



From the Editor

When the following reflection arrived unsolicited on the Editor's desk, it was clear that it brought something special to the PRH Education community. Although Mr. Orlando, Sr. does not directly mention his use of PRH resources, they have been a part of his journey. His story puts a face on truths familiar to those using PRH methods: that self-discovery at its core is often a spiritual journey (and vice versa); that learning is a lifelong process; that change is made in incremental steps over time; and that it's never too late to claim your life as your own.

A New Beginning

by Joe Orlando, Sr., Boston MA

Ten years ago, when I retired at seventy from my university position, I had a sense that something was wrong. At some point during my life I had become isolated and lost my way. Despite my marriage of forty-two years, our six loving children, financial security and good health, I felt off-center.

While attending a self-help session, I realized that I had completely lost contact with God. This was a total shock to me. How could this be true? Accepting this truth brought up a feeling of loss so powerful that I could not think about anything else. I began a passionate search for a spiritual path to heal this pain and lead me to peace.

I knew that if my spirit was to be restored I had to change. Everything had to change: the way I thought, interacted with people, viewed the world... everything. "How in heaven's name could that be done?" I wondered. The behavioral patterns and defense mechanisms that

began during my childhood were now well honed and fully automated. At my age, change was too difficult, so why bother? Even while these thoughts clouded my thinking, I felt driven to find a spiritual path.

I received insight about how to approach this change in a lecture by retreat-master Rev. Richard Rohr. He made the point that, while we all need some structure, if we want to lead a rich and full spiritual life it is absolutely essential that we be open to transformation. We just cannot remain where we are forever and never change. When I got home I had to ask myself this question: "Am I open to change and transformation without exceptions, and am I willing to go wherever that will take me?" I went to a quiet place, asked God for help, then looked deeply into my Being and waited for an answer. After some impassioned reflection I was able to say "Yes" with conviction.

Unconditional openness to transformation has been the key to my new beginning. It instantly removed filters that had prevented me from seeing and hearing some of the truths about myself. I saw my fear, anger, resentment, self-centeredness, self-seeking behavior, and dishonesty. The process brought me face to face with the reality that imperfection is part of my humanity. My imperfections and defects are not who I am and have nothing to do with my Being, but they are part of my life and they profoundly influence my behavior. Coming to terms with this has not been painful or embarrassing. It has been liberating.

My quest continues. I spend time in twelve-step programs, meet with people who are willing to share their lives with me, and read extensively. My wife and I

share our journeys and attend counseling together.

In addition, meditation has become an important daily commitment for me. My practice is simple and only takes about twenty to thirty minutes. I begin the day in prayer and ask God for help. After my short prayer, I sit in a chair with my back straight, set a timer for twenty minutes, practice some breathing exercises for several minutes then focus on my breath. It is not important for me to do this perfectly but it is essential for me to sit in silence every day and to listen with a clear mind and an open heart.

I am now in the eighty-first year of my life and continue to follow this life-giving path. As a result I am able to see and hear things that I could never see or hear before. I sometimes feel like an exuberant child who is seeing or experiencing something wonderful for the first time. One of the



most exciting experiences for me now is the irrepressible life of my spirit. While my body ages, my spirit remains forever young and unaffected by time.

The spiritual path that I am on is a new beginning for me and I am learning new ways to live and to think. As long as I follow this path there is no limit of wonders for me to experience, and that will be true as long as I live. ■■■

Newsletter Changes Coming

Letter from the Editor

Mary Kolb, PhD, PRH Educator



Dear Readers,

The PRH Newsletter is in its 21st edition this year and—just as 21-year-olds enter a new stage of young adulthood – there are some changes afoot. I am pleased to announce that the PRH Newsletter will be available electronically beginning with the next edition, in winter 2011. We follow the lead of many other print media as the costs of paper, printing, and shipping have continued to rise – while the ease of use and accessibility of electronic devices have improved dramatically. (Your local PRH Educator will continue to print and mail newsletters to you, if you prefer; the choice is yours.)

This decision to change the Newsletter format was difficult because it has implications for the content of our published articles. Reading from a screen can be more taxing and somewhat more prone to distraction (“You’ve got mail!”) than reading from paper. So future Newsletter editions will have shorter and fewer articles than in the past. I’ll also try to include questions for reflection each time, to invite you to continue to discover your unique self.

I personally found this a difficult decision because I loved creating each edition the old way! Our readers have loved it, too. “Your words affirm for me the power of who I am and what I have done,” a young mother told me. Readers say they are encouraged in an ongoing learning process and that they gain a sense of not being alone, a connection to a larger community. Others appreciate that the articles have been “practical and inviting,” helping them connect with the books and groups in our culture that support self-discovery. Real-life stories and questions for reflection have helped many find hope and life in their everyday experiences. “Enjoyable,” they say – after reading it cover to cover.

Doing something new always entails letting go of what is familiar. However, this decision to change formats allows our team of PRH Educators to better express deep values of care for the Earth by not wasting paper. This decision also reflects our desire to efficiently and effectively carry out our Mission:

**To offer adults tools for self-discovery
in an environment of respect and freedom, and
to contribute to the positive evolution of our human community.**

I hope you will continue to rely on our twice-yearly publication – in whatever form you receive it -- to find personal inspiration and a sense of connection to a community committed to growth. I and your local PRH Educator are here for you, with simple tools to help you discover and express your positive core.

Please call or email your local Educator now, to indicate whether you wish to continue receiving your PRH Newsletters on paper or by email. We look forward to hearing from you soon! ■■■■



Newsletter Editing Team: Bill & Judy Kelly with Mary Kolb

Paradoxes of Growth

By Bill Kelly, PRH Educator, Tacoma WA

Several years ago, I was in the midst of renewing my license as a PRH Educator. Educators are required to renew every three years, and this was my seventh renewal. As I reviewed the evidence of my growth, I realized in a deeper way how radical the commitment is I have made to my growth. With the help of PRH Education, I have discovered and learned to live beneficially with a number of “apparent contradictions”. These are at the root of my greatest satisfactions as well as being the source of some of my confusion! Like the inscription over the doorway into the oracle at Delphi, they mean more than they say.

1. No change is possible without first accepting who and where I am now.
2. The first step in communicating with another is to listen.
3. When my Intellect humbly accepts to work at the service of my whole person (Body, Sensibility and Being), it achieves its wisest expression.
4. “Insignificant” but recurring reactions, over which I can’t seem to get control, are doorways into fuller freedom.
5. My body communicates in a more economical language than my educated intellect.
6. Healing my past sometimes feels like the end of my world, but it ALWAYS opens something new.
7. When I live and act from the deepest and most intimate level of my being, I am most connected to God and open to others.
8. Staying in my present sensation is my best preparation for what is next.

If you find “apparent contradictions” in your efforts to live from your being, please share them with me. Blessings on your journey! ■■■■