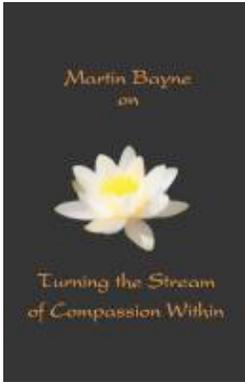


Martin Bayne
on



*Turning the Stream
of Compassion Within*



Martin Bayne, "the Voice of Aging Boomers," describes his 50-year search for the source of compassion within each of us: a search that included a sojourn as a Soto Zen Buddhist monk, a MIT scholar, and a long-term care advocate. "Few of us discover our inner temple in a blinding flash," says the author, "but rather as incremental victories-one day at a time."

Martin Bayne on Turning the Stream of Compassion Within

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Martin Bayne on
Turning the Stream of
Compassion Within

Titles in “The Voice of Aging Boomers” Series

No. 1:

Martin Bayne on Turning the Stream of Compassion Within

Hibernation

Awakened during the night, I open my eyes, and listen to the sound of crepe soles on freshly waxed floors in the long dark corridors outside my hospital room. My mind races like a mouse in a cage—an eternal treadmill of bleak despair—while the “raging voice” inside my head competes for what little mercy and stability still exist.

I startle when I see him from the corner of my eye: a tall black orderly in green surgical scrubs. He rolls a gurney beside my hospital bed. “Martin Bayne?” he asks, matter-of-factly, while glancing at his watch with world-weary eyes.

A nod of my head brings, “I’ll need to see your wristband,” he says, now close enough to smell a subtle confluence of sweat and cologne. After a cursory scan of the plastic band he says, “My name’s Jesse and I’ll be taking you to the tenth floor for shock treatments.” He pats the center of the stretcher and I wriggle across the bed onto the clean, cool sheets with a mix of resignation, excitement and terror.

As the elevator door opens on the tenth floor, I find myself staring at a large red button on the wall, positioned directly below two flashing lights and a sign that unambiguously states “Operating Rooms.” Jessie reaches across my body and punches the button, activating the main OR doors. Once inside, he checks the routing slip in his pocket and wheels the gurney into the room designated “POST OP 2.”

Only seconds later—as we enter the large room and I become aware of gurneys lined up like commercial jetliners waiting to taxi down the runway—my breathing becomes rapid and erratic, and my heart slams against my chest: the first movement of an ancient and grand Paleolithic symphony of flight and survival. “Breathe . . .

slowly and evenly . . . from your diaphragm.” The woman’s voice behind me is gentle yet firm.

“That’s it,” inhale . . . now exhale,” says the forty-something, green-eyed blond woman now standing in front of me. “My name is Gloria and I’ll be assisting Dr. Manguse.” Gloria examines the band on my wrist and crosschecks my name against a list of others on a large bulletin board and smiles, “OK, Martin, the doctor will be here momentarily. In the meantime, we’ll get you ready. Open wide, dear,” she says, placing a large, black rubber airway into my mouth, momentarily triggering my gag reflex. “Are you, OK?” she says.

I stare at the ceiling tiles in the brightly lit room, fighting the urge to panic. Gloria wheels a tray next to my gurney, examines the veins on the back of my hand and lifts a sterile needle from the tray. “Alright, Martin, you’re going to feel a small pin prick.”

An intravenous line is started and I have a sudden urge to bolt from the gurney. My heart begins again to thrash against my ribs and I am nauseous. Gloria rests her hand on mine and I hear someone behind me. “Martin, the doctor’s here—we’re going to get started,” she says.

Doctor Manguse is a tall, balding, third-year psychiatric resident with an authentic smile and warm hands. He circles the gurney and looks into my eyes. “And how are we this morning, Martin?”

“Jz poo da beesd t zlep,” I reply through a mouth full of neoprene.

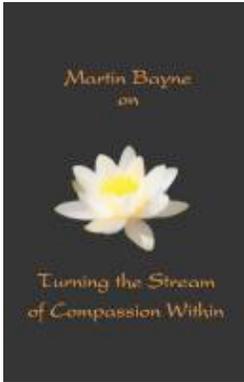
The doctor nods his head and smiles as Gloria sends 30cc. of a short-acting barbiturate rushing toward my heart.

“Jz poo da beesd t zlep,” I repeat to the doctor as I feel the first wave of the warm liquid begin to lift my body into the blackness. The doctor, sensing the urgency in my eyes, leans forward—his ear now directly above my mouth. Slipping away, I summon every last bit of remaining consciousness and whisper: “Just put the beast to sleep.”

A form of curare is administered through the IV line, causing my complete paralysis. Electrodes are attached to my temples and a 150-volt, 900-milliamp shock is delivered, causing a full-blown, generalized epileptic seizure, the first of eight Electro Convulsive Therapy (ECT) treatments I will receive over the next three weeks.

ON TURNING THE STREAM OF COMPASSION WITHIN

It is the Spring of 1969, I am 19 years old, and, for the moment, I have forced the beast into hibernation.



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