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**PRH -USA**  
Personality and Human Relations  
An International School  
of Adult Development since 1970

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### Rock, Paper and Scissors

by Ron Spann

Trying to define integrated personality at times past felt to me like trying to define good art: I couldn't say exactly what it was, but I knew it when I saw it! What an irony for a personal growth educator!

One of the rewards of PRH education is being able to draw on its evolving vision of the person in the process of growth. PRH currently defines integrated personality as the result of sustained movement along three lines: inner solidity, emotional maturity, and fidelity to in-depth conscience.

Simply naming these three developmental lines makes it much easier to think strategically about our growth. They've always been there in the PRH explanatory system, but as the saying goes, sometimes it just helps to say the obvious. In a kind of conceptual reorganizing of its toolbox PRH has found new leverage by keeping these three grouped together as parameters.

Growth is too often left to chance with little sense of how to seek it purposefully. Life becomes a series of strivings "to win" and frustrations over "losing" as if it were an adult throwback to the kid's game of chance, Rock, Paper, Scissors. *One, two, three:* which one do you "throw?" Rock *shatters*, paper *smothers*, and scissors *cut* up-or down! We can't be too surprised by how these distort our relationships and our personalities. Amazingly, many people actually think these are qualities they do best to build into their personalities. It's "do or be done unto."

By approaching personal growth as a matter of working creatively along the three lines proposed in PRH education, the game of growth takes on a different feel. Rock means to ground ourselves in the interior reality that is solidity of being, paper reminds us that true growth comes gift-wrapped in life-giving relationships, and scissors remind us of the incisive wisdom of our in-depth conscience.

The educators of PRH-Center invite you to experiment with using the three lines as an organizing concept to frame your approach to

your own ongoing growth. To help you, we will be using them as the themes of our next three newsletters, beginning with inner solidity in this issue. Enjoy!

### André Rochais:

#### Four Characteristics of Solidity

[One of our educators, Irma Gendreau, pointed us to an Observation Note from 1974 by André Rochais on "Solidity of Being" as a great anchor for this issue on Interior Solidity. We have taken it out, dusted it off and adapted it for your use.]

#### Realistic Awareness Of The Self

Strength of character, or solidity, exists when there is a clear-sighted knowledge of our own personal value and of our limitations, that is to say, when we see ourselves the way we really are.

To have a *negative self-image* is to have little solidity because we are unaware of our deepest resources. To have an *over-rated self-image* is also to have little solidity because we are unaware of our deepest resources. It is to know oneself only as mirrored by others.

Attention is not centered on limitations, but rather on our own positive value. Well integrated persons are not unaware of their weaknesses and limitations, but they are not fixated on them. They actualize their potential to the full without suffering from limitations, and they are happy.

#### Trust In The Being As Our Source Of Strength

As we experience our being, we find that its foundation is as solid as rock, and that life holds resources which will never leave us defenseless before difficulties.

There is a great self-confidence which is not pride but self-assuredness. The answers to our problems and the capacity to



André Rochais, founder of PRH

### In This Issue of the Newsletter

- André Rochais on Solidity
- Vicki Serwick – A Personal Reflection on Solidity
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- Book Review: Left to Tell
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## André Rochais: Four Characteristics of Solidity

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face any situation can be found within ourselves.

There is a *supple strength* of which the clearest symbol is water. Water is powerful. Beating it with sticks will not break it; ripples form on the surface and that is all. The bow of a ship cleaves the water, which closes again when the ship has passed. Resistant, it can support very heavy vessels. It appears to be elastic. Water adapts itself to the outlines of the landmass it flows around. Once it erodes the obstacles standing in its path, it surrounds them and goes on its way, leaving to time the task of breaking down these obstacles if they leave themselves open to its eroding power. So it is with the steadfast person who is confronted with the difficulties and hardships of life.

*The phenomenon of love makes it possible for this steadfastness to be as flexible as water and solid as rock... When we speak of the being, we keep in mind that its kernel is love. When we speak of an integrated person, we think of the strength that is released from a free-flowing love. Love imparts a warm glow to all the other gifts of nature, and gives the whole person suppleness, flexibility, and harmony. True and total strength of character presupposes emotional maturity.*

### Life in depth becomes habitual and spontaneous

Until now, life was lived on the surface, on the level of the intellect or the emotions. It was lived outwardly, centered on other people and happenings. Now, real life is experienced within. We feel at home in our being, for there alone we live.

Life in depth, now exercising its full impact, has become attractive and draws us constantly like a powerful *magnet*.

Exterior and intellectual activities have not ceased. They are performed with even more intensity and interest.

The best illustration of this habitual and spontaneous life in depth is that of a *ship with a weighted keel*. Thanks to this added weight known as *ballast* in the bottom of a ship, it is possible to brave the ocean with its storms. Stability is unshaken and the waves are powerless against the enduring strength of the vessel. It rights itself again and again, and passes on its way. When the weather is calm, it forges on its course,

rocked simply by the movement of the waves.

The same applies to a well integrated person; she has "ballast" and rides the waves in the stability and strength proceeding from her being.

Previously, her actions stemmed from a variety of sources: her self-image, her idealized self-image, other people, her shortcomings.

Now everything is united around the being. Self-concept corresponds to true self. The idealized self has disappeared because she no longer has personal ambitions and takes life as it comes. Even though she continues to foresee and to prepare for the future, her projects and plans are not irrevocable, but flexible, allowing for unexpected happenings and above all, for new intuitions, which can always spring up from the being and modify the plans.



Other people no longer depersonalize her because being sure of herself, she does not need their approval. She can be completely true to herself, and therefore, completely liberated while still remaining close to others. The gaps due to past deprivations and stunted growth are filled. Previously unaccepted limitations are now accepted because she has realized that the fullness of life is to be found within one's limitations and not beyond them.

...Integrated and mature persons have found a place where they can enjoy the fullness of life and being to which they aspired. Rejoicing that they have found it, they never leave it for very long.

### Ability to live with one's solitude as a human being

Sooner or later, the human being must experience aloneness. Every person is unique; no one can live our life for us. Communion with others is rare, and even

where it exists, it is transitory and incomplete.

Without a well emerged maturity, solitude is difficult to bear. It is experienced as an emptiness which had to be filled. Turning to social contacts, activity, and pleasure becomes the means of filling it. There was more being distracted, mental numbness and flight from self than real living.

With the emergence of maturity, solitude is no longer empty. It is filled with a fullness of life, solid as rock, filling as the ocean, and attracting as a magnet...

...The feeling of aloneness does not totally disappear. A person becomes increasingly aware of his uniqueness, but finds joy in it. He learns from experience that he alone can solve his problems, but he knows how to solve them. Although communion with others is more frequent, he is constantly aware of the difficulty of really communicating with another. Moreover, this inward strength helps us to tread new paths far from the beaten track and so encounter a new form of isolation. This solitude belonging to the human condition is lived peacefully, for it is not an empty solitude but one filled with richness. We like being alone with ourselves because our self is a living, life-giving presence.

The experience of solitude is accompanied by an experience of something beyond self which intensifies as solidity increases. This awareness of something beyond self, which we have called the Transcendent, broadens the horizons of our beings, and helps us enter into communion with the cosmos and its vital energies.

Then solitude becomes ever fuller, more overflowing and expansive. The boundaries of our being seem to recede towards a horizon which we sense to be limitless. At certain times, this experience is so intense that our whole being aspires to express and enjoy its own infinite and eternal dimension. But we are brought back to the condition of human life on earth; in this terrestrial workshop, our task is to reawaken this life so that more and more people may share its fullness.

*André Rochais (1921-1990) founded PRH in 1970 in France.*

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## SOLIDITY: How it got me through a Difficult Time

by Vicki Serwick



Vicki Serwick

Ten years ago, my daughter gave birth to a beautiful baby boy, Michael. Several days later, we received the news that he was born with a serious congenital heart defect. Michael was born without a septum between his ventricles, and the tiny ventricles of his heart were reversed along with the heart vessels that connect to them. In addition, he had a narrowing of an artery going into his heart that one day would raise the pressure in that vital organ. When that took place, he would require intensive, serious surgery that would involve rewiring all of the vessels of his heart and changing the flow of his circulation. This is called a "double switch". When Michael was three months old, the surgeon put a septum into his walnut-sized heart. He did well over the next ten

*"Vicki's experience of solidity was a result of her determination to be authentic and of her commitment to her growth and healing. Through PRH workshops, regular analysis of her inner world, and times for being, her being emerged more and more and enabled her to stand firm and trust in the Transcendent (God) dwelling there. The evidence of this in her life is a greater sense of peace and self-confidence."*

years and grew and developed into a beautiful child of God. Our Little miracle boy. Even as a very young boy, he had an unusual spirituality about him, and he would frequently talk about God in ways young children seldom do.

As he grew, his eventual "Big Surgery" was never far from our minds. On December 18, 2006 it took place at University of Michigan Mott Hospital.

For about two years prior I had taken continual PRH classes. At the same time I was doing some deep healing of past hurts. I was connecting the dots from my adult pain to unmet childhood needs, and how that had formed my life and affected a lot of choices I had made and was continuing to make. During that process, I was able to evacuate a lot of pain and I felt a sense of freedom in certain areas of my life where I once felt stuck.

Solidity comes from the being. It is a solid strength. The being is where all truth and goodness lies. It is where everything of God is. During this difficult period of surgery and the days following, it was in that place

that I lived and received my strength. It did not remove my fear and anxiety; those were still there, but it was a knowing that God was there with us and was giving us his grace.

That knowing made me feel firm and strong and able to be there for my daughter, son-in-law, and grandchildren and for Michael. I would sit for hours at his bedside with my daughter the days and weeks following the operation. I experienced *knowing* that I needed to be there just present. I felt Solidity about me that I know only can come from God. I do not know what Michael's future holds but I do know that there is a purpose to all of this, and that God will give us the solidity and courage to stand firm and strong in our being.

*Vicki Serwick is a Rehabilitation Nurse Case Manager, who manages catastrophic injuries from auto accidents. A resident of Northville, Michigan, she loves to knit and dote on her fourteen grandchildren.*



# Book Review

by Kathleen Ciani

## Left to Tell by Immaculée Ilibagiza with Steve Erwin



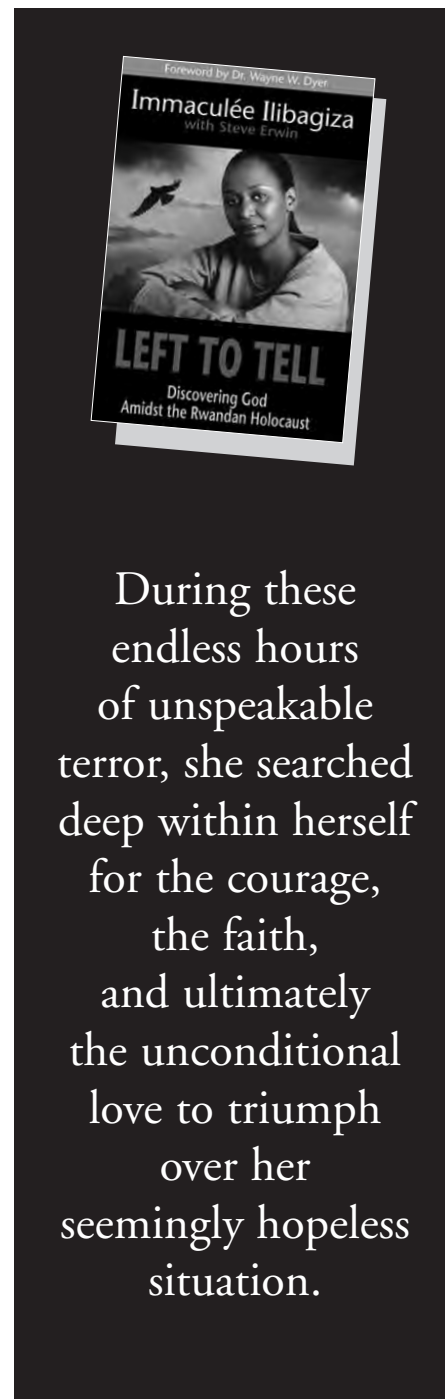
Kathleen Ciani

“When we are no longer able to change a situation--- we are challenged to change ourselves.” This quote by Viktor Frankl introduces this extraordinary, true story about a young woman’s journey and survival through the 1994 Rwandan Holocaust. Immaculée was a college student at the National University and a young woman surrounded by a family deeply loving and rooted in their faith. Her life was forever changed as her family was brutally murdered during a killing spree that lasted three months and claimed the lives of nearly a million Rwandans. She became a victim of terror, evil, and hatred by her fellow countrymen. She and seven other women were huddled silently together in a cramped bathroom for 91 days while hundreds of machete-wielding killers hunted for them. During these endless hours of unspeakable terror, she searched deep within herself for the courage,

the faith, and ultimately the unconditional love to triumph over her seemingly hopeless situation. Often in times of trials and severe stress, we find we can rely on what is solid within us in order to face the situation and stand firm. This rock of being is a place of strength as it emerges more and more into our consciousness. In this story, we are witness to Immaculée’s growth in interior solidity when during a time of terror and tragedy, she discovers the most unshakable part of herself. Through her openness to the Transcendent in her life, she finds the grace to transcend her suffering, fear and loss. Certitudes of faith, hope, and determination empower this young Rwandan to not only endure her situation, but ultimately to forgive her family’s killers and participate in the healing and recovery of her country.

Her story of faith, hope and compassion will inspire and encourage you in your journey to solidity.

*Kathleen Ciani lives in Novi, where she bases her work as a PRH educator. Since she hails from New Jersey, she is able to talk faster than the other members of PRH-Center.*



During these endless hours of unspeakable terror, she searched deep within herself for the courage, the faith, and ultimately the unconditional love to triumph over her seemingly hopeless situation.



Bill Kelly

## In His Skin: An Interview with Bill Kelly on Solidity of Being

**Ron:** Bill, what are some of the markers of solidity of being?

**Bill:** When I sat down to prepare for this interview the first thing that struck me was what I recognize about the absence of my solidity. When I’m not accessing what is most solid in myself I’m very aware of resentments, aware of my tendency to keep score. If that’s where I’m starting from it keeps me in the past and future.

**Ron:** Everywhere but the here and now.  
**Bill:** Exactly. On the other hand, when I am in a place of solidity, I feel present, current, I feel authentic and connected with the person I am facing. I’m in my skin - that’s a pretty good acid test of whether I’m in solidity of being or not.

**Ron:** I notice how quickly your thoughts touch on the question of relationships in explaining personal solidity.

**Bill:** Well yes, it’s one of the three lines of growth we speak of, and they cannot be separated. I’ve been aware of the importance of accessing my solidity of being in close family ties, whether I’m talking about something between me and some of my siblings, or in my marriage. In Judy’s and my relationship, I would say there is a good testing ground of my progress in solidity.

**Ron:** Couldn’t we say that one test is the extent to which we remain the same person regardless of who we are with?

**Bill:** Sure. It’s important to remember that it’s developmental, my solidity moves along a continuum, and that it has to be seen in relation to my other lines emotional maturity, fidelity to conscience.

**Ron:** What are some day to day matters in which your solidity is the resource you draw on?

**Bill:** In fact, whether it’s me and Judy or me and the cash register person, I can find myself having to stand up for myself, stating my preferences, needs or feelings, no matter how simple the business may be, I don’t simply defer to the other person before I access what my needs are within. It’s crucial that I take responsibility for that. I’ve got to be able to state what I need in my responses.

**Ron:** Bill, what would be an application of what we’re talking about in relationship not just to another person but to when you’re functioning as part of a group?

**Bill:** Well, just take my work as an educator. Say I’m facilitating a group - if I’m stumbling over an inner need to appear competent, I may try too hard to answer participants’ questions rather than letting them wrestle with their own questions. It’s not like that for me when my responding proceeds from what is solid within me.

A group setting like family, where there is a lot of familiarity-or presumed familiarity-this can come out as an intense need to overcome conflict and to smooth out differences. I was in a situation recently where it was so important that I keep my inner

*“progress along one line of growth is not equal to advancing along another”*

freedom to back up one of my siblings in an important decision that pitted her against several others in our family. It was challenging. In the ensuing negotiation, a better solution emerged.

**Ron:** What can interior solidity contribute to relationships that cross cultural and ethnic boundaries, where there can be lots of difficulty and misunderstanding?

**Bill:** I just went through some major cross-cultural encounters in Thailand where there were plenty of opportunities to avoid letting my own cultural assumptions control my responses to how others relate to me. I also got to see something fascinating play out with some friends from Belgium. I didn’t realize that in their culture it’s not at all normative to invite some-

one else to stay with you as your guest. It’s just not done. So when some Belgian friends were here in the States recently, they were totally taken aback when someone made their home available to them for several days. They enjoyed the experience of being a guest so much that when they returned to Belgium, they made a similar gesture of hospitality for a first time and found that they absolutely enjoyed it.

**Ron:** That immediately makes me think of how we awaken each other at the level of the being when we stay there, and our gestures and actions come from there.

**Bill:** Yes. Solidity has a certain humility to it: I can’t fill all the gaps, be everything to someone else. The one thing I can do is initiate an honest relationship - what the other then does is their choice.

I want to say as well, that progress along one line of growth is not equal to advancing along another.

**Ron:** I can make a breakthrough in solidity and yet still be awkward in certain areas of interpersonal relationships, right?

**Bill:** Right. This makes me go back to my earlier point about the fact that we’re talking about a developmental phenomenon. I’ve got to come to a point where I can distinguish between adapting my energies, my time, for another without sacrificing myself. It’s essential to develop authentic qualities of being: when I do, then I find that my adapting happens without resentment.

**Ron:** There’s a real paradox at work here, isn’t there? The more solidity that I develop, the more I find real freedom to sacrifice.

**Bill:** Yes. The more that I am in my being, my qualities become more spontaneous, and I have the ability to express them spontaneously and not withhold them.

Bill Kelly lives in Tacoma, WA, where for over twenty years he and his wife Judy have been PRH educators as well as leaders of PRH USA-West and occasional escapees to Whidbey Island in the Puget Sound.

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Eveleen Forkin

### Our First Associate

She does it again! Eveleen Forkin, who almost twenty-five years ago first planted PRH education in the Great Lakes states, becomes the first educator in PRH-Center to retire formally, taking on the status of our first Associate Member. Specifically, she has handed in to the PRH Foundation the dossier she built over the years, signaling that she will no longer facilitate PRH educational activities or assume leadership roles in the Foundation.

This is a threshold moment for the USA-Center team, who will be quick to point out her pervasive influence through her years of providing Formation for almost half its members. She has seeded awareness of PRH in diverse audiences, all of whom seem to respond happily to her Irish shellacking of Midwestern English, and to the unquenchable interest she takes in every hint of convergence of the best in human energies and aspirations.

As it happens, she passed another milestone this past January by becoming our first octogenarian. Somehow she has the energy to look ahead to sustaining her intensive work in PRH Helping Relationship "and [she writes] an occasional brief workshop" as well as "to work in St. James Parish three days a week, mainly with the homebound and those who are grieving." Those readers in the Metro Detroit area should therefore not be too surprised to cross her path at a moment least expected.

She still resides in metropolitan Detroit with her Marist sisters, whose moniker on cyberspace is the "Eastpointe 3." Sounds like an Irish gang to us!

Eveleen, may the road rise to greet you, and may your unflagging hope in the possibilities of goodness and healing be a source of strength to you at all times!

## A Short Catalog of PRH™ Workshops

\*Denotes a change in workshop title

Visit <http://PRH-usa.com> for more information and to register online or call an Educator to learn of Additional Offerings, Mini-workshops, etc.

### Who Am I?

In this workshop, the focus is on one's being, the positive center of the person. The being, self-image, intellect, feelings, body and deep conscience are explored to increase self awareness. Participants observe their environments and relationships to confirm what is life-giving for them. Concrete steps are offered to support on-going personal development and authentic self-expression.

### Clarifying My Relationships\* (My Interpersonal Relationships)

Participants focus on their relationships with those they love. They review and clarify their relationships in order to grow in their capacity to give and receive love.

### Leading My life

Returning to the pivotal centers in the person (Being, "I", Sensibility, Body and Deep Conscience) explored in "Who Am I?", participants observe how they function at each center. They discover what they need to support the development of their being. They identify personal life goals and how to realistically live these goals day to day.

### Listening to the Messages from My Body\* (Approach to Self Through the Body)

Through simple relaxation and movement exercises, participants grow in awareness of their body and its messages. They learn to describe feelings and follow them in writing to uncover the truth in their experience. This workshop is a step by step development of the PRH analysis skill.

### Seeking God\* (I Am Seeking God)

By exploring the history of their search for God, participants discover means to create an optimum environment for spiritual growth. They define their relationship with God, and cultivate attitudes for deepening it.

### Exploring the Transcendent Dimension of My Life\* (A Person's Growth and the Experience of Transcendancy)

Exploring their unique experience of Transcendancy, participants become aware of how this experience impacts the growth of their being. Participants learn to identify and describe their personal experience of the "More Than Me" and become aware of their journey in relationship to Transcendancy.

### Helping My Children Become Themselves

Parents explore ideas and patterns that influence their relationships with their children of all ages. Needs and aspirations of the child are examined, including the need to be loved and guided, and to be a child in a secure environment.

### Loving and Being Loved\* (My Affective Life)

Identifying unmet needs of the past, participants begin to heal from experiences of not feeling loved. They discover the basic need to love and be loved and grow in their capacity to love themselves and others.

### Learning How to Receive and Give Help\* (Initiation into PRH Helping Relationship)

People taking this workshop learn the components of the specialized PRH Helping Relationship. They practice helping and being helped with real problems. The knowledge, tools, and experience gained lead to confidence in the use of this method.

### Exploring My Present Relationships\* (My Relational Life Today)

Participants use creative expression to explore their relational life. They express sensations stirred by current relationships in line, form and color. Important aspects of growth are revealed as participants explore their sensations and current relationships.

### Exploring My Childhood Past\* (My Childhood Past)

By using art materials, participants reconnect with their childhood. Happy, as well as painful, childhood memories that are still alive today are explored. This is a healing and growth-producing exploration.

### Freeing Life In Me\* (Life Within Me and its Obstacles)

Participants explore their positive qualities through line, color, and form. Art experience is not necessary. While moving along the road to self-discovery, they recognize what enhances and inhibits their growth and especially the expression of being.

### Accelerating My Growth\* (Managing My Growth)

Participants cultivate practical skills and attitudes helpful in making the most of their potential. They learn how to plan and manage their lives for optimum growth and healing.

### What is Most Essential in My Life?\* (My Essential Course of Action)

Participants sort out what is and what is not life-giving in their activities, and where they want to focus their time, energy and creativity. They review their past and present activities to clarify their life's decision.

### Growing as a Couple\* (Becoming a Couple)

Couples learn to listen to each other from their hearts, and share more of themselves. They reflect on what they experience in their relationship in order to clarify the bond that draws them together. They also grow in awareness of the behaviors that block their growth as a couple.

### Being Fully Authentic

This workshop helps participants to understand what it means to live respect for themselves and verify whether or not they live the authenticity of who they are. They learn how to progress in their capacity to live the truth of their being.