

Cathy and Christine, roommates, began e-mail correspondence after moving to different states. They discuss Cathy's recovery from addiction, advice on handling life's challenges, and the deep faith both depended upon to get them along the path of life. Let their experiences help you on your path.

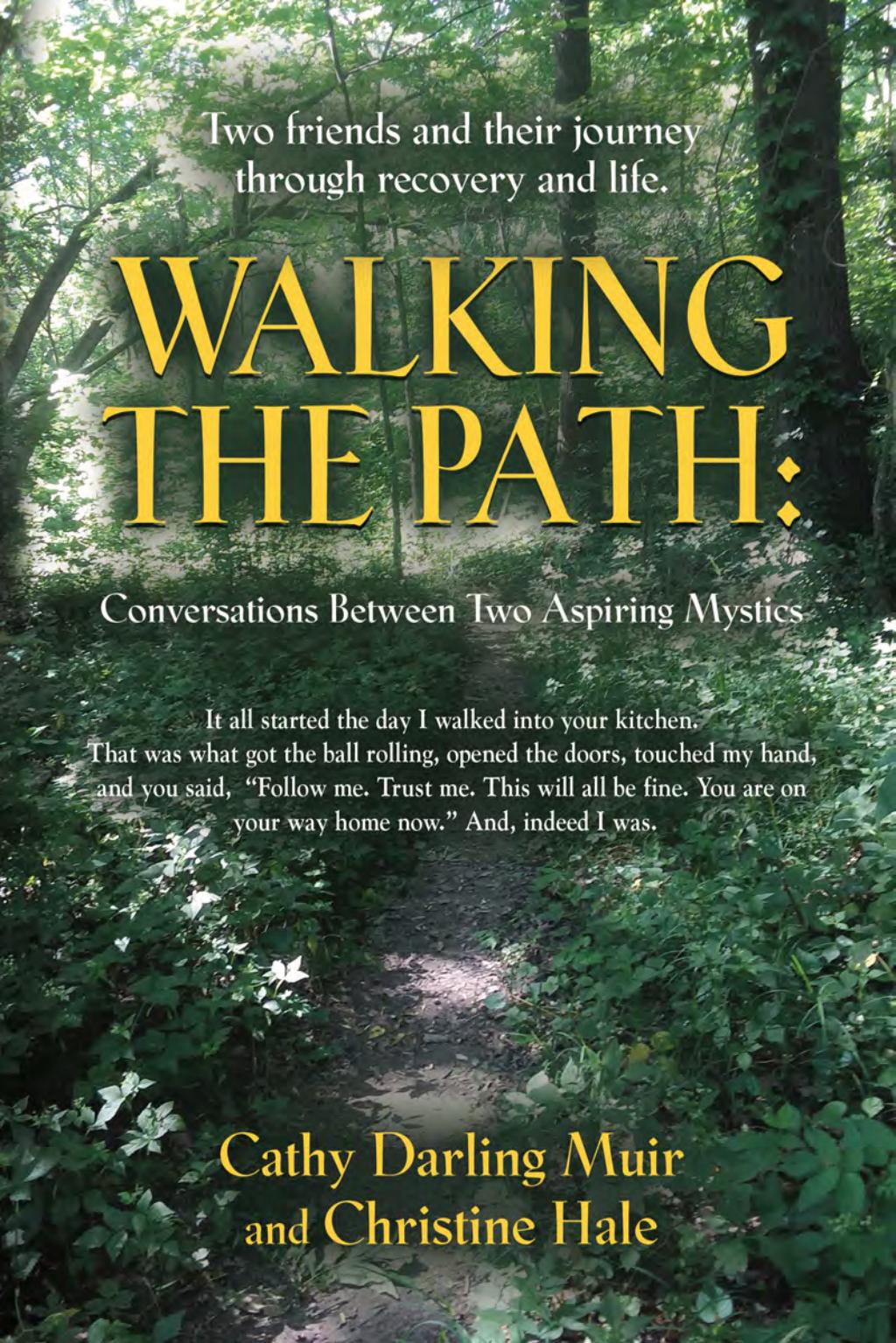
Walking the Path: Conversations Between Two Aspiring Mystics

By Cathy Darling Muir and Christine Hale

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Two friends and their journey
through recovery and life.

WALKING THE PATH:

Conversations Between Two Aspiring Mystics

It all started the day I walked into your kitchen.

That was what got the ball rolling, opened the doors, touched my hand, and you said, "Follow me. Trust me. This will all be fine. You are on your way home now." And, indeed I was.

Cathy Darling Muir
and Christine Hale

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Cathy's Introduction

"The spiritual journey is individual, highly personal. It can't be organized or regulated. It isn't true that everyone should follow one path. Listen to your own truth."

— Ram Dass

Whether we know it or not, everyone is already on some sort of a path.

Where that path leads, no one knows. But once you move forward, there is no going back. Once The Creator becomes real to you, and part of your consciousness, your life will never be the same.

My path began the day I walked into an AA meeting, after having been through detox and rehab and was living in a shelter. At that time, my entire life shifted and I began to believe in a "Power Greater Than Myself."

I had been an addict and an alcoholic since I was 14. I began with speed, and then graduated to "whatever." Anything and everything I could get my hands on, I consumed. I lived in a total fog. From scoring speed from my best friend's brother, to stealing Demerol and syringes from where I worked as a nurse. There was nothing I wouldn't snort, shoot, or swallow. Nothing. My life was about getting high for nearly 40 years. I was in my mid 50's when I finally nearly died, overdosing from a powerful combo of all I was taking at the time, mixed with so much tequila each day, I can't even begin to tell you. My roommate found me nearly dead with my head in the bathroom sink and the water still running.

I moved from the shelter when my 30 days were up. I was lucky enough to begin to collect unemployment from the job I was fired from, due to my substance abuse.

The first apartment I looked at was a room on the third floor of Christine’s “boarding house.” It was a small room, with kitchen privileges. I sat and chatted with Christine for at least an hour, and told her my story. To my amazement, she actually agreed to rent the room to me, and to give me a second chance at life. I could look in her eyes and see compassion and empathy shining through from her soul. We began a relationship then that would be an emotional roller coaster, as I struggled to learn how to live sober.

The fits of rage, the fits of uncontrollable tears, and the craving to numb it all out were very real, and very difficult. But with the help of Christine, who would send me some words of wisdom from her spiritual guide, Julie Redstone (now GurujiMa), and who would tell me straight-out what was real, and what was probably just the insanity of a brain that had been altered for all those years, I began to recover.

From our beginnings there to our adventures on the west coast, and then ending in me returning to my childhood home and rekindling a relationship with my husband, I landed in the mid-west, and Christine, for now, has returned to the house where we first met. For me, there will be no more outbursts, no more blaming or shaming. When things get tough and even Christine can’t straighten it out for me, I now simply let it go, and let God carry my burdens.

These emails are a sort of backwards map of my path. There is no map for the future, there’s no shortcut, there’s no way around the dark times that come in life. This moment is all we

ever really have. And for this moment, I opt for sobriety, and with God's Grace, I shall succeed.

To say the path is easy or seemingly even doable is definitely misleading. Everyone has to follow the one that fits them, their life, their beliefs, their goals and dreams. Mine was to become as close to God as I could, and to come to know my "real" self, the person underneath the addiction. The girl who was raised on a farm and rode horses as fast as she could, with no saddle, hanging on for dear life, but alive as hell. The soul that screamed to come out for 40 years to save me, but I was too deaf to hear, and too high to listen.

Now, I sit in silence each day while my inner voice guides me. Not the one that likes to take away all of life's pain, but the one that wants to help me live life to the fullest, to be my best self, and to find joy in all of God's creation, facing all that comes, even the painful and the dark.

May you discover your own path too, and may it lead you to peace.

Cathy Darling Muir

Christine's Introduction

This book was 12 years in the making, although we had no idea we were “making” anything until recently. Cathy and I were just muddling through our lives, trying to do our best, and offering advice to each other when things got tough.

It started in the fall of 2007, when she came to my house in response to an ad for a place to live. I own a three-family house in a small city in the northeast, and she had just gotten out of rehab for alcohol abuse. Despite a long history of alcoholism in my family, I had no idea what we were in for.

When she sat down in my kitchen to fill out the application, there was some sort of something that passed between us. To this day, I can’t name it or describe it, a kind of recognition or fragment of unknown memory, but we’ve both commented on it and knew that some kind of connection was being made.

She moved in upstairs, and I thought everything was ok until a few weeks later. One of the other third-floor tenants, a student from Saudi Arabia, came to me with complaints about her.

His English wasn’t really great, so he had a hard time telling me specifically what the problem was. But the overall message was clear: She goes or I go.

I asked Cathy to come down so we could talk about the issues upstairs, and she immediately deduced who the complaint was from. She became angry and stomped back up the stairs, muttering things that could get you arrested, jailed, and whipped in Saudi Arabia—accusations related to race, parentage, and sexual preferences.

Although our rental agreement said either party could end the tenancy with 30 days' notice, I didn't have the heart to just toss her out. So I wrote her a letter outlining behavioral expectations and standards, hoping it would be helpful. Surprisingly, she accepted and signed this "contract," and she still has her copy of it.

At the time, in my downstairs apartment, I had a roommate who was a much younger student. She was sweet, but had several practices that made it difficult to live with her. I decided to ask her to swap rooms with Cathy, which was tricky, because my roommate's room was a good bit nicer than the one Cathy was in. I was just honest with this roommate and asked her to open her heart and help someone who was in a challenging stage of life. She thought about it for a day or two, and finally agreed. Thus, Cathy and I became roommates, and everything worked out extremely well. The roommate got along great with the two guys upstairs and formed a work-out-together, party-together trio, and Cathy and I settled into a middle-aged slower pace of life.

Things shifted significantly in '09 when I realized I needed to go across the country to live with my mother, who was aging and ailing a bit, although she still felt she needed to keep up with her reputation as the original 80-year-old party girl at the yacht club. She and I had a very rough relationship based on her alcoholism and poor (ok, non-existent) parenting skills. She kept my siblings and me safe and fed and housed after our father died (I was 14), and she was good at investments and became quite comfortable financially. However, in addition to alcoholism, learning disabilities ran in her side of the family, and she really had no idea how to teach us to function, interact, and relate to other people. Going home to

live with her afforded me the opportunity to heal a very fractured family relationship.

For Cathy, that meant her room would no longer be available, since I'd rented my apartment to another couple. But there was a room on the second floor that she moved into. Because the economic situation at the time was particularly challenging, Cathy was having trouble finding and keeping a job, so I allowed her to stay even though she couldn't pay rent.

Once I was out on the West Coast, we started e-mailing each other, and because I tend to hold onto things, I kept all our correspondences, which at this point is probably close to 6,000 e-mails, most of which are total drivel. (Here's a picture of a cute kitty! Here's a funny meme with a dog! Here's a link to a funny video! Here's an interesting article!) But some small bit of it has been good advice two caring friends have shared when things were challenging over the years.

Then, in January of '20, I received (not conceived) the idea of sorting out the jewels of advice we'd exchanged over the last 12 years and compiling them into something that hopefully some people would want to read—people who struggle with the aftermath of addiction, people interested in spirituality, people interested in personal growth, people interested in human potential, people on their own spiritual journey. Cathy's personal story is one that I believe brings hope and understanding for anyone whose life has been touched by addiction.

Finally, it's also important that I acknowledge fully that this book was not my idea. It was a Gift of the Divine, however

you want to conceive of that. From my perspective, our very lives are a Gift of the Divine, and we spend our time walking the Path of Return and helping others along the way.

Christine Hale

November 18, 2007

Dear Cathy—

I'm going to draw up another rental agreement with you—one that is in addition to the basic one you've already signed. This one is a "behavioral" agreement, and it has two purposes:

1. To help you grow and become more emotionally stable and in control.
2. To make it possible for you to continue to live in this building.

I *fully* understand the distress at feeling rejected and, in the past, have responded exactly the same way you did and said many of the exact words you said at having been fired from yet another job or losing yet another boyfriend. However, I've learned to be stable, control my emotions, and take life's blows with grace, understanding, and compassion for those who are hurting me. At this point in my life, I don't care about romance, and I've been in the same job for nearly 15 years.

You, too, can achieve this measure of stability and peace in your life. And you

can use this growth as a means to help others.

You *must* realize that the tantrum you had yesterday is not in keeping with living in a group situation. Regardless of the precipitating factor (being told you had to move), yelling, cursing, storming through the dwelling and making negative, insulting statements about another resident cannot be tolerated. I believe that this is something that you could not control, but I'm also saying that you must learn to do so in order to function in society.

You acknowledged that you are energetically sensitive. While I am not, I have many friends who are. Nearly everyone is "in recovery" from alcohol, drugs, or both, and they have borne much suffering in their pasts. However, they have also become fully functional adults who have achieved goals far beyond what they ever imagined themselves capable. We will need to *discuss** this at greater length, however. I believe I can be a bridge for you to stability and growth.

With this in mind, I'm adding a few conditions to your continuing to stay here:

1. You must attend AA or NA meetings. These are free and the best therapy available, and every successful "recovering" person I know—and there are many—has achieved emotional

functionality, stability, and success with their help.

2. No more temper tantrums. You can surely understand how such negative and violent energies being emoted will affect the feelings of others throughout the building—even the people on the second floor and the animals would be negatively impacted... especially the dogs and the cats. If you are feeling out of control, *say nothing*, but go directly to your room or out for a walk, and we can talk about it when you are calm and rational, and at a time when I have the emotional energy to be able to deal with it.
3. You must show a willingness to be *razor-sharp honest*, to *listen*, and be *willing to see* the point of view of another person. During our conversation yesterday, I noticed a few things that led me to believe these are areas where you've made a lot of progress, but still need to work on. I italicized and asterisked the word “discuss” above because I felt you weren't able to listen to (perceive) some of the things I was saying.

I understand that being as defensive as you were is a reasonable response and is surely deeply rooted in

much pain and suffering in your past, but now is the time to begin to grow beyond this.

If you feel these three points are unreasonable, then please show this letter to your therapist and get his or her advice.

One more thing: I teach all day and tutor a number of students in the apartment after school—some days are nearly twelve hours. This can be extremely tiring and is often emotionally draining—every student I teach is one-on-one, and much of what I do is as much in the area of counseling and advising as it is teaching. It's important that you are aware of this so if we have something to discuss, I might have to put it off a day or two. I know that waiting is not always optimal, but life isn't perfect.

Chapter 3 — 2010

Note by Christine: There were many emails back and forth on mundane issues related to my mother's broken pelvis, her stay in a rehab facility, planning the trip to Mexico, her actual flight down to the Baja beach house with friends, and Cathy's trip out west. In Mexico, my mother and her friends were met by me, as I had driven down with two of my dogs, Serrie and Felicia (the third, Duffy, staying back home with Cathy, who was also caring for my mother's dog, as well as the house).

After our two weeks in Mexico, shortly before driving back up home, my mother ordered me to tell Cathy she had to leave the house. It seemed related to the week that the two of them were together while I drove down to Baja with my dogs and three cases of wine for my mother and her guests. Cathy's behavior had somehow offended my mother, who insisted that Cathy be out of the house before she flew back from Baja. My mother's demand was surprising, but I had no choice but to come back and throw Cathy out on the street. She and I talked/argued by Skype and also emailed as I drove north from Mexico. Cathy tried to convince me I could change my mother's mind, but I finally had to insist that I was not in control, I did not own the house and I had no power in the situation. I had been forced to be the messenger. I presumed Cathy would go right back to the east coast, but she refused, and wouldn't take the pre-paid return flight and found a place to stay in another town about 25 minutes away. She also had to arrange for care for her cat, Claire.

January 10, Cathy wrote:

I called her and told her I was staying out here. She seemed okay with the news. I told her to go ahead and try and rent out my room, and the furniture and everything will stay, just what is left of my clothes needs to be packed up, and the radio you gave me. Really, that is it.

I asked her to care for Claire, and we talked of Claire coming out here, but I really feel strongly that Claire is where she needs to be, and I am where I need to be. The whole attachment-to-things-you-love stuff is a grim reminder of how painful it is to leave those you love.

But I can't keep fighting the same battles, with the same negativity forever. I must get free. As you know.

So there, it's done.

**January 26, Christine wrote to her spiritual sister about
Cathy being asked to leave.**

I called Cathy tonight and told her the news about Mother asking her to leave the house and be gone before Mother returned from Mexico. Cathy, of course, became very upset and asked why she was so disposable, and I really didn't have a good answer.

She said she was not acting in a professional capacity with Mother because Mother fired her two weeks ago and she was going to stay with me, her best friend. I had no idea Mother had "fired" her.

She threatened to go to a shelter immediately and let us figure out how to take care of the dogs. She's been dog-sitting Coco and Duffy while we're gone.

Then she hung up on me.

Sigh... I'm never very good at dealing with these kinds of things.

I'm going to send her an e-mail and hope she's willing to let me help her—and truthfully, I can't help her emotionally, but I have no idea how she'll respond. I know that if this ends our friendship, it really wasn't a friendship.

January 26, Christine wrote:

Dear Cathy—I've never been able to help you emotionally. I'm sorry.

I've only been able to help you on the most basic economic level. It's my mother's house, not mine. I have no power or control. We are dealing with an elderly woman whose mind is not rational.

I believe that this situation for you is a lesson in containment of emotional issues, which is something we dealt with when you first moved in to my house. There, I could be patient and supportive because I've chosen a life of service. My mother has not.

If this ends our friendship, then it never really was a friendship.

On January 27, Cathy sent Christine a note which Christine had sent her in December about Christine's mother being irrational over her medications and physical condition.

January 27, Christine replied:

I also have every e-mail you ever sent me...

I'm sorry, I have to be very direct about this. This has nothing to do with me and our relationship. However, it does go back to our first, original issue ever:

When living with other people, one must learn to contain one's feelings. Feelings are extremely powerful. Outbursts and overflowing of fearful or negative (dark) emotions have a profound effect on others. If one cannot contain one's fears, angers, frustrations, etc., it should be kept within one's own room.

It doesn't matter if my mother "fired" you previously. It doesn't matter who started it. It doesn't matter that your best friend (me) was not available.

What matters is you were the responsible, more mentally capable person in the house. It was your job to maintain a calm and organized environment. You weren't able to do so this time, but this is part of recovery and growth. I'm very sorry that it's putting you in such a difficult situation. If I could change this, I would. There is still an empty room on the third floor—your original room. It's yours if you change your mind and want to go back.

You've come an incredibly long way. I'm proud of what you've done, and maybe I'm wrong, but I also believe the Universe has presented this so you can see this issue and learn from it.

January 27, Cathy wrote:

I have applied for over 10 live-in situations today. Something will come of that, I am sure.

January 27, Christine wrote:

Oh, I truly hope so! That would be a blessing and a solution.

I'm sorry this happened. We don't always get along with everyone, and we both know how difficult Mother is. It's only because of Julie healing all the past that I was able to come home and deal with her. She really has no clue the effect she has on others and is nearly always willing to place the blame elsewhere.

I'm certainly not perfect, but I try, and I know you do, too. I also think that if I can't contain my emotional state, as has happened a couple of times because Mother can be belligerent and deliberately provoking—that she's able to forgive me because I'm family and you're not.

As for my return on Saturday, that's up in the air. The roads down here have been so severely damaged because of the storms last week that six bridges were washed out and very little traffic is getting through. I may take the ferry across the Sea of Cortez and go up through Sonora State, but that would

surely add time to the trip, and I have no idea how much or where to go.

January 27, Cathy wrote:

What is up with you and rocks-cars-traveling-rain and karma?

It almost sounds as stuck as my *list* karma.

Well... I guess that's not so, unless it's you, and cars-tires-rocks-rain and your pseudo vacation, vacation from nothing.

Pour some more wine into your mother, she'll be fine.

January 27, Christine wrote:

Sounds like you are hitting the ground running. Good job, woman! I'm proud of you. Life throws you a curve ball and you just rebound. I'll pray hard for a great job.

January 27, Cathy wrote:

Off to AA. Hope west coast women are just as good at getting trashed and bouncing back as New Englanders, hehe!

Then later:

Wow! Probably one of the best meetings I have ever been to. No, it was THE best meeting I have ever been to. And I was worried about fitting in and what I should wear, etc.

No, there are some incredible women who live in this area. Wonderful group.

January 28, Cathy wrote:

Just applied for three more live-in positions. Grand total = 14.

How are you? How are the roads? How is your mother? I hope her pain has been helped with the Celebrex. She should get that and stick with it for the near future if it helps.

Oh my god, there I go again, trying to play nurse.

Note: There were many other mundane notes related to computer troubles Cathy was having, living in Vallejo, a trip to Walnut Creek, and possible job interviews.

February 25, Cathy wrote:

My roommate has an emergency, and because she's month to month, she's thinking of leaving here.

Meaning I now again have a dangerous deadline hanging over my head, as do her cats, her son, and the guy she never really had the heart to toss out, who used to live here, because he is a vet and has nowhere to go.

Ugly sort of story. Not the brightest of days.

While that was brewing, I tried to install the new hard drive the computer manufacturer sent me, and it didn't work. For a while there, neither did the old one (obviously, I magically attended to that). And my check didn't show up, yet again, from my former roommate, who mailed it last Saturday, and my Wellbutrin was gone and my hair turned purple.

That might be a bit of an exaggeration, but you get my point.

I tend to see the world collapsing, every 2/3 of the way through. And then bingo, like magic, all things clear up and work out and get done, by the full moon.

I've gotta stop ignoring my innate sense of what is transpiring in my physical being.

The ramblings of a lunatic, they say...

Oh, wait no, it's just another Thursday. And thank you for listening, dear friend.

February 26, Christine wrote:

I'm sure everything will turn out OK. It's the not knowing that's so difficult. But you've always been provided for, so don't worry—you probably don't have to face anything you haven't already. And you are not a lunatic.

Any news on interviews?

March 4, Cathy wrote:

Every day in this room, no matter how long or how intense I meditate and pray, by noon I've been overcome by an energy that I don't know. It renders me useless. It seems to have the upper hand.

I keep trying to push through, but I can't seem to get back to positive. I read what you write back to me, but in the context of you and your mother entertaining for the woman I thought

I was going to try and impress for work, who was going to be a person with great networking abilities, and the visual I get of you two running around and being excited and having life and being animated, is something so far from my reality, it almost makes me sick.

If I even inadvertently land on a thought or memory of the deer, or the sweet air there, or how it smelled and felt clean and was worth fighting for, I cry, and it's a little more insane each day.

I have no therapist. I have no friends. I have no home, I have no pets, I have nothing. And each day it gets worse. I didn't know having nothing could get worse, but it does.

The mail comes and the bank now wants to charge me fees and fines that I can't possibly pay, the computer is non-functional, hard drive, new cords, new batteries, a new something broken, or an old thing breaks. Each day, every day. No solutions. And then you get physically sick, yee haw!

What? What could possibly be in place for me? I can hardly lift my arms to pray. I don't walk or move or go out of the house. I don't know if I'd have the ability to get out now even if someone did want to interview me. I'm scared and I know I am living through fear, not love, but I can't seem to find release from the fear long enough to reach for light.

It's hard to convey to another, but you are the only person I can turn to when I talk about the negativity that can creep up when you are down. And yes, I know. Call Julie.

If only life were that simple and things got solved so easily, with that great magic wand. If only.

March 7, Christine wrote:

I'm wondering if that house/space/neighborhood is carrying a very depressing vibe, and you, being sensitive, are absorbing it like a sponge? In fact, meditation and prayer might be opening you not only to God's light, but also to dark energies that are in your vicinity—something to ask Julie.

Julie would say that this is all part of your soul's path/choice for purification and healing. She might also say you are on the "fast track." She said that about me when my difficulties were particularly intense, and someone asked her why I was suffering so much. That was before I knew I was coming out here—things intensified exponentially because of what I needed to do to get where I needed to be.

March 10, Cathy wrote:

I forgot, I got to sing Happy Birthday to my granddaughter over the speaker phone, while Pleasance was driving somewhere in the car. That was the best thing ever. Just a quick hello, but I have not heard her voice since before Thanksgiving. It was huge for me.

Now I just have to remember to back off, and not get too emotional.

Happy day!

March 11, Christine wrote:

I'm glad you were able to keep in touch with your beloved littlest one. Pleasance will come around sometime.

March 16, Cathy wrote:

I was watching the YouTube of Julie's about clinging early today. Don't know why. Was just browsing for new meditation fodder. And then I got an email from my ex-husband with the pictures of our granddaughter's 2nd birthday party.

I knew it would be bittersweet and painful, and it was. Very. But having watched the "Clinging" video today, and bearing in mind the reality of the situation (*not my fantasy version*), I know this pain will dwindle throughout the day, as I continue to live in the light. When I did attend the party last year, I felt like an outsider even then, looking in at the party from a far-away location.

And when Pleasance didn't even ask me to spend the night last year, when it was clear everyone else was, I felt so out of reach and distant. So remembering today that the distance was already there, before the miles were actually laid down or known about, or even in someone's wildest imagination thought about, there was a huge chasm.

The miles just made it more sure, and clear, and visible.

I'm so glad you are there to talk to, and understand what these words mean. It means a lot, and I thank you.

Happy Tuesday. 'Nother job interview Thursday, yesterday's

in Oakland was good, second interview to be set up next week.

March 16, Christine wrote:

You are beginning to see more clearly all the time—the fog from years of substance consumption is starting to lift. This is beautiful.

March 23, Cathy wrote:

I hate it here in this house. It's making really sick. I can't get out. I hate it here. I cannot breathe.

March 24, Christine wrote:

I'm sorry. I wish I could help. Keep up hope. Watch Julie's videos on YouTube. It's all part of purification. Listen to the Dharma talks.

You do know Julie is taking a “break” from some of her activities? She’s not seeing people individually, she’s not meeting with the Tuesday or Saturday groups. The only things she’s doing right now are the Wednesday meditation and the 2nd and 4th Sunday gatherings. These are all available on Skype now. I don’t expect to see much writing—she’s already taken a break from the blog, and there are fewer YouTube videos these last few weeks. It’s also possible that she’ll end up cancelling Gatherings, too.

She’s done this before when the energy changes have been intense, and it’s likely that the increases may be part of your difficulty, as well. She suffers terribly when she goes through

these “retreats.” The previous one lasted for two years, and I don’t believe Julie left her house. Gatherings were held at another house, and no one saw Julie at all—only one person could visit her. Then, at every Gathering, she would talk about what Julie was going through. No sleep for months, terrible pain, wracking pain, barely able to eat, barely able to sit up.

My belief is that there’s another one of these bigger energy shifts occurring at this time—and it will likely last through April, which she mentioned in a recent e-mail. This is the first time she’s made any mention of an ending date. That’s why she has to take a break from teaching and counseling—she has to process planetary darkness as it’s releasing and being transformed in the Light, and at times when it intensifies, she can’t do “double duty:” teach/counsel and tend to the transition.

March 24, Cathy wrote:

I’m quickly losing all faith and hope. I see no way out. I’m tired of trying. I’m in pain and can’t get help. I’m in pain and I can’t move or breathe.

March 24, Christine wrote:

I’m sorry. I don’t know how to help you. All I can say is all suffering is for good and will eventually bring the Light. That is God’s promise. That, and there is always someone worse off than you are, so count your blessings rather than looking at the deficits. You have a roof over your head and a sober house and...

March 24, Cathy wrote:

Okay, better now. I can breathe with the pain. Julie's voice and message are always so powerful. I am so grateful.

March 25, Christine wrote:

Julie doesn't talk specifically about this, but transformation is really a death. You may rather be dead at times, but you are in the process of dying—the old you has been dying so the new you can be reborn and resurrected. It just takes time. Jesus' crucifixion was an example for us to follow—that's why he said we would do the same thing as he, and greater. His was particularly painful and gruesome, but he got it over with in less than 24 hours. Our deaths are less tortuous, but take longer, that's all.

March 27, Cathy wrote:

I have a \$50 job interview today in San Mateo. It cost over \$15 at least for the tolls, a bunch for gas money, and then for my roommate to sit somewhere for an hour or so while I interview. I feel it necessary to pay for her time, as well.

Gosh, at this rate I'll be owing people money just to interview me. It ain't easy, and it sure the hell isn't cheap.

I wish to hell I could go home. I wish to hell I had a home. It won't be much longer till I either do have a home, or I don't. And there are lengthy waiting lists to all the shelters here. That's why there are so many homeless people. With the budget cuts here, they are having to close shelters, not expand them as people got foreclosed on, and as people lost their jobs. If I had a tent, I would feel a lot better.

Scary days, Missy. Scary days.

March 27, Christine wrote:

Thanks for keeping in touch. I'm sorry there's nothing I can do, and am wondering if by helping you I didn't help at all. Maybe you should call around to the thrift stores or check out Craigslist for a tent. You can certainly survive out here with a tent—although where, I don't know.

If you want to go back to the east coast, the ticket is still open—I just have to make a reservation.

March 27, Cathy wrote:

Are we still friends then, even? I mean, I still consider you a close friend. I would still like to go and do something every now and then. Do you?

I'd go back east in heartbeat, if I had a place to go to. But I don't now.

I wanted to stay out here, where you are. Not a town 45 minutes from you. And the reason I didn't ask your opinion about where I am now was because you were holding a shotgun at my head, as I remember: "Deadline... deadline... you got two days... deadline," and so I took the first thing I found. Not because I thought it was a good place to go to. I had no choice but to come, remember?

So yes, in thinking you were helping me by having me come here, you have pretty much fucked up my life as I knew it. No cat, no home, no nothing.

But you didn't know then how it would all play out, and I made the decisions. Bottom line, my life, my fault. I just should have said no a few times ago.

It's all hindsight now... I just don't know how I'll get my stuff from the house, or where I'll put it. Not that it had a lot of value to anyone other than me. But it matters to me. It's my stuff. Sure wish I had my summer clothes now.

Oh, well. Good night. Hug that dopey dog of yours. I miss him so.

March 28, Christine wrote:

Yes, we're friends.

When you get to a time when you have to move and end up needing someplace to store things you can't keep with you, let me know. I'm sure there's space here up in the attic.

March 28, Cathy wrote:

You didn't ask how the costly interview went yesterday. Well, they hired me contingent on me passing all of the tests, and me getting my certifications up to date. So I got the job, if I can afford to get a physical and TB test done. They gave me a check for the \$77 fee to get my finger printing done (now just how *do* I bury that past conviction I got for being an ax murderer?).

However, for real, I don't know if I will pass the physical, as I am in a great deal of pain, and that's gonna be hard to hide.

I'll try and gulp down a bunch of Advil before going, I guess.

The drug screen should be alright, except for that night last week when I went out with my roommate's son and smoked crack. Ha!

We shall see. Just got an email from another job I had sent my résumé to, and it's to care for old people in Redwood City. That sounds like a better opportunity, actually.

When it rains jobs, it pours jobs. Or so it seems. No one wants you till somebody else wants you.

Mar 28, Christine replied:

OH! YEAH! SORRY!

HOORAY!!! So, tell me what the job actually is?

March 28, Cathy wrote:

Direct care for three mentally ill women, in their 20s, who also have cognitive loss. I would live there four days and then be off and come back to my roommate's for my days off. So I would go from one nut house to another. One I would pay to live at, and one I would be paid to live at. It sounds doable. For at least as long as it would take till I could save up enough to get the hell outta here and get a room closer in a sane and suitable house. Right?

May 8, Cathy wrote:

Hey, is there a meditation tomorrow?

May 8, Christine replied:

Not that I know of. Julie is on “retreat,” meaning that she limits her contact with people because it’s too difficult with the increase in energies. She’s even limiting the amount of time with the Tuesday and Saturday groups. There will be a gathering, but it will only be an hour.

May 8, Christine replied:

It might seem sad, but usually when Julie withdraws, it’s because changes are taking place. She still inhabits a human body, and it is subject to limitations. That’s just the way things are.

And actually, this time she is still available, if on a limited basis. There was one time when she withdrew for about two years and saw no one, absolutely no one except Marie on rare occasions. She didn’t take e-mails or phone calls, see anyone for counseling, there were no gatherings or group meetings. She didn’t leave the house to shop for groceries, even.

Marie brought her food, and no one else could come to the house. A few of us continued to meet at Kathy and Andrew’s house twice a month for the Gatherings, but that was it. When it started, we had no idea how long it would be. In my mind, Julie was undergoing a kind of “crucifixion” because of the transformation of the darkness, and Marie always spoke of how much Julie was suffering. She was in physical and emotional pain, which Marie said intensified every time she

visited. Marie also said Julie hardly ever slept—and that was the only time she had any relief from the pain she was in.

So her “withdrawal” at this time is not a bad or sad thing, it’s just what is going on—another thing that we are being asked to wait through. Julie did tell us that most of the time when she’s not meeting or counseling, she’s in another state that she can’t describe because it’s not something we’ve ever experienced. She hasn’t talked about being in severe pain like she was before, but she says when the energies are more intense, as they are right now, she has a hard time transitioning from one state to the other—in fact, she cut our last Tuesday group short by 15 minutes, and it was understood by everyone that she was getting more energy that was making it hard to function on a more human level.

This time, when she sent the note saying she would be limiting her contact, she said it would be through the end of April, but things don’t seem to have let up, and may have intensified, so things could change. So she is even more limited, or they could loosen up so she is more available.

Note: In June, Christine made a trip back to her home to see friends and check up on the house. Many notes of a mundane nature were exchanged on various topics, including what to do with Claire, the cat Cathy left behind when she went out west. Claire was eventually adopted by the next-door neighbor, who has other cats and has done rescue work with feral cats. Claire has had a long and happy life there.

In the meantime, Cathy moved from the house with the roommate and was staying in a hotel on her three days off each week.

June 25, Cathy wrote:

I had breast pain last week, and I went to the E.R. here. They did a chest x-ray and diagnosed it as inflammation of my ligaments attached to my breast bone (rib cage). Well, the pain got worse instead of better, so I returned, and that nurse ordered a mammogram. I had the mammogram and an ultrasound and blood work yesterday, and they found some suspicious masses. So they scheduled me for a CAT scan today and a surgical consult for a biopsy next week.

The biopsy will be soon, and I will let you know when and how that goes, right after.

I was hesitating telling you, as I know your mother is filling your time with medical issues already. But I also am now feeling a bit anxious and just wanted a friend. Hope it's okay.

I miss you and the dogs, but right now the pain is so bad it would hurt to play with Duffy.

How's your mother?

June 26, Christine replied:

I'm distressed to hear of your medical issues. That is indeed scary. I had something like that happen to me when I was in my late 30s, but it was all cysts, which the doctor aspirated and that was that. I never had any since. At the time, I was totally freaked out.

From man's point of view, I guess the good news is you're at least on an affordable medical plan. Spiritually, you are certainly cramming in a lot of experiences in a short time!

I'm not trying to be glib, just acknowledging what your soul has chosen to do. I'm still not sure why it's so important that the human part of us suffers so, but can only trust that there is a greater reason.

Keep listening to Julie's CDs and watching her YouTube videos, and remember that waiting is a sacred act.

Mother is ok—considering that my sister and I are having a terrible fight. I made the mistake of telling my sister she should stop drinking. That started the fireworks. Actually, it isn't so much fireworks as she's totally withdrawn behind locked doors. I feel awful, and angry that I still get angry at her snide remarks, obsessive-compulsive judgmental behavior, and passive-aggressive/withholding.

Mother had planned to take us to the local restaurant for dinner tonight, and I was really looking forward to it, but when my sister realized I was going, she refused to go, and Mother and I decided to just stay home and have soup. Then since I'd packed to go home early—this morning, I tried to leave, but my sister, who doesn't want to deal with Mother, suggested that she go home with me. That's what Mother wanted to do, so now, instead of getting out of this toxic environment, I have to stay another night and deal with the fact that half of my stuff is in the car.

It's too complicated.

On the other hand, this morning Mother was having another "spell" when she realized I wanted to go home right then and not stay for this afternoon's charity event we came up for. I figured my sister wouldn't go if I was going (like what

happened later over dinner), and I finished packing to go home. That way I'd be out of the house and not at the event, and my sister could hang out with all her friends there. They had already decided that I would go home on Tuesday, and Mother would stay till Thursday and come home with my sister. But when I realized she might play martyr and not go to the event, then I decided to try to leave.

So when I was loading the car to leave at 9:30 a.m., Mother started having palpitations. My sister deigned to come out of her office where she is so busy all the time doing so much for everyone that asking one little question brings on an attitude of "I'm too busy to deal with YOU." My sister asked Mother if she had pain in her jaw, and mother said not really, and then my sister asked her if she had indigestion, and mother said no, and my sister said heart attacks in women start with indigestion and go to sharp pain in the jaw, so since Mother's heart was only pumping very strongly and not as fast as she thought, it was probably an *anxiety attack*. Now, that's starting to make sense!

If we can get her on some meds for anxiety, that could well take care of the problem.

At any rate, I'm in my room, my sister is in her room, and Mother is alone downstairs watching *Criminal Intent*. It's been a very, very bad day. At least for Mother, it's a good TV night.

June 27, Cathy replied:

I'm so sorry. Maybe I'll call you. I'm sitting in this hotel room feeling absolutely miserable, so perhaps I'll call you up and whine.

And you can explain what happened with you and your sister. I didn't know she drank. Your mother, I knew, but not your sister.

June 28, Christine replied:

The alcohol roots in this family run deep, as do the ADHD roots, mostly on Mother's side. ADHD and substance abuse go hand in hand. For me, the substance abuse was marijuana for a few years in my 20s, but then I discovered the spiritual path, and giving it up was extremely easy. I drank, but never really liked it that much. With friends who drank, I'd have one or two to be social, and on very, very, rare occasions get plastered, but I had to give it up completely when it started tearing up my digestive system shortly before you moved in. That made it really easy to keep alcohol out of the house for your sake, although I never drank tequila. But Mother and my sister drink every night, without fail, and have for all of their adult lives.

June 28, Christine replied:

Since Mother is still up in the Sierras with my sister, I might be able to watch that documentary you told me about. However, if my sister gets too aggravated with Mother, she'll figure out a way to come home early, even if it means giving up something she really wants and has planned to do, allowing her to be a martyr. And she always accused Mother

of doing it. Mother does, but not nearly as “well” as my sister.

June 28, Cathy replied:

Things still not quite settled, I take it? I am feeling so ill at ease I can hardly type.

Gotta chill for a bit. How are you doing in this challenging time?

June 28, Christine replied:

I was pretty much OK as soon as I got out of the house up in the Sierras. My sister knows very well how to make someone feel unwelcome. Now I’m back at my mother’s and cool with wet clothes in the hot weather, although it’s cooled down a bit. Mother would have turned on the A/C, but it’s going to be cool tonight, so I’m going to open some windows and hope flies don’t come in.

Will probably spend the night watching Netflix—something I want to see, but know Mother wouldn’t appreciate.

Note: On July 5, Cathy called Christine extremely upset concerning her cat back east not being cared for, and forwarded an e-mail from the next-door neighbor who was filling in taking care of Cathy’s cat and a former roommate’s cat.

July 6, Christine replied:

Hi—When I read what our neighbor wrote, I got a totally different sense of what is going on over there.

The cats are being taken care of. They were not shut up in the apartment for three days with no food or water or open windows or fan—the impression I got from what you said.

I know you have many worries and burdens—not enough money, not a great place to live, being separated from your cat, your medical issues. I know all of these things will be taken care of in time. Just hang on and don't sweat the small stuff, because in the very big view of things, the cats are the small stuff—important, but small.

By the way, yes, you were melting down yesterday, but you were able to listen to a cooler head and respond. *This is very, very big progress for you.* Good job! The last time I had a major meltdown, I was standing right in front of Julie, and I couldn't shift my frame of reference to a new and better emotional state.

Note: Between early July and Cathy's next note was an event that was a bit of a setback for her. In preparation for this book, Cathy wrote:

Much of this time was a blur. I was having my first breast biopsy done, and they had given me pain pills for my breast pain. I was confronted by the staff at my job (the other women), who all said I didn't do my share of the cleaning. I felt attacked. I knew they didn't like me. The three residents that we watched were very, very emotionally disturbed and

kept trying to sneak out to go to the city. Sometimes they did. It was a mess.

Anyway, the night they confronted me it was pretty late, and I took my purse and pills and I left. I intended to stay somewhere for the night, but I didn't have much money. I did have enough for a big bottle of tequila, which I drank all the pills down with, and then I lay down on the ground and went to sleep. I was found some hours later in the middle of the night by the cops. They took me to the hospital. It was an awful experience. The only thing I remember clearly was another male patient urinating on the floor and the staff ignoring him. I couldn't leave the room because they locked you out of your room to make sure you didn't sleep all day. I'm used to crazy, but that was way crazier than I've been around.

Anyway, a man from a group home came and interviewed me. It was a step-down type facility in a beautiful neighborhood. He couldn't believe I had been held in the hospital for five days. It was a low point. But that's what led up to my placement at the group home. It was such a nice, nourishing place with lots of helpful group meetings. But then, I ended up in the shelter because there was nowhere to go after that.

I met a male friend there, who I was going to marry, right up until he dumped me for his high school sweetheart from Wisconsin. They remain good friends of mine, and were key in me coming back from the dark place and finally getting home to the mid-west. They even brought me to the train when it was time for me to go. West coast, you know, that whole other-world.

July 24, Cathy wrote:

I am okay, and they do have visiting hours on Saturdays and Sundays. I would love to see you. I can go anywhere around here you might want to go (very nice dog park nearby).

We have many little coffee shops and such in this section of town. Let me know if you get thirsty for some tea, or a bun. I am thirsty for a bun and some dog.

I love you, and please tell your mother hello, and that I am fine.

They finally medicated me yesterday, after five days of very few meds, very little sleep, and not much eating. I had to throw a temper tantrum to get the doctor to listen, but that worked. He did. And I slept for the first night since arriving here.

It was pretty hellish, but I never once lost sight of the Light, and I knew all along that I was only playing pretend mad, because I really just always know the Light is within and around me, forever and ever. And then even some more.

How's Julie? Any word?

Tis late, I played much basketball and pool today, so I am tired. I also did karaoke for the first time, and made a beautiful tiny beaded bracelet for my granddaughter.

The residents and staff here are top notch, and very smart, and the groups are exciting and motivating.

I love it here.

Tomorrow is my day to cook for 21 people, and my cooking buddy said we would make Tofu something (I was sleeping when he volunteered me), so I think there is a good chance, for the first time in recorded history, this group home will have to order pizza to be delivered, for everyone. ;-)

Not really, we will muddle through. The guy assigned to cook with me is my favorite resident here. He is a young man, early 20s but a very old soul. Since the first day he “got” me, and I him. It’s nice like that.

Anyway, I’m babbling. One of the residents who lives here was raped and assaulted, and left for dead by a stranger a year or so ago, and made ass-kicking Baklava tonight. Aaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhh... life is grand.

Write when you can. I have gardening duties early, and am going to have coffee with an ex-resident who visits sometimes, but the rest of the day is an open sort of book.

August 7, Christine wrote:

I spoke with my closest friend in the Light Omega community today. She's been sober for over 20 years. I told her the difficulties you've been through. She said that when she was in early recovery, for the first five years she felt crazy and couldn't control her emotions and was crying much of the time. From what she said, it seems like what you've been going through is "normal!"

September 6, Cathy wrote:

I have a new roommate at the group home. The amount of negative energy that she emits is almost unbearable. Being this close to her is making me sick. Yuck.

I thought I wanted this new roommate because the last one snored and I couldn't sleep, but...

I will pray.

September 7, Christine replied:

Your roommate could be mentally ill and carry an incredible amount of darkness—she does not realize what she carries or how her behaviors/feelings contribute to and create the dysfunction in her life—or the effect she has on others. One does not have to be a therapist to see self-destructive tendencies—from the physical aspects of the piercings and tattoos and body image to her willingness to prostitute herself for drugs (or whatever she was going to get out of that “ threesome ”)—and she thinks it’s cool and OK to do so.

For you, not being in control of your life is extremely difficult. It forces you into situations where you have no choice about the energies that are around you, and since you are in early recovery, you are not purified enough, strong enough, or spiritually astute enough to protect yourself. Of course, others in your life have also been in this situation—and been forced to deal with the negative energies that you have emitted because alcohol and drugs gave you “ permission ” to dump whatever darkness you didn’t feel you could carry anymore (remember what happened when you lived on the third floor?). I’m not being judgmental or

coercive, but am hoping that you will have a healing by coming to a greater and much deeper understanding of this principle. It's easy to say "What goes around comes around," and vice versa, but that's just on a mental level. Living it brings it to a deeper emotional/psychological/feeling level so a deeper level of healing can begin and the beginnings of wisdom are generated.

A Taoist would celebrate the opportunity to learn something useful. Most of us in the west just bemoan our suffering.

September 7, Cathy replied:

I disagree with "spiritually astute enough." I was just venting to you about the negative energy that is around her. I fully understand my part in the situation I have placed myself in, and the lack of control I have over my surroundings. Even sharing a room with her has not stopped me from carving out a "sacred" meditating spot, where I spend my time in close contact with my higher self.

September 7, Christine replied:

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to come across as judgmental. Sounds like you are doing the best you can in trying circumstances. I hope things are much better very soon.

**September 16, Christine forwarded this message from
World Blessings:**

An Important Moment on the Earth

September 16, 2010

Dearest Beloved Ones,

All love and blessings to you at this challenging moment in the transformation process that is happening on the Earth. The energies of separation and fear are attempting to gain a foothold in the new energetic landscape that is being created by the expansion of light.

These attempts are being fueled by an acceleration of the process of purification, and are in large part only successful to the extent that human beings allow them to be. It is very tempting to give in to the energies of fear, anger, despair, or hopelessness at a time when so many problems are visible and appear to have no solution.

Truly, beloved ones, you create your own realities both individually and collectively, and although it is not possible to fully understand this from the level of the mind, your heart knows it to be true. Your soul remembers why you came to the Earth, and the sacred purpose that you are here to fulfill. The soul remembers, even during times when heavy blankets of negative energies attempt to cover your awareness and cause you to forget.

Beloved ones, at the present time there are energy forces amassing in an attempt to halt the forward movement of light on the Earth. In your daily life you may witness these energies in your thoughts, and in the behaviors you witness around you. What is most important is that you be aware of what is happening, and that you choose the path that most resonates with your soul's purpose.

God always provides Divine choice at any moment. There is the choice to open to love, to light, and to the purpose that you are here to serve. There is also the choice to resonate with fear, and to choose actions, thoughts and decisions that are based on the belief that one is alone and separate.

Should you choose the path of love, there are no promises of abundance, or an instant resolution to all of life's challenges, only the simple and pure alignment of your soul with spirit, with God, and with All That Is. The alignment with light opens new possibilities for healing, for transformation, and for the fulfillment of your heart's truest and deepest desires.

Should you choose the path of love, the light you carry will grow, and with that, new experiences will come your way emotionally, energetically, and in your physical body as it aligns with light. You may be challenged as you encounter energies which are opposed to the expansion of light. These energies can create fear, however are not stronger than God's light.

At this time many illusions are falling away from the eyes of spiritual seekers who are discovering mixed motivations within themselves in their pursuit of light. A true spiritual path serves God, and all of humanity, and aligns the soul with their true soul purpose. A true path releases the soul from excessive preoccupation with the smaller self, and helps the soul turn towards their true, larger Self. A true spiritual path opens awareness to the reality that all souls are One in God, and that there is no separation between self and other.

Beloved ones, the current economic challenges on the Earth are the result of a long period of imbalance, where a minority of people held the

majority of the wealth and abundance of humanity. In this scenario, many people suffered or even died from lack of the basic physical sustenance that is needed to continue life. This sad reality continues to this day, with untold amounts of suffering happening every day that could be easily remedied by a shift in consciousness by those who hold large amounts of wealth and are capable of creating change.

Beloved ones, at the present time more than ever, what is needed is a large scale shift in consciousness, which would instantly shift many situations that are currently intractable. It is not possible to transform others; however it is possible to transform your own consciousness, and your own world.

In your present circumstances, look towards the areas where you can bring more light, and where you can be of service to others. Look towards your heart, and to where your heart is longing to go, that perhaps you have not given yourself full permission to follow. Look towards God, whose love and light shines equally on all souls, regardless of their status, beliefs, or physical circumstances, and who desires to bless all of humanity through your eyes.

See with God's eyes the preciousness of all the souls in your life, no matter how difficult or challenging. Ask and pray how you may be of service to bring more light to the Earth during this time. God's love and light will respond and shine upon you and bless you, and bless all those in your life that will benefit from your love. We give great thanks for your love, light and presence during this important time on the Earth. With all love and blessings, Amen.

Note: Shortly after this, Cathy got a job caring for three elderly women. She lived at their group home, but again, had to stay elsewhere on her days off. She also met a gentleman who became a romantic interest.

October 31, Cathy wrote:

I had a good hike and meditation today. I almost lost my job last night when my relief was two hours late because her cheerleading gig ran overtime. My boyfriend had to sit and wait.

He is living in Milpitas now, so it's a drive to come and collect me for my days off. Anyway, I still have a job, but barely. My emotions got out of hand again. But I have not been able to meditate regularly and to connect with the Light. Today, I made a commitment (recommitment) to get back to the ways that keep me in check. So my boyfriend got my tears this time, not you. They were only brief and relieving tears, anyway.

I miss the doggies. Kiss and hug them, please.

November 1, Christine replied:

Glad you still have a job. Containing your stress is a major accomplishment. It'll happen again to give you another opportunity to "purify" the stressful feelings.

November 4, Cathy wrote:

I've given my two-weeks' notice. One of the resident women went into the hospital being a partial care patient, and came out a total care patient. No weight-bearing on her legs, etc. Totally incontinent, agitated, and unhappy. All of the time. Not appropriate for residential treatment. She has end stage congestive heart failure, plus dementia. Even her daughter knows she is not getting the degree of care she needs.

Soooooooooooooooooooo... it's back to the shelter, or at least I'll have enough money for a room for a couple of days. We shall see.

November 4, Christine replied:

Sorry this isn't going well. At least your boyfriend's there to support you, and you know how to get back in the shelter.

November 4, Cathy replied:

Yes, it's not so bad this time. I'm not afraid. I'll find the right job and situation. It's out there somewhere. Or not.

I'm beginning to question my ability to care for others. I'm not sure I can. I can hardly care for myself. I need a job that is not one where someone is dependent on me for everything. I think it's time to make that assumption, and to realize my limitations.

I used to be able to remember everything for four people, myself included, but not anymore. Age has a way of making

those abilities decline, as you know, and I have to be realistic.

So, there it is.

November 5, Christine replied:

At least this time you've made a rational choice—for good or bad—but not one based on wild fear and emotion, nor are you blaming someone else for what's going wrong. BIG change!!!

As for today, I have to spend the day cleaning—it's been two weeks since the house was vacuumed, and my mother has been patient, but I sure wish we had a cleaning person!!!! I absolutely loathe, despise, and detest doing it. But it has to be done because tonight her friends are coming for the weekend—some fancy dinner at the club tonight which I am actually invited to—Mother has deemed my manners not so disgusting that I can't come. Dinner will be good, but since it's totally lacking in spiritual content, it will be a challenge for me to get through.

The conversation and interaction are so incredibly shallow and one-dimensional I can only sit there, wondering how intelligent people can be so consumed by total drivel, and long for the coming change when people's hearts will open and we can be real with one another. That, and I can remember how, at one Light Omega dinner, I saw Julie lick her knife!!! I suspect she got Guidance to do it—and I'm pretty sure no one else saw her. Since my mother has always been so critical of my manners, I feel sure it was just a way

for me to be reassured that manners are nice, but not something that God really cares about.

November 5, Cathy replied:

Julie licking her knife. That is a visual I will use to keep me up today.

It was weird. I was so tense about all of this, and then suddenly yesterday afternoon, a moment spoke to me, to my heart, and said “God,” and I remembered that the Universe is in control, not me, and that I just need to open my heart to the light. It was wonderful.

November 6, Cathy wrote:

Never mind 'bout the love and stuff. My boyfriend has decided to have a relationship with a woman from his high school days and not me. So, I sit here humiliated and hurt and homeless and jobless and profoundly disturbed.

My heart is broken rather nicely.

November 7, Christine replied:

I'm sorry this happened. It's why I gave up on men. I'm glad no one has come forward to change that, either.

When's your last day? I'll make an effort to get over to pick up your stuff if you want.

November 13, Cathy wrote:

Part of the reason I took back my two-week notice was that I remembered those frustrated feelings oh so well. It's "be not so happy with a not so fantastic job" or "be miserable looking for one."

November 13, Christine replied:

I'm glad you did decide to keep your job. You are going to be frustrated one way or another—either the job isn't perfect, or you have no job. I'll take the imperfect job any day. You are beginning to make better decisions and think more rationally.

November 24, Cathy wrote:

I don't know how much longer I can continue to battle my mental illness, and keep substance abuse at bay, and try to care for others, when I can hardly care for myself.

I don't even know if I should still be here out west anymore. I've lost all sight of any plan, or path, or expectation.

I think I am in serious trouble.

I can only tell you these things.

November 25, Christine replied:

Only you really know how things are—you and a therapist. All I can say is many people suffer many things—the vast majority of it unintentionally "self-inflicted."

I have always questioned why you have “shifted horses” in mid-stream so many times—giving up jobs, moving across country... But only you can decide if these were wise decisions and then learn to do something different the next time similar circumstances occur.

If you are in serious trouble, find the least disruptive way to get help. Do the best you can. Remember the Light is purifying everything, so often things that look dark and negative are really only passing out and leaving. Things will be better shortly.

Maybe what’s needed is to learn to weather the difficulties and not give up and start over, because giving up and starting over means it just takes longer to get back to where you were. If you have to keep starting over, then when do you make progress??

November 25, Cathy replied:

You are wise and compassionate, Christine. Thank you.

December 3, Cathy wrote:

Yes, it’s come to the attention finally of my boss that I can’t perform this job, and so now we both want me out of here. Sooner more so than later.

I just can’t seem to do the work I used to do. So I’ll be job hunting, and/or finding a shelter bed, yet again. So frustrating.

December 5, Cathy replied:

My boss wants me to stay till she finds a replacement, but if I am leaving those women in danger because of my lack of ability, it would be best if I leave ASAP.

I can't perform well enough for her to change her mind, because my best is not enough to offer for this job, simply stated. I keep speaking of my limitations, and I mean it. I can't remember anything, for the most part, and that is a huge safety issue.

I want to crawl inside a hole and stay, as they say.

Thank you for offering to store my stuff, yet again. I appreciate that more than words can say.

December 5, Christine replied:

Actually, this situation is a great thing. Your awareness of your limitations is a new thing, and I suspect that this may have been part of the root of the difficulties at the last job with the Filipino workers—you've never before mentioned awareness of limitations, and it may be that a lack of awareness and the need to protect yourself from that knowledge was what put the wedge between you and the other workers and led to the arguments.

So, now that you have this new awareness, you can start to learn to overcome the limitations instead of hiding from them, which is what alcohol allowed you to do. Good JOB!! Increasing awareness of yourself and your thinking processes will prevent you from endangering the women—that and prayer to keep them safe will go a very long way.

December 6, Cathy replied:

Did I tell you I have no psychiatrist now? Mine left for a cushy job at Kaiser. No one was assigned to me. So I have a few weeks of pills, no doctor, and apparently I am going to be in the shelter with no backup support from mental health services.

I'm not sure where to turn. I guess to the clinic at the hospital.

I'm not sure what my next step is, to tell you the truth. I don't even know how I will get to the shelter. I won't have enough money to stay at a hotel more than one night. I'm really at a loss of direction.

I'm not looking for you to wave a magic wand. I'm just venting, and mulling things over. And you are there. Thanks for listening.

December 7, Christine replied:

Trust that a way will reveal itself. You never know when someone needs to help someone else. This has always happened—pretty much, right? A way through the difficulty was found, and you got through it.

December 19, Cathy wrote:

Whatcha doing in this yucky, rainy weather? Staying and watching telly? The dogs must be going whacky. Can't wait to see them next week.

Please thank your mother for allowing you to invite me over

for Christmas. It meant a lot. Staying at the house where I work would have been a bit much. I don't think the boss is looking too hard for a replacement. It takes too much work.

December 19, Christine replied:

As for your boss not looking for a replacement, this gives you a chance to grow into the job. I know it's theoretically not too hard, but since you are in recovery, then the learning process could be very slow. Like for me and having ADHD. Any new task takes twice as long as I think it will to learn it—and for you, the memory piece is what you are working on. Years of drinking sometimes impairs memory.

Learning something new has to do with consciousness—often we do things while we're thinking of something else—and that something else blocks what we need to remember when we mentally get back to the task. My guess is that for you, this means learning to stay focused on the task and not think of anything else—and at the same time, mentally rehearsing to remember the things you might forget, like leaving the stove on.

December 22, Christine sent another posting from *World Blessings*:

Blessings for a New Time

Dearest Beloved Ones,

You are blessed in God's eyes, even at times of great trial. Often during a period of crisis it is not possible to feel or see the many ways God is upholding and supporting you, and so it is at the

present time, when humanity is grappling with multiple crises individually and collectively.

At this time when an old way of life is ending, a new one is being born. It is not yet possible to see exactly what is being born with physical eyes; however, it is possible with the eyes of the heart.

The heart sees and feels God's love, and understands the miracle of life. Although the human heart feels grief and sorrow as well as joy and hope, the Divine heart is joined with God at all times, even when the human, embodied self cannot feel anything positive or uplifting.

Beloved ones, an entire chapter of human history is coming to an end at this time. The social, cultural, economic, political and personal relationships that were created through separated consciousness are now transforming.

This time of transformation is challenging and difficult, and also filled with blessing. As greater spiritual light infuses the Earth and all beings on the Earth, it is more possible to feel love, and to feel the miraculous spiritual reality that exists simultaneously within physically embodied life.

As the momentously challenging year of 2010 comes to a close, it is possible to be grateful even among the profound difficulties that exist. The new energetic templates of spiritual light that have been established within the physical Earth are now expanding and gaining momentum, affecting the consciousness of all embodied souls on the Earth.

This is causing a process of spiritual awakening for many that is revealing the true nature of life, and expanding possibilities that were not previously

imaginable. Spiritual awakening reveals the true nature of a soul's identity which is both One with All and also Divinely and preciously unique.

The spiritual awakening of each individual soul expands the Divine harmony within the collective consciousness of all of humanity. Like a ray of expanding light that expands out and touches all other rays of light, each awakening soul adds to the light of the whole.

Spiritual Healing

Beloved ones, this time of spiritual transformation has profound effects on the physical, emotional and energetic lives of all embodied souls on the Earth.

Spiritual light is infusing body, mind, and heart, activating a profound spiritual healing process that releases the soul from the bondage of separation, limitation, and pain. This process of purification can be intense, and so there are many spiritual supports available on the Earth to help souls to anchor in light, even during times of extreme difficulty.

Beloved ones, at this time the increase in spiritual light is catalyzing widespread changes in the human body, as well as consciousness. One of the most common symptoms being experienced by many at this time is fatigue and difficulties with memory. The reason for this is that the experience of linear time is changing as human beings become more connected with their multidimensional selves.

This greater connection with the spiritual realms is accelerating the rate at which atoms and electrons

move in the physical dimensions, and this increase in frequency is changing the electromagnetic fields within the human body. New and unusual body symptoms are appearing, some of which have no medical explanation but which are the result of the dissolving of separated consciousness.

The human body is being re-patterned both energetically and physically. Most of these changes are gradual and not immediately noticeable, except for those souls whose work requires a greater embodiment of spiritual light. This is especially true for those who work as healers, whose bodies are being purified and infused with light at a more accelerated pace so that they can be of support to others.

Spiritual Relationships

Beloved ones, at this time there are a multitude of new possibilities available in relationships. All relationships are spiritual relationships, for all souls are connected for a Divine purpose. Even those relationships which have been limited or difficult for a very long time now have new possibilities with the advent of greater spiritual light on the Earth offer support for moving into the depth of what is now possible for spiritual relationships.

Preparing for 2011

The new energetic templates that have been established on the Earth will provide all souls with new opportunities in 2011. What has not been possible will become possible, not through the efforts of the ego or the smaller self, but by the actions of God acting in harmony with the higher self.

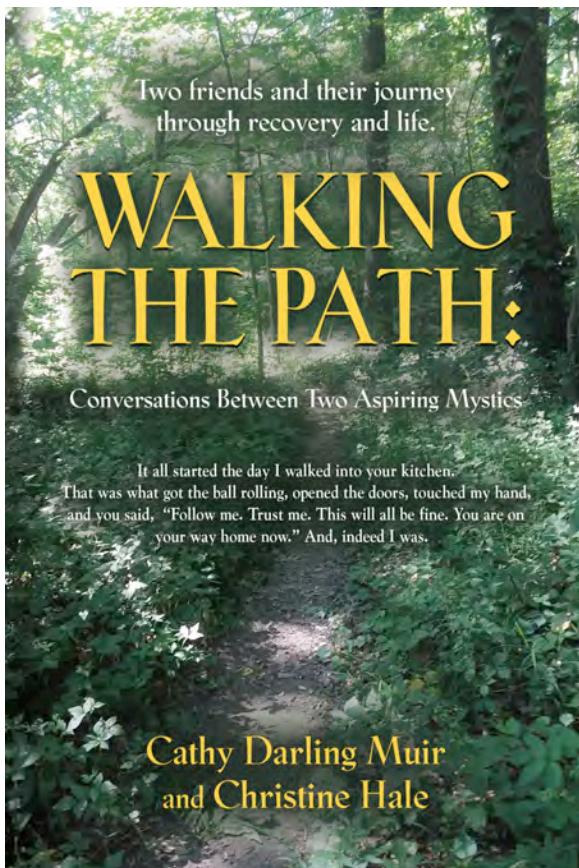
Thy will be done is the mantra that will allow your human, embodied self to move into full and complete alignment with your Divine soul purpose. The alignment of one's will with the Divine creates harmony and peace within body, mind and heart. This harmony radiates outward into the world and amplifies and expands the light available to all souls on the Earth.

Beloved ones, many of you have been waiting a very long time for the manifestation of spiritual light on the Earth. You have chosen to be here now to witness and to participate in this miraculous transformation. It has been a very long period of gestation, filled with many challenges. A new birth has begun, and we give great thanks to all who are participating with us in this holy time.

December 29, Cathy wrote:

Thank you for having me over for Christmas Day. It was fun just hanging out with you and the poochies. I love that Duffy so. Hope everything is well and that you were able to get the dogs out in the good weather, when it seems to randomly come.

Anyway, just a thank you and hello. Goodbye, and Happy New Year!



Cathy and Christine, roommates, began e-mail correspondence after moving to different states. They discuss Cathy's recovery from addiction, advice on handling life's challenges, and the deep faith both depended upon to get them along the path of life. Let their experiences help you on your path.

Walking the Path: Conversations Between Two Aspiring Mystics

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