doesn't reflect our **diverse** cultural and ethnic wealth. And it doesn't reflect our sexual diversity. It's not a team of judges. It's a hood.

Thankfully, there is a court in **America** that's more supreme than the Supreme Court, and that's the court of public opinion. People are getting wiser, more loving and more loyal to the American dream as well as to their faith in themselves and **GOD**. Therefore, the American people expect our court system to be constantly **growing**.

Why would you expect the Supreme Court not to be derailed by an issue as utterly ridiculous as abortion? Abortion is murder. But it's a level of killing that's so intimate, personal and spiritually minute that couples who create unwanted babies should see that the use of contraception is the answer if they want to have sex for fun rather than for procreation. If the gay community could have **learned** to use contraception to protect our own life, the straight community can learn to use it, too. This isn't rocket **science**.

Those with an overly developed conscience ought to put their idea of **evil** on the scale in their soul to weigh their

opinion of themselves as a murderer for acts of neglect, abandonment and betrayal of the American dream! When you make your **GOD** [or your lack of **GOD**] your only cause, you make **Naziism** your cause.

Breaking down doors

Despite the fact that my dream of becoming a world-famous ballet dancer was dashed; despite severe mental illness; drug and alcohol addiction; three suicide attempts; a 13-year relationship that went down the crapper – I can now tell you unequivocally that **GOD** has opened doors for me.

HE knows who I am and how I operate. When I **deserve** an open door, **HE** opens it like a gentleman for a lady. **GOD** makes me feel like a natural woman. And that feels wonderful!

I was born male thanks to the physical contribution from my father [a Y chromosome]. But I never **learned** the difference between masculinity and femininity from either of my parents. My father was a coward with bravado. My mother was an unsung hero. She held me like a father because she had to survive and learn to thrive in a man's world.

When I discovered I was gay, I thought I yearned for the father I was missing. What I really was yearning for were two inner parents to replace both my parents. That freed me to express myself authentically in bed with men. That freed me to express myself authentically with everyone.

Once I see an opportunity to go somewhere that I've never been to before, I'm no fool. I get the hell out of where I was and enjoy the **freedom** of having moved on to a better place.

I'm an **Adam** and **Eve** all rolled into one. I'm the personification of the **Jewish creation story**, a **Jewish tree of knowledge** with a **serpent** [boy-toy] in it. The fruits of my labors aren't literal. They're figurative. I'm the personification of poetry in **emotion**.

I sometimes have to be made to fall asleep to what I'm doing here, so **GOD** can speak to the woman in my heart. To do that **HE** has to figuratively remove a rib in my chest, so I'm a little less able to stand tall on my own emotionally and

a little more dependent on all others and **HIM**. This **creates** intimacy with the experience of living from the outside in.

That's a **curious** way for our **TEACHER** to instruct each pupil. But that's the way it is if you're poetic and **soulful** enough to interpret the words of **Moses** but haven't studied **Torah**. What he was describing is called inner **reality**, not the alternate **reality** advanced by religious people.

The **Jews** were given the Diaspora to open doors for others. That changed the course of the Western World. But I've gone through an inner diaspora. **GOD** still opens doors within me like **HE** opened nations to my ancestors. And I'm eager to take advantage of every opportunity given.

My life changes incrementally day-by-day. I can now watch as doors open in my heart for me. I can even watch myself go through them. And I can talk about what the world looks like from the other side of me, which I call my soul.

The world isn't like it used to be when I was young, not because the world has changed, but because I've changed. The fact that I see the world differently than I did before is because I've gone through open doors into new rooms inside myself. I'm looking out of new **windows** onto the world that give me perspectives I didn't have before.

This is why I write about the things I see inside. I add color to everything I do around me because of these changes within me. I don't just use **black** words typed onto the **white** canvas of electronic pages. I say things in my books that have never been said before. I'm new. I'm different. I'm colorful. And every day I become newer and more unique.

I'm not vain, and I'm not frustrated. I'm not even as impatient as I once was. Now I look at the vanity, frustration and impatience of those around me and relate it to who and how I was before.

I'm **growing**. I'm changing. And I'm using the opportunities **GOD** is giving me to make myself more at home here, so far away from Home.

I certainly wouldn't want to stay here forever. **GOD** no! But I do want to continue to use life as a school while I'm here. I do want to learn. And if most students around me and elsewhere don't want to learn, so be it.

Let them live locked up where they are inside, suffering as they do. I'm sure **GOD** will teach them things about life in due course that I already know. Or **HE** won't. It's none of my business. I vote responsibly and I pay my taxes honestly. What more do I have to do?

I know jealousy and envy will eventually force some men to tear down more Twin Towers. They can't stop themselves from getting into trouble. They yearn to be punished for their covetous nature. They strive to lose. They can't wait to die to tell **GOD** how they suffered to take **HIS** words to heart. But I can wait. I'm in no hurry to graduate this school.

I suggest you take scientific words literally and religious words figuratively. If you do only that, you'll be amazed to see what a fool you're making of yourself some of the time.

You can't have anyone's else's power. You can't become a pharaoh and make others you **Israelites** for more than a brief moment in time. Eventually, you're going to have to settle with the knowledge and power you've been given. So, if our **TEACHER** should choose to plague you with harsh **lessons** to expand your knowledge of yourself, do your best to get through it with **dignity**. You're no **Jesus**. You're not **GOD**, **HIS** son or a distant relative. You're just **HIS** creation.

Do the right thing

What I felt Deborah did was bait, beguile, coax, draw entice, entrap, inveigle, lure, mislead, persuade, seduce, sucker and tempt me into coming up to Ft. Bragg to visit them. I didn't see that as an invitation. I saw that as an ambush. At least that's how it came across to my inner teenager who knows about such things from personal experience passed down to me by my biological family. That's how my heart has been trained to feel.

Granted, she probably didn't give it a second thought until she felt triggered by Jennie and me in the moment. And then all hell broke loose. But tell that to my heart!

My parents didn't teach me to trust people. They taught me to distrust people. Unfortunately, they inadvertently taught me to distrust them, as well.

I was taught to look for the worst possible interpretation of everyone's intentions. That's what got me locked up in insane asylums.

As my 35-year-long relationship to Deborah fell apart, I went back to the basics I'd **learned** as a child to make my way across the **rainbow** of adolescence yet again. I became suspicious of her. I realized I don't like her anymore.

Everyone I spoke to after the incident told me to forgive her. They gave me good reasons to do so, including the fact that she's family; that she had a rough life; that although she may not have a sense of humor, she has many other qualities that are valuable.

What they didn't focus on is that Deborah threw me out of her house without using the words, "Get out!" She finagled me into coming up for a visit [whether consciously or unconsciously] so she could make me feel unwanted and abandoned – feelings she feels about herself but can't face. If she could face them, she'd never make anyone feel that awful. I think she projected those feelings onto me and then

punished me so she could secretly observe how I dealt with them.

My parents did the same to me. They made me feel equally unwanted under their roof so they could show me what every **Jew** in Europe had felt from the unfiltered point of view of **Holocaust** survivors.

Granted, Deborah didn't literally throw me out of her house. That would have ended her game of emotional cat-and-mouse. Just before we left that Sunday morning, she told me I should forgive her because when she gets upset, it takes her a long time to get out of her moods.

She got upset, alright! But I think what she was really upset about was that her parents hadn't aborted her! They made her feel unwanted all her life.

Doing the right thing is something that everyone advocates others do, but I question how many **angels** in disguise there really are out there. I question how many people truly forgive, forget and move on.

The mother of the 18-year-old kid who killed 21 people in Uvalde, Texas said her son didn't have violent tendencies. And I'm sure that's true. I'm sure he honored her by not showing those tendencies to his family members – that is until he shot his grandmother in the face and then made 19 innocent children and two adults pay for him having had to grow up without any spiritual training on what life is all about!

I'm not just talking about him or teenagers generally. They're only a mirror of adult society. I'm talking about something that all children of **GOD** have to deal with.

Think long and hard about what you're doing to yourself if you don't move through your unconscious **hatred** of your parents and the way they may have shaped you with neglect, abandonment and betrayal. We all know how you feel.

Your parents don't necessarily have to know how you feel about them. But if *you* don't know, you'll try to love others and then dishonor your own reputation before **GOD**.

Do the left thing

Instead of doing the *right* thing by believing in your parents, I suggest you do the *left* thing by feeling all your feelings, instead. If you want to develop a sense of humor that's sardonic enough to create a **Wailing Wall** high enough to protect you from the **evil** of all others, you're going to have to go through more of the length, breadth and depth of your feelings.

A pastel **rainbow** isn't going to do you much good in life. Your **rainbow** is going to have to become jewel-toned. You're going to have to become filled with **passion**. If not, you'll die long before you're dead.

So many people make it their cause to **hate**. It doesn't matter if that someone is a **Jew**, gay, **Black**, Democrat or a woman who doesn't want to be pregnant. The people they really want to **hate** but don't have the guts to **hate** are their mother and father for having brought them into this world and then not given them the tools to make their life **hopeful**. Deep down inside they may feel their parents ruined them for life. And there isn't a crime worse than **feeling** like an infant, child, teenager or young adult who isn't permitted to grow up.

Being authentic requires keeping some of your thoughts and feelings to yourself, and only allowing a portion of them out through word and gesture.

Being authentic requires creating inner parents for your inner children. And, **believe** me, you've probably got more than one inner child.

Becoming authentic may feel very artificial at first. But if you persevere, authenticity will begin to feel natural over time. To know **reality**, you have to get real with yourself.

You don't need a gun in your pocket or a penis between your legs to feel authentic. You don't need both and you don't need to reject either.

Learn to be realistic and sensitive to your feelings like a **Jacob**, and you'll discover your own secret to becoming authentically you in a way that makes this world better for all of us. That's what **Jacob** did. That's what **Joseph** did. That's what **Moses**, **Joshua #1** and **Joshua #2 [Jesus]** did.

Deepening your feelings will involve spending a lot more time moving from the top of the **rainbow [red]** down than society will tell you, but there really isn't any other choice if you want to find hope in having been **created** with a heart.

Remember that anger is the **feeling** closest to the heavens and therefore to **GOD**. Therefore, it's the most righteous. So, give your anger to **GOD**, not to the rest of us, and **HE**'ll move down with you through the feelings in your heart. The **promise** of hope is all you've got when push comes to shove.

You're going to graduate this school, and as a senior about to leave this institution of learning, you're probably going to be given a final exam based on the sense of humor you've developed over a lifetime. If you don't ace that test with self-deprecating jokes that will amuse The **TEACHER** and you, I wouldn't expect to get the **eternal** "piece" you're hoping for. **GOD** loves the class clowns who can make fun of themselves.

Don't delude yourself into thinking that **GOD** forgives anybody for anything! **HE** gives us reasons to laugh our way through life. If we don't face the music with atonement for *our sins*, we won't find the relief to *our* moral [internal] and ethical [external] predicament that elicits laughter from others.

I know that I'm abnormal, eccentric, odd, offbeat, peculiar, queer, unconventional, unorthodox and weird. I know that most people don't like me. I'm too strange. But I've been blessed with the ability to laugh at myself thanks to a heart that's lightened up. When it comes to my feelings about the outer world, my heart is **pastel**. It's only when it

comes to my feelings about my inner world that my heart becomes jewel-toned.

Expand your sense of humor, and you'll become more of an oxymoron. You'll **believe** that becoming *like* a 20th Century gay **Jew** is your **DESTINY**, too.

I do what I do to become more like who I truly am. I like teaching others to avoid doing what didn't work for me in my past. That's why I can say that from my students I am taught. I am not going to become like an anti-**Israel lesbian**. Deborah is no different from a **Palestinian** woman who endures misogyny to feel self-sacrificing.

A righteous **Christian** is someone [male or female] who behaves like **Jacob**. He's someone who fixes problems in ways that are so **hopeful** that **GOD** changes their name to **Israel**. **Jesus** advocates on their behalf for bringing them into **Heaven**. By designating a Christian as righteous, **Israel** is letting **Peter** know that we'd like him to open that **gate**.

I started out in life by yearning to become a ballet dancer who could take flight using classical music as my wings. But I didn't have the height. I didn't have the bodily strength. And I didn't have the communicative skills needed to participate cooperatively in the social arts. You could see by my body language that I had more to say about **hatred** than about love.

I was especially lacking when it came to the sense of humor needed to laugh at myself for wanting something that was totally unattainable for someone who was so conflicted inside. When I couldn't have what I wanted, I went crazy and had to be locked up.

I embarrassed myself by going nuts before family, among **friends** and in polite society. When I think back to what I put myself and others through, I'm still embarrassed by my efforts as a young man to be someone I was not by insisting on attaining something I could never achieve.

Fortunately, I'm slowly moving through that embarrassment to become more modest of my body in old age, even though I'll soon need a helping hand or a firm object to get up from a crouching position...

Today, I'm also moving through my shame at how poorly I misjudged my talents and abilities when I was young. I took the best in me for granted and insisted on becoming important to others rather than to **GOD**. Now I'm being humbled for everything I arrogantly once thought would define my idea of success in life.

I'm a gay, **Jewish** teacher of self-hate. Everything I profess comes from experience in which I tell others, "Don't let this happen to you!"

Deborah insists on giving **Palestinians** excuses to continue to express their misogyny, homophobia and anti-**Semitism**. I didn't end our friendship because she ghosted me. I ended our friendship because we have nothing in common anymore. The fracture we see in society in **America** and **Israel** is the same fracture found in Deborah and me.

When the world realizes how diabolical the **Palestinian** cause is as they present it through prejudice and violence, they'll see more of the faults in themselves. This is a lesson from our **TEACHER** that has universal implications and applications.

Jennie isn't the only one who needs to listen more and talk less. She's not the only one who needs to recognize she's a backstabber. Deborah isn't alone in ghosting herself. What they did to me speaks to what they're doing to themselves. They're both passengers in their own vehicles. They're not in the driver's seat on the **journey** of their life. Neither can forgive her parents for not wanting her when this is the only thing **GOD** asks from them.

When I think of how **GOD** has guided me by teaching me who I really am and what I can really do to help myself get through this world by becoming more enlightened, I find

myself in an **indigo** awe and **violet ecstasy** with **orgasms** at how my heart has been transformed and my soul has been transcended with **HIS** help.

I don't have to justify, explain or apologize for my feelings and **beliefs**. I only have to justify, explain and apologize for my *actions*. Therefore, it makes far more sense for me to thoroughly explore my feelings and **beliefs** before taking any action at all.

But talking in loud is an action in **GOD's** eyes. Our **GOD** and your God are listening to you talk to yourself. You're not alone inside. If you think you're alone inside, you're a *ghost*. You're not a *spirit*.

Needless to say, we all have to take action sooner or later about the smallest of challenges brought to us by the **TEACHER**. The relationship between our container and contents demands that of us. Just getting up out of bed in the morning is now something I see as an act of faith.

The external world is not all we have to contend with. We all have an internal world that requires us to face our feelings and **beliefs** about our thoughts with righteous intention. That's what develops our conscience and slowly ripens it like forbidden fruit that makes us **soulful**. All that that requires is self-love.

I'm the sort of person who doesn't behave too badly overall, but I feel **bad** easily and often over the littlest of things. I can now say that I'm proud of that. I just don't let it ruin my sense of humor.

I've reached the outer limit of bitterness. I'm more than cynical. I'm more than sarcastic. I'm sardonic. My view of life had become so **disdainful** that I needed to kill myself. That's why my books are so great. That's why the world needs to know what I did *to* myself and then *for* myself. That's why it's so obvious to me that no agent would waste their time trying to sell what I've **created**. People don't want what *I* have because they don't want what *they* have. The Eskimos may have a hundred words for "snow," but they

know they don't want to be sold snow. Keep your snow. Sell me sunshine!

For me, happiness comes fleetingly for a moment once or twice a day. But that's enough to remind me of how **devoted** I've become to learning how to be *joyous*, not *happy*. Joy is bittersweet. Joy is **blue**, not **white**. After a lifetime of telling myself I'm *crazy*, I can now say that I'm really very far beyond *normal*.

I, myself and me

Here's an imaginary letter I've written to the three most important people in my life: me, myself and I. It's taken me a lifetime to make the acquaintance of all three of them.

Until I knew myself better, I felt more like **The Three Stooges**, who were also **Jewish**. I was a slapstick, comedy routine that made others laugh. But for me, myself and I, my shtick was very painful.

Dear Barry,

I'm no longer desperately alone inside. I'm no longer a ghost. I'm a spirit. I needed good company, so I haunted you. I'm sorry about that.

I now know I'm a spirit in a vehicle on a **journey**. I don't worry about dying and having nowhere to go. When I'm dead, I won't stay here. I know that because I'm living each day in anticipation of my **DESTINY**. My **fate** is behind me.

It was my **fate** to try to become normal like most others. It was my **fate** to be attracted to people who were sick. Now I know that I'm beyond normal, not better than anyone. Now I'm in pursuit of my **DESTINY**.

My imagination is now well developed, even though I'm learning more about how to think better every day. I can make do with having lost my *head* now that I've found my *heart* and *soul*. This has given me the faith in myself always needed to go back to retrieve what I can above my stiff neck.

I've already imagined killing all of my family members and **friends**. I've seriously wounded all my loved ones in my mind. Thank **GOD**, I live in my heart and have a summer home in my soul. I don't do what I think of doing. I laugh off some of my thoughts.

Because I literally tried to kill myself three times, I have no desire to act out the nightmares I create in my imagination anymore. I'm live with me, myself and I as we are.

Thanks to the way my life has turned out, I often feel that I've got no one left to turn to except **GOD**. I can now say that I'm a personification of faith in **HIM**, even though I don't rely on any one proper noun or pronoun for **GOD**.

I'm a modern, true believer. It's easy for me to see that **Jesus** was a **rabbi** who reached a level of **GOD** consciousness that no **Jew**, including **Moses**, had ever previously attained.

It's easy for me to see that with the help of **Moses** and **Jesus**, the Prophet **Muhammad** reached another spiritual height a little over 600 years after **Jesus**.

The **Christians** had better get used to having **Jews** around them who aren't the personification of perfection. They can **believe** **Jesus** was the **perfect Jew**, but they can't force the rest of us to live up to their imaginary standards. It would be hard for anyone to be a **perfect Jew** whether gay or straight. My cross to bear isn't easy. But it's mine, and I like it.

The **Muslims** had better get used to having **Jews** around them, too. Straight **Jews** are like **Isaac**. **Isaac's** mother, **Sarah**, loved him. **Muslims** are like **Ishmael**. **Ishmael's** mother, **Hagar**, loved him. But **GOD** loved both children. You'd have to be insane not to have come to that conclusion by now.

Abram had problems with both his wife, **Sarah**, and his girlfriend, **Hagar**. **GOD** gave him a struggle that was so difficult that **HE** changed his name to **Abraham**. And he bequeathed that struggle to his sons, **Ishmael** and **Isaac**.

Changing **Abram's** name to **Abraham** didn't change his nature, any more than Dale is a different person from Deborah or Ilana is any more authentic than Elaine. **Abraham** still had to live with the fact that he abandoned **Ishmael** and tried to kill **Isaac**.

Names don't change your moral [internal] and ethical [external] problems, any more than Monsanto disappeared when they changed their name to Bayer. You can pour lousy

coffee into a glass, a mug or a cup, but that doesn't make what goes down your throat any less distasteful.

It's easy for me to see that to be a modern believer in **GOD**, the world has to **embrace** all the evidence of the **miracle** of **reality**. What use is there in living on a round planet if we don't bother to go past our own horizons to discover what **GOD** has **created** elsewhere within us?

What use is the internet, telephones, airplanes and flat-screen TVs if we don't use these tools to discover the tools **GOD** has given us within ourself to **improve** ourself?

Deborah is still a wild teenager in some ways. She's defiant. She's a dropout from the school of life. She played hooky for so long that she was expelled. She refuses to **believe** in the **TEACHER** or trust any of **HIS** instructors when it comes to understanding her own nature. She thinks she's too good to take life's tests in anticipation of graduation.

I know how she feels. I had to get my spiritual GED. I had to figuratively go to night school to learn what I couldn't learn what other people were learning all day.

But today, I feel that I'm raising the class curve for everyone in my life. I feel that I figuratively made my way through city college and four-year undergraduate schools. I feel I've achieved my master's degree in **Judaism** and my Ph.D. in life.

Jennie is a class clown. She only wants to interrupt every teacher who comes into her life so she can show the rest of the class what a smart-ass she can be. She wants to make everyone laugh *with* her and *against* those who think they know more than her. She's the **perfect** study-partner for a defiant pupil like Deborah.

Will just wants to seduce his teacher... He's the kind of **student** any horny teacher would like to have in class... I still enjoy dreaming about getting in his pants after 12 years together. We're just juvenile delinquents in bed enjoying our

boy-toys together! But in other rooms in our house, we behave like adults. Is that too much to ask others to do, too?

I'm an author, not an artist. If I had to paint a realistic portrait of my boyfriend, it would have to include scars and open wounds.

I can't express myself thoroughly enough through ballet, although I developed an impressive and expressive vocabulary in body language for dance. But there are no steps I can take to help my soulmate [Will] see himself as in a vehicle on a **journey**. He has to take those steps himself. So far, he's gone from atheist to **Catholic** to ex-**Catholic** to agnostic. I don't need to **convert** him to true believer. That's not my job. My job is to **convert** me to a true believer who believes more each day.

My idea of a self-portrait artist requires applying shaving foam and a razor to my face in the morning. After that, the day becomes my opus. My feelings become my paints and the world becomes my canvas.

My idea now of becoming a world-famous dancer/choreographer is by walking in a dignified manner across the street in pedestrian crosswalks even if the drivers glare at me to try to make me move faster.

If I'd been **Moses**, I'd have spent a lot more time on my autobiography talking about how I'm carving myself like clay, and less time on how those around me should shape up.

Love,

Emanuel

[Love is my middle name.]

Where are YOU?

In the story of **Adam and Eve**, after eating the forbidden fruit that **Eve** picked, the two of them heard **GOD** stomping through the **Garden of Eden** and chose to run away from **HIM**. **GOD** caught up with **Adam** and asked him, “Where are you?”

First of all, **GOD** doesn’t need to stomp around to scare us or walk softly to comfort us. If **HE** chooses to make **HIS** presence known, you’ll know it in your heart. You won’t need your ears to inform you. **Moses** simply didn’t have another way of saying that at the time.

Secondly, when **GOD** asked **Adam** where he was, it wasn’t because **HE** didn’t know where he’d been. What **GOD** was asking was where **Adam** was in relation to **HIM** inside, not outside.

We all know when **GOD** is approaching us by the feelings **HE** leaves us with. Usually that **feeling** is fear, and then people run away literally, or figuratively into denial.

The purpose of denial is to avoid fear. In our effort to avoid this negative and upsetting **feeling**, we circumvent our fear altogether by coming to conclusions about **reality** that we can **embrace** intellectually without having to admit we’re here to face emotionally and soulfully.

Logic comes from our head. *Rationality* comes from our heart. When mothers are screaming over their children being attacked by a mass murderer, they’re behaving logically and rationally.

When people tell us that guns don’t kill people, people kill people, they’re not being logical or rational. They’re almost as insane as the mass murderer. They should expect to do very poorly on their final exam.

Sometimes people choose to defy their fear of **GOD** or denial of **HIM** by becoming angry and frustrated instead. Fight or flight? How many people do you know who choose to employ **courage** instead?

Sometimes people experience the **feeling** of **guilt** as well as fear. But whether they feel fear, **guilt** or denial, they can usually acknowledge that something inside them has changed even if they haven't put their experience into words.

Sometimes you look at a sunset or a child at play, and you know that **GOD** has approached you because of the feelings of **mystery** and magic that ensue that you can't put into words.

GOD approaches man through his head, heart and/or soul. What transpires in his head is like a reflection of what transpires in his heart. What transpires in his heart is like an echo of what transpires in his soul.

If you don't look at **Jews**, **Christians** and **Muslims** as the personification of these parts of yourself, you're going to miss **GOD's** teaching moments. You're going to do badly on your tests, which is going to affect your grades, which is going to look **bad** on your transcript.

When **GOD** asked **Adam** how he knew that he was naked, **Adam** exploded in anger, because he was in denial of how he'd **learned** that truth through eating forbidden fruit. He was ashamed of having moved past childhood into adolescence. He was ashamed of having concealed his genitals because he knew something new about how they could make him feel.

Perhaps some modern men are equally sensitive if you provoke them into admitting that they've tasted their semen. This is the juice of their fruits. Having done so makes them as **curious** as gay men who've all tasted the juice of other men's fruits. What difference does it make if you have to admit that you've literally and figuratively eaten forbidden fruit? You know **guilt**, whether the fruit juice was yours or someone else's.

You know what **Moses** was talking about. You know the depth of the **Hebrew Testament** from the very first story. If

you refuse to admit that your anger at **Jews** goes all the way back to our scripture, you're in denial. **Believe** me, there are plenty of **Jews** who deny the depth of our scripture, too.

After **GOD** asked **Eve** what she'd done, she simply confessed the obvious – the **serpent** had beguiled her. The forbidden fruit affected **Eve** differently from how it had affected **Adam**.

What **GOD** didn't do after that was ask the **serpent** what part it had played. Since "he" could talk, you'd think **GOD** would have wanted to get all three sides of the story.

We know the **creation story** is a metaphor because we know that every man's penis talks, just not literally. But we can see that some **Jews** are still arguing among themselves over whether to take **Torah** literally or figuratively.

Nude is what you are without your clothes on. *Naked* is what you're like when you're emotionally exposed and transparent to others. **Adam** knew he was *nude*. The mind knows when our genitals are uncovered. **Eve** knew she was *naked*. The heart knows when our genitals are exposed.

Adam and Eve covered themselves with fig leaves, but for different reasons. Until **GOD** asked **Adam** how he knew he was naked, he didn't **realize** how emotionally exposed he was in the presence of his **CREATOR**. When **GOD** asked **Eve** what she'd done, she already knew she was emotionally exposed before **HIM**. This is the essence of the betrayal some men feel against women that many men refuse to internalize.

Your grades won't be going on my report card. I'm not your tutor. I'm not the **TEACHER** or even **HIS** T.A. I'm not privy to all of your grades. I can't look in the **TEACHER**'s roll book.

I just watch the world go about its business despite how neglected, rejected, dejected, angry and alone I can see that people feel. But my inner adult tells me that they're getting

just what they **deserve**. **Justice** is a much bigger topic than most people are willing to discuss.

I admire my inner child's emotional stance on **justice**, but I now **realize** that my parents felt the same way after the **Holocaust**. Nobody was interested in what they had to say or how they felt. And now look at the world.

There *is* a **GOD**. There *is* a spiritual operating system given us to teach us how to operate ourself from the inside out. But nobody seems to want to listen to me describe it.

So, I'll just honor my parents, whether or not I sell any of my books.

Good for **Israel**

It's not good when **Jews** fight with **Jews**. In the ancient past, our enemies were so focused and strong that we had to be much more united than today. That doesn't seem to be the case anymore.

The **Israelis** can hardly keep a coalition in government for more than ten minutes. Tel Aviv is now as far away from Jerusalem as the Earth is from the moon.

Now that the Jerusalem Pride Parade is under threat of violence from the Orthodox **Jews** each year, you know that gays and lesbians the world over need to shiver in our boots. We're not safe anywhere if these maniacs are this out of control.

Many **Jews** say that the American **Jews** have forgotten who they are. Some **Christians** say that all the **Jews** were much more humorous when we were oppressed. They say today's **Jews** have lost their sense of humor as the result of having won the war on anti-**Semitism**. What they refuse to admit is that we're now in a war against anti-**Zionism**.

If it's wrong to **hate Blacks, Latinx** and Asians, you can't make an exception by **hating Jews** without being called a hypocrite. That's especially true for **Muslims**, although most of them don't yet know it. They don't think of themselves as racists.

Once you no longer **hate** others for the way **GOD** made them in **HIS** image, you refrain from joking about the color of their skin, their belief system and/or sex life. You realize you became cynical, sarcastic and/or obsessive to counter those with a **bad** sense of humor about you.

If a gay **Jew** feels that a **lesbian Jew** has deeply hurt him, what does that say about the relationship between straight male and female **Jews**? What does that say about the relationship between all men and women?

Would sharing a book like this with Deborah and Jennie make things better or worse? I doubt it would change a thing. But I do think that the anti-Zionism in today's LGBTQIA+ community is abominable and a book like this would help our community wake up to GOD's purpose in having created us.

I'm sure my upcoming interpretation of Ecclesiastes will be 180 degrees opposite of most peoples'. Most people see pessimism and hopelessness everywhere because they have little or no sense of humor. They see nothing new under the sun.

I see just the opposite. I see my very creation as the most modern and innovative invention GOD has ever embarked upon. I'm filled with promise in the miracle of my life.

By comparison, Deborah and Jennie are colorblind as well as shortsighted. So are my siblings. They're all banished from a part of their hearts in particular ways. They're wandering aimlessly inside themselves without concern for their soul.

Should straight men take out their grievances against all women or just against lesbian Jews, lesbian Christians and lesbian Muslims? There are many Jewish, Christian and Muslim men who'd say yes.

But these men will always worry about turning their back on a man like me because of what they think I'd do to them from behind. They believe that anal penetration would damn them to hell.

Now, you've got to admit that *that's* funny!

Like strangers

Songwriter:

Dave Davies

Like strangers,
that's what we are.
Darling how can lovers pull apart so far?
Like strangers,
how can it be?
Only days ago, we loved so tenderly.
I love you, truly I do.
And I hope deep in your heart you love me too.
Let's forget that we've been angry.
Let's be lovers like before.
And try not to be like strangers, anymore
Let's forget that we've been angry,
Let's be lovers like before,
and swear not to be like strangers, anymore.

That's a **fantasy!** You can't forget we're like strangers because you can't forget that you're like a stranger unto yourself. **GOD** made you this way. **HE** isn't forgetting what it means to be a Stranger in a Strange Land. [Robert Heinein, 1961]. Why would you?

Waterloo

Sung by ABBA

Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus composed the music.
Stikkan Anderson wrote the lyrics.

My, my, at Waterloo, Napoleon did surrender.

Oh, yeah.

And I have met my **DESTINY** in quite a similar way.

The history book on the shelf
is always repeating itself.

Waterloo!

I was defeated; **YOU** won the war.

Waterloo!

Promise to love **YOU** forever more.

Waterloo!

Couldn't escape if I wanted to.

Waterloo!

Knowing my **fate** is to be with **YOU**.

Wa-Wa-Wa-Wa Waterloo!

Finally facing my Waterloo.

My, my, I tried to hold **YOU** back, but **YOU** were stronger.

Oh, yeah.

And now it seems my only chance is giving up the fight.

And how could I ever refuse.

I feel like I win when I lose.

Waterloo!

I was defeated; **YOU** won the war.

Waterloo!

Promise to love you forever more.

Waterloo!

Couldn't escape if I wanted to.

Ecclesiastes

Why does **GOD** let us get into situations that cause suffering? What's the difference between pain and suffering? Why does **HE** use sticks to teach us? And how are carrots intended to help us help ourself, not just others?

Emotional pain [suffering] forces us to look for **answers** in our heart. Physical pain forces us to look for **answers** outside ourself. Both are sticks **GOD** uses to teach us.

Carrots are given to motivate us to teach ourself to help ourself as well as to help one another. Just being gifted by **GOD** doesn't teach us how to gift one another. We need the wisdom that comes from doing **evil**, getting stronger and then realizing that we need to use our strength to do good.

Many people complain that they aren't a mind reader. They don't know what others are thinking. I've become so sardonic, so bitter about the human race, that I've concluded that most people are spiritually illiterate. They can't read their *own* mind.

To read my mind, I had to learn to perceive the difference between a thought, a **feeling** and a belief. I had to unify the letters I **learned** in the alphabet into words. I had to string those words into sentences I wrote to myself. And I had to amalgamate my sentences into paragraphs and then into 5-paragraph essays to myself that I could then share with **GOD**. This is how I turned my thoughts into **prayers**.

I had to talk to myself and correct my spelling and grammar. I had to correct my moral mistakes. I had to use my logic, rationality, reason and sensibility on myself in words. You don't have to become an English teacher, as I did, to do the same. You speak English well enough. Use it or lose it!

Moses may have described his characters' personality disorders using names **GOD** changed for him. But I don't have that luxury. If I were to change my name, I'd know something smelled to high heaven inside me.

When I examine my thoughts, I find there's only an "I" and a "you," a first-person singular [I] and second-person singular [you] relationship within me with myself. The first-person plural [we] **created** by my mind when referring to myself also includes the **serpent** in my tree or, for a woman, the worm in her apple.

All third-person relationships [he/she/they] in my mind are confounding. The only healthy way for me to deal with these pronouns is through creative writing internally. Dance doesn't address this. Neither do the arts of painting, music and sculpture. I tried them all.

All the arts produce beauty. But literature is the only art that produces the language needed to achieve prayer in the conventional sense of the word. That's why **GOD** gave us scriptures and not idols to communicate with **HIM**.

There's the equivalent of two people inside me who are in a conversation with one another, the "I" in me and the "you" in me. The "we" in me included my penis [boy-toy] until I **learned** from **The Quran** how to include my soul in with my head and heart. That's when I achieve a "we" in me that could combat the "he" below my waist that was always beguiling "us." Such is my mind's understanding of lust, an experience of life I only achieved in adolescence.

Looking closely at my stories [fantasies, dreams and nightmares] can lead to paranoia [fear of myself] unless I **realize** that my mind has no other way of reflecting on myself to actualize self-improvement except through thinking about what I'm thinking about. The words and pictures I create in my mind have to be interpreted. Without self-interpretation, I became a puppet on a string that others used at my expense.

The **Jews** strive for a wise relationship with themselves and others. The **Christians** strive for a loving relationship with themselves and others. And the **Muslims** strive for a loyal relationship within themselves with **GOD** and others.

But unless we learn from one another how to be wise, loving and loyal, we're not going to progress as a species. We'll destroy ourselves.

Knowing how the mind works is paramount to becoming your own best friend.

The I/THOU relationship Martin Buber spoke about must be broached through the I/thou relationship with ourself. If we don't begin by learning how to talk to ourself [I/thou], our conversations [prayers] with GOD [I/THOU] will be fraught with vice and vanity. This is why praying in color is so important in developing a healthy imagination.

Ecclesiastes proclaims **Vanity of vanities! All is futile!** [1:2] The **Hebrew** word **hevel**, [vapor], can figuratively mean insubstantial, vain, futile, or meaningless.

The next verse in the first chapter of **Ecclesiastes** presents the basic existential question with which the rest of the book is concerned: **What profit does a man have for all his toil?** [1:3] **The lives of both wise and foolish people all end in death.** [2:16]

While **Ecclesiastes** endorses wisdom as a means for a well-lived earthly life, the author is unable to ascribe **eternal meaning** to life.

In light of this perceived senselessness, he suggests that human beings should enjoy the simple pleasures of daily living, such as eating, drinking, and taking enjoyment in one's work, which are gifts from the hand of GOD. [internet]

The book concludes with the injunction to **Fear GOD and keep HIS commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. For GOD will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.** [12:13-14]

We're near the end of this book which I've written as an examination of wisdom of the heart. But it's been an interpretation of my life viewed through my mind, as well as

my emotional realm and belief system. It's been about the intellectual wisdom I've attained in my head as well as the wisdom in my heart. I've even included the wisdom of **Hinduism** [tolerance]; wisdom of **Buddhism** [acceptance]; wisdom of **Taoism** [admiration]; and wisdom of **Islam** [**loyalty**] in with my revelations about my own wisdom.

But for me, this only makes the Book of **Ecclesiastes** the greatest error in **The Old Testament** after the initial error in the misinterpretation of the main metaphor of creation by **Moses** as a *literal* story, not a metaphor.

I chose to explore **Ecclesiastes** through name-calling and bullying because I wanted to show you how insufficient all of **Torah** is in validating truth with argumentation once you've found **answers** to the **meaning** of life through love.

But I also want to show the brilliance of **Torah**, and by extension all of **Tanach**, when combined with all the other operating systems **created** by **GOD**.

This is the great **paradox** of life. This is the answer to the **meaning** of life that **GOD** is leading us to. If you don't become more knowledgeable about all seven of the paths to **GOD**, you're going to turn gays and **Jews** into scapegoats. You can see that you're already doing that. Stop it!

Daily living, including the simple pleasures of life, such as eating, drinking and **working**, don't produce nearly enough love of life because most people can't regulate the feelings that accompany those actions. At least that's my opinion of most people.

People overeat, or they eat foods that are unhealthy. They drink to excess, whether that includes soft drinks or alcohol. And they often either **hate** their job or are so addicted to work that they find no **meaning** to life other than through how they make money.

It's only when you weigh the thoughts in your head against the feelings in your heart that you find a balance in your soul that makes the pleasures of life both satisfying and meaningful.

I say all this to *myself*. I'm speaking to *me*. I'm speaking from the "I" to the "you" in me and putting it down on paper for future readers to interpret any way they like. I want my future readers to experience my self-intimacy first-hand.

Naturally, **Tanach** is going to come to no useful conclusions about how to operate the entire human operating system. Learning the first step in a seven-step **process** isn't going to get any complex job done well.

Tanach was **created** by **GOD** to be used directly in conjunction with **The Gospels** and **The Quran** in the Western world, even though these two spiritual steps came much later.

Indigenism and **Hinduism** came before **Judaism**. **Buddhism** and **Taoism** came after **Judaism**. All five came before **Christianity** and **Islam**. If you don't know your way around all seven, I think you should keep your opinions about gays and **Jews** to yourself.

The man who lives in his head is going to know little about how to handle his heart. The man who lives in his heart is going to make huge mistakes when it comes to using his self-knowledge in conjunction with the **beliefs** that he holds sacred in his soul about **GOD**.

Without knowledge of the operating principles of my heart, I remained backward, obstinate and dangerous. I needed knowledge of my head, heart and soul to give up control to my conscience.

It isn't rocket **science** to conclude that one **GOD** gave us all of the world's scriptures because all of them have now become so obviously necessary in order to modernize man's *contents* in conjunction with his human *container*.

We've advanced as a species to the degree that we should be proud of who we are, but very humbled by who we could yet become.

Those who are the most comforted, peaceful and useful to humanity are those whose skills include the operating

principles of all six world faiths and the philosophy of **Buddhism**. Those who've achieved this awareness through other means have just as much to offer as the rest of us, as well as to learn from the rest of us.

What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun. [1:9]

So long as a man lives in his head, he's not going to witness anything new around him because he can see nothing changing, transforming and being transcended from within himself.

The mind can only move from one thought to another. Thoughts have no ability to move through feelings and **beliefs**. A man's mind can't even calculate whether his feelings and **beliefs** are moving him in a righteous direction. He needs his conscience to do that.

Feelings transform a person's outlook on life. When you experience new feelings, you feel transformed inside. And new **beliefs** help us transcend who we were before.

Without changing our mind, transforming our heart and transcending the **beliefs** in our soul with higher **beliefs**, the magic of life disappears. Boredom and mundanity ensue. That's when idle hands become the devil's workshop.

For with much wisdom comes much sorrow; the more knowledge, the more grief. [1:18]

This quote associates matters of the mind to certain matters of the heart. [sorrow and grief]. It flatters the reader into thinking that because he's sorrowful or grieving from losses in his life, he's therefore wise and self-knowledgeable.

The opposite is probably true. Those whom **GOD** has had to punish with enormous pain and suffering have probably been the worst students of life who've been the most contrary, willful and stubborn. [At least I can attest that that's true about me.]

But how many of us have become humbled enough by our pain and suffering to pursue peace with all others, beginning from within with ourself?

Knowledge of the external world only accomplishes a **greater** understanding of **science**, which gives our body more physical comforts. Inner comfort can't be achieved with external knowledge alone. Therefore, we should pursue self-knowledge with the goal in mind of achieving wisdom of the heart. Without self-love, what are we?

I saw that wisdom is better than folly, just as light is better than darkness. But I came to realize that the same fate overtakes them both. [2:13-14]

The man who dies happy is far better off than the man who dies unhappy. If life is a school, then happiness, as elusive as it is, is a great reward worth pursuing. Nobody in his right mind would choose to give up his happiness just because we're all going to die.

The same **fate** only overtakes the happy and the unhappy when they don't have a clue to their **DESTINY**. It's in our pursuit of our **DESTINY** that joy replaces happiness and unhappiness with a sense of divine purpose.

The value of life doesn't lie in survival. The value of life lies in living life and achieving joy. Those who are so *oppressed* by society, *suppressed* by their family, *repressed* by themselves and then end up *depressed* about everything around them – are going to lose interest in seeking joy. They're going to feel that happiness is unattainable, and they're going to be correct in that conclusion.

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:

**a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,**

**a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from
embracing,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.** [3:1-9]

Life is an experience of time and space. Time is measured externally because the sense of time from an internal perspective becomes so subjective that it quickly becomes meaningless. We live in an internal eternity. We live in an external **reality** about the beginning and end of everything.

There are times to do things externally that are intrinsically in opposition to one another. This may seem paradoxical, but this is simply a fact of life. From **GOD's** perspective, now is the right time to do everything. From our perspective, we must learn in a linear fashion.

We must be interrupted to experience impatience. And then we must be interrupted again to overcome impatience. Learning to change in myriad, useful ways in the moment is the secret to doing anything well.

The more you use your time productively, externally and internally, the more poetically meaningful this scriptural passage becomes. It goes beyond the realm of truth. It enters the realm of beauty.

GOD will bring into judgment both the righteous and the wicked, for there will be a time for every activity, a time to judge every deed. [3:17]

Only those who **believe** in **GOD believe** that there will be an accounting of the actions of every human being. Out

of our religious beliefs, we believe that our means will be justified by our ends. We don't believe we'll be harshly judged for our actions because we don't hold a B&W view of ourself because we're not emotionally colorblind.

It's up to every individual to determine the level of moral accountability s/he anticipates having to deal with by his or her end. It's up to me to face my fate by turning it into my DESTINY. My eternal reward depends upon it.

In my opinion, many gays and Jews don't generally consider the ways in which we treat ourself as dependent on our moral accountability to GOD. We don't associate all our actions in the world around us as emanating out of actions from within.

Therefore, we often feel inferior or superior, and then consider ourself expendable, which causes us to get depressed.

We see ourself as a victim or martyr to external circumstances rather than as a victim to our own self-cruelty.

Thank GOD I'm also a member of the disabled community. We have much more awareness of how cruel we can be to ourself when we compare and contrast ourself to others.

But gays, Jews and the disabled are really no different from all other human beings. Our operating system is identical to others' even if our individual behaviors are unique and probably appear to be a bit peculiar.

The more we can all see ourself as occasionally cruel in the way we treat ourself, the more our existential purpose will hold greater meaning. We'll come to feel that we're a necessary part of this world once we feel that *we're* a person, too.

A good name is better than fine perfume, and the day of death better than the day of birth. [7:1]

In the sense that a good name wafts in the air from miles away, a good perfume is a poor substitute. *Covering* up your smells isn't nearly as useful as *cleaning* up your act.

In the sense that a person believes that life is a school, birth corresponds to the day of enrollment and death corresponds to the day of graduation.

Graduation becomes more and more meaningful the more you've **learned**. Everyone who goes to this school to learn about himself hopes to graduate with honors. Everyone who goes to school to conquer, control and impose his **beliefs** on others will graduate forlorn and confused because all his rewards will lie behind him in the external world. Material conquests can't be taken with you when you leave.

For those whose transcript is both good and strong, their graduation becomes a nostalgic, bittersweet event where classmates get together to celebrate their years of hard work in anticipation of new and exciting adventures to come in achieving **Nirvana**, **Heaven**, **Paradise** or whatever they choose to imagine will come next.

For those whose transcript is **bad** and weak, graduation is a frightening event because the **student** isn't prepared for meeting and shaking hands with his **TEACHER**. This is why the killing of the innocent is perceived as such a tragedy for mourners.

Death, like graduation from varying levels of self-schooling, means something different to everyone, depending on how they lived and loved. An *untimely* death is investigated as a crime or an accident. A *timely* death is perceived as a blessing or a curse.

The more love you've gleaned from life, the more at peace you'll be on your deathbed. The more **guilt** you have hanging over your head, the more of a struggle you may anticipate having to go through when taking your final exam. Most people are afraid of *pain*, not *death*.

What really matters the most is your relationship with yourself. If you've produced an intimate, strong bond with

yourself, you'll have the strength to help yourself throughout your life, regardless of what you may have to go through in the external world with all of us watching.

It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, for death is the destiny of everyone; the living should take this to heart. [7:2]

Today, death is a topic most people chose to avoid. They don't want to be involved in the killing of the meat they eat, and they don't want to be involved in the preparation for death of their loved ones. They get squeamish just talking about such subjects.

Taking death to heart begins with accepting your own mortality. The more you can accept your own death as a given, the more you'll be able to accept all aspects of **reality**.

Do not be over-righteous, neither be overwise – why destroy yourself? [7:16]

Righteousness begins in the darkness within. It's a light in the dark that illuminates us to our inner **reality**. It's an awareness of our **guilt** in only being able to express some of all **GOD's virtues**.

When you're so illuminated inside that you can see no shadows, no **guilt**, no room for your own imperfections – you destroy yourself with flawlessness. You become humorless.

It's much wiser to laugh at your imperfections than to deny them. This is why I said earlier that your final exam in the school of life ought to be anticipated as being based on your sense of humor. Start practicing laughing at yourself now. Don't wait until it's too late.

A person's wisdom brightens their face and changes its hard appearance. [8:1]

It's not the wisdom that comes from knowledge of the world that will brighten your face. It's the wisdom of your

own heart that comes from intimacy with yourself that will brighten it.

We all need to develop a hard, outer appearance so we can protect ourself from the disregard and neglect of others. But we can soften that appearance with eulogies to ourself rather than sarcasm of others.

People are dying to be dead and reticent to remain alive. Watch them racing toward death. Nothing could be more amusing. Where do they have to be other than here, now?

There is something else meaningless that occurs on Earth: the righteous who get what the wicked deserve, and the wicked who get what the righteous deserve. This too, I say, is meaningless. [8:14]

I see this as utter nonsense. All that I have, I **des**erve; the good, the **bad** and the ugly. And the same holds true for others. They **des**erve their carrots and their sticks, and you do, too. If you'd like to see others get more sticks and fewer carrots, I recommend you work harder for more carrots by helping them become better people. **GOD** has a way of finding equilibrium if you're patient enough to watch and wait for it.

The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favor to the learned; but time and chance happen to them all. [9:11]

I agree that no one can control time. No one can control chance. These are two forces that effect everyone that no one can anticipate or influence.

But I argue just the opposite for the rest of this passage. The race is to the swift and the battle to the strong. Food comes to the wise and wealth to the brilliant. Favor comes to the learned. And the consequences of how we've used our time and the second chances we've been given affect us all.

This is why it's so important to achieve emotional intelligence. In my opinion, most *luck* is the result of E.Q., not I.Q. The more you're afraid of success, the less you know what's in your heart.

As you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed in a mother's womb, so you cannot understand the work of GOD, the MAKER of all things.

[11:5]

This may have been true 2,000 years ago, but it's not true today. The path of the wind is plotted every night on the weather portion of the news. And how a baby's body is formed in its mother's womb is documented in myriad scientific ways.

Therefore, understanding the work of **GOD** is much easier than it was thousands of years ago. Man has progressed. Like a **student** in a school, a man's relationship to his classes is augmented by his relationship to his teachers.

Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear GOD and keep HIS commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. For GOD will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil. [12:13-14]

The Ten Commandments aren't just five commandments for how we should treat **GOD** and five about how we should treat others. They can also be interpreted as five commandments on how to treat our inner parents and five on how to treat our inner adolescent.

This personalizes **The Ten Commandments**. This turns us into our own guinea pig. If we can't test our theories on how to treat **GOD** and man on ourself, we certainly aren't going to achieve personal knowledge about all our unspoken **beliefs**.

1. **I am the LORD, thy God, who took you out of Egypt**

I am your inner parents' PARENT. I guide you away from your parents. And I will continue to guide you toward faith in yourself.

2. **Thou shall have no other gods before ME**

Don't listen to others without consulting the Me inside you. Don't get overwhelmed by external pressures and then act like everyone else. I am always with you by your side.

3. **You shall not take the LORD'S name in vain**

Don't be overly pleased with yourself. You have inner parents who know how juvenile you can be. If you don't get overly pleased with yourself, you won't become vulnerable to ME and others.

4. **Keep the sabbath holy**

There are seven days of the week. Choose one to rest and take a deep breath. You're often out of breath. Choose a day to heal your relationship between your inner parents and inner teenager. If you can find peace from within, you can spread peace throughout.

5. **Honor your father and mother**

You can't honor your first two tutors in the school of life if you can't replace them with inner parents and then learn to honor them. You can't reach the concept of the FATHER if you haven't achieved the relationship of an inner father to your inner infant, child, adolescent and even your inner young adult.

6. **Don't kill**

Don't kill yourself in an attempt to give yourself what you ask yourself for. Nothing is worth that

much pain, suffering or self-cruelty. If you can resist those temptations in the external world that aren't good for you, you'll be far better off.

7. **Don't commit adultery**

Not committing adultery is a **promise** you make between your inner parents that means more than any other **promise** you make to others. Keep that bond within you, and you'll find all your relationships to **ME** and others will fit more easily into place.

8. **Don't steal**

When you try to kill yourself [#6], you hurt yourself. When you break your **promise** to yourself [#7], you punish yourself. And when you steal from yourself [#8], you ruin your reputation in your own eyes. Don't give yourself reasons to distrust yourself through any of your actions. Nothing is worth losing your good name in your own eyes.

9. **Don't bear false witness**

When you only endure the company of other people rather than learn something from being with them, you lie to yourself and move into denial. Denial turns outer **reality** into a dangerous place because then you can't see the world for what it actually is. Tell yourself the truth, even if that means suffering uncomfortable feelings. Make the **exodus** out of your head into your heart so you can struggle with your feelings to plummet the depth of the family of origin dynamics you've been subjected to. **Israel** means "to struggle with **ME**." Become a modern **Jew**. You don't have to **convert** to **Judaism** to do so. Anyone who isn't emotionally colorblind can do it.

10. **Don't covet**

Don't try to protect what you've got around your body by denying the riches inside it. The power of those inner riches [**virtues**] will become available to you as you face your character defects. It's all a **process** of spiritual evolution.

I feel like a billionaire. I feel like the richest man on the planet. I wish billionaires felt as rich as I do. If they did, they'd use their money very differently. We can see how poor they are, even if they can't. Teaching a rich man how to feel rich is a great mission. I wish more monetarily poor people would take on that goal.

I feel like I'm back in El Sereno Junior High School in East L.A. on my first teaching job when I was in my thirties. I feel like I'm surrounded by Mexican, immigrant kids who walk the streets of L.A. kissing the ground beneath their feet like my father did as he walked the streets of New York City while enjoying his **freedom**.

I see **White** Americans like the kids I taught at Comstock Junior High School in Santa Rosa who walk the streets of **America** today like orthodox **Jews** in **Israel**. They look like they're congratulating themselves as though they've already arrived in **Heaven**.

Many don't see the trail of dirty footprints they're leaving on the ground, on the waves of the oceans and on clouds. They don't see that **Israel** and **America** are places to practice **freedom**, not autonomy. They don't see democracy as scripture codified into law for all.

If you want to learn about **loyalty** to **GOD**, read **The Quran** as poetry, not fact. If you'd like to read about my interpretation of **loyalty** to **GOD**, read my 7-volume, 4,500-page series on **The Quran**. Or just vote and do your part in bringing **Heaven** down to Earth by being kind to strangers.

Mrs. Keller

Dear Helen,

You should be posthumously **married** to Ann Sullivan by the **LGBTQIA+** community. Yours is the greatest love story ever told. You shared a bed. You shared a life. You shared souls.

I can't tell you how much I've enjoyed your writings. I, too, am blind and deaf. I, too, have had to learn to speak in my own special way. And I've had to learn to make sense of the world with the help of others who were very flawed and imperfect.

I'm not literally blind or deaf, although I do **proudly** wear glasses and hearing aids these days. I want people to know I have trouble understanding everyone. I don't want them to take it for granted that anything they say to me in words or body language will pass through me without a struggle.

That said, I can't **believe** everything I see, and I certainly don't listen to everything some people have to say. Being a gay man, a **Jew**, a disabled person and the child of **Holocaust** survivors has crippled me, the way the wind *twists* a tree. I'm *bent*, not straight. I'm *gnarly*, not magnificent. I'm *knotty*, although not naughty. I'm **crooked**, but not a crook. I'm *distorted*, but I'm not spiritually misshapen.

Like you, Helen, I smell the **jasmine** that leads us to **GOD**. We follow a path no one can see or hear. How do you describe something to people that they'll only be able to figuratively smell?

We know that our nose knows. You said, "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart"

Love,
Barry

The West Bank of my heart

Perhaps you can now smell with the nose in your heart that for **Muslims** to have fanatical, religious schools in Islamabad, Pakistan is utterly ridiculous and a waste of their valuable time. They should open religious schools with **Christians** and **Jews** in Ramallah on the West Bank. They're only making **GOD** look like a hypocrite until they learn to express inner peace with **ONE** and all.

Revenge is never the answer. Forgiving your parents for what they couldn't teach you about the **meaning** of life in a modern world is the right answer. The secret to inner peace lies in *never* forgiving yourself.

The center of **Islamic** learning ought to be on the West Bank of **Israel** so **Muslim** students of life will be able to learn as much as possible about **The Old** and **New Testament** while teaching **Jewish** and **Christian** students of life more about **The Quran**. In this way, everyone in the **Abrahamic** faiths will become a **student** of the same **TEACHER**.

The West Bank of **Israel** is a part of **Israel**. No one can have it. The only thing those who are lucky enough to live there can do is to thank **GOD** for living in the **Jewish** nation recreated after 2,000 years. If you're not grateful to the gays and **Jews**, you have no business living in **America** or **Israel**.

I'm done! D.o.n.n.e. Donne! John Donne. No man is not an island! If not for the waves of **emotion** that lap up against me, I'd be all alone at *sea* without anything to *smell* or *see*.

Changing majors

Life is like a school.
If you decide to major in anything,
I suggest you major in **em**pathy for **GOD**,
who's like our **TE**A**CH**ER.
Imagine how you make **HIM** feel
with every breath you take.

The end

Maria died Monday, February 13, 2023,
the day before Valentine's Day.

She was 97.

I saw her the Thursday before.

She wasn't feeling well,
but dressed and came down from her room to visit with me.

I told her I loved her.

I held her tight.

I kissed her on the cheek.

And said goodbye.

My last words to her were:

Me go where you go, Amigo.

Previous Books

I recommend you read my books in the reverse order I wrote them.

28. Knowing GOD in the Biblical Sense of the Word
If you've got a banana and two plums
I'm sure you already know
that your fruits were once forbidden
27. Welcome Aboard My Yellow Submarine.
Our Destination is the North Pole where Santa has his
Workshop.
The melody that accompanies the Psalms
[A book for men with special needs]
26. David Met Jonathan *After* Slaying Goliath
How I made peace with my penis and testicles
25. GOD's Gay Agenda
penis envy or semen envy?
that is the question.
24. Chicken Salad for the Soul
A tale of candor on dry rye with a kosher pickle on the
side
23. Star-Drek
A Science-Friction Adventure to a Very Strange Planet
22. It Wasn't My Heart I Left in San Francisco...
A Philosophic Look at Semen and the Delivery Device
that Emits It

21. How to Find The Man of Your Dreams by Intensifying Your Orgasms
A Self-Help Book for Unicorns and Horny Wild Stallions
20. Lampshade for the Light
of the Last Day of the third Month of the Year
19. Call Me Glinda
a book for friends of Dorothy
18. Home Schooled
why my inner child refuses to go to college
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