



## Nurturing Life

by Mary Kolb, PRH Educator, Bellevue WA

The last time I saw Holly Borba, she was visibly pregnant. So when I encountered her recently with shiny-eyed baby Petra on her hip, I was eager to hear her experience of mothering. As she talked, I was impressed by the consciousness she was bringing to caring for Petra and how that led her to reach out to the world -- and invite other mothers to do the same.



Three generations of Borbas:  
Holly, Petra and Kay on Mother's Day 2006

Holly shared with me a letter she posted in her neighborhood coffee shop. While nursing baby Petra, she had reflected on something she learned in her Waldorf teacher training, "that babies receive their mothers' thoughts as well as their milk." Holly felt invited to feed her precious daughter with her deepest certitudes: of the power to create peace and the universality of love, and that individuals make a difference.

Nurturing Petra united her with her own mother and with other mothers and children around the world. Action became imperative. The ripples of Holly's love for Petra and her faithfulness to her being's invitation to action began with her meditation on unity and soon became actions to help create peace and alleviate suffering.

The letter Holly posted in the coffee shop calls mothers to join in vision and action, creating still more ripples of peace and caring. As Petra grows, so does her mom; Holly continues to "try to find ways for parents to weave political activism with their everyday life and to energize moms to take political actions for peace." ✍

Dear Moms,



As a nursing mother, you are a powerful force. Your body transforms and in doing so, it sustains. What if every time you nursed your child, during that precious time when you ponder your hopes and fears, you also nursed health and peace throughout the world?

Now more than ever, as a mother you yearn for a more peaceful world. You can imagine the pain of other mothers — mothers who lose their children to war, whether they be soldiers or babies; mothers whose children are traumatized by violence or suffer from disease or malnourishment. You hope your child will never be touched by these cruelties. You know deep down that no mother should ever suffer the loss of a child.

You may wonder what to do to create a more hopeful future for your baby. Well, if every time you nurse your baby you set aside just two cents, and put it to work for the charity of your choice, you would begin to nurse the world and your baby to greater health. If you nurse 10 times a day and donate 2 cents each time, you'd contribute \$5.60 a month.

I'm a Seattle mom who's decided to donate in this way to Mercy Corps, an international humanitarian relief and sustainable development organization. I ask you to join me in giving to Mercy Corps or to whatever charity you know is creating a more peaceful, healthful world. Together we will nurse a healthier world for ALL our babies. . .

Excerpted from Holly's letter, posted in **Cloud City Coffee**, Seattle, WA

## In This Issue

This issue is devoted to the many ways we nurture life in others. In these pages, parents, counselors, caretakers, Twelve-Step sponsors and educators explore what and why they give — and how they receive in the process.

## Keeping My Heart Open

by Heidi McCormick, Helena MT

How do I keep my heart open to the severely troubled children, adolescents, and families with whom I work as a psychotherapist? These young people endure profound emotional pain and possibly irreversible cognitive deficits from the effects of abuse, neglect, malnutrition, sensory deprivations, and prenatal exposure to drugs and alcohol. They constantly disrupt classrooms, refuse to do schoolwork, run away, steal from peers, chronically lie, and even commit violent crimes.

Working with these clients, I have learned that I cannot rely on visible progress for evidence that I am making a difference. In fact, I have grown accustomed to not seeing positive changes in them; and sometimes their symptoms worsen, despite my varied efforts. Yesterday I waved goodbye to a 13-year-old as she was arrested and shipped off to a juvenile corrections center for threatening to kill a classmate. In the midst of this event, I found myself completely at peace; instead of looking for results outside of myself, I looked for them within.

My workday is a continuous call to self-awareness. I may ask myself, *“What am I learning right now from this 11-year-old boy who says he wants me to get the hell out of his life because his life was great until I came into it? How do I feel as I stand next to him? What resources do I need inside myself in order to be fully present with him?”*

Then I reach into my being for the combination of qualities that I want to contribute to the interaction: perhaps strength and compassion, or courage and creativity, or truthfulness and gentleness, or simply calmness.

So I aim to bring my best qualities to the 14-year-old boy who must live in foster care because his mother committed suicide and his father is in prison, and he hates foster care and can think only of running away to find his father. I listen heartfully to the 8-year-old girl who says that no one in her family understands



Heidi McCormick

“...I reach into my being for the combination of qualities that I want to contribute to the interaction...”

her or knows who she really is — no one except her hamster. I talk about video games and play basketball with a 12-year-old boy who frequently bursts into tears, screams obscenities, and hits his peers at the slightest frustration. I eat lunch with a six year-old girl who cannot focus during class because she is afraid that she will have nightmares again, tonight. I listen receptively as grandmothers weep, adoptive parents sink into despair, and teachers complain justifiably about the behavior of these children.

Releasing hope that my clients will change because of my interventions, and practicing the art of self-awareness frees me to become a more effective and genuine therapist. Rather

than scrambling to amass an arsenal of techniques, I cultivate my capacity to listen to my intuitions, express particular qualities, and find my own sense of making a difference.

This interior work enables me to build therapeutic relationships of respect, compassion and dignity, even when I am triggered into my own pain. It also enables me to perceive my need to take care of myself when my heart becomes weary and closes down. Then by renewing myself, I open my heart again to care for others.

Perhaps most importantly, this practice expands me to feel more gratitude for my life, even on the most harrowing of workdays. Many days, driving home after work fully exhausted, I feel enriched by the sensation that my life is a gift. ↗

## Attitudes that Nurture

by Mary Kolb, PRH Educator, Bellevue WA

In PRH Helping Relationship, the helper listens and responds to the other with acceptance and respect. The six attitudes that PRH Helpers must develop and practice are the same ones found in any relationship that nurtures life in the other. See for yourself how practicing these attitudes will help you to be a caring presence for your neighbor, coworker, or family member!

1. Listen to understand the other in his/ her experience
2. Suspend judgment and engage your compassion
3. Have faith in the other's being
4. Respect his/ her freedom to decide on the solution
5. Feel your sympathy and affection for the other
6. Be honest about what you are experiencing

## Anonymous Help

As told to Mary Kolb, PRH Educator, Bellevue WA

The author of this narrative is a suburban mother and businesswoman who began her growth journey with PRH a decade ago. PRH self-analysis helped her to identify her need to recover from alcoholism.

Through Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), she continues to develop her deep conscience and her relationship with the Transcendent, re-educate destructive old habits, and cultivate her attentiveness to the life within her. Supporting others on their recovery journey is an essential part of the AA program.

I am an alcoholic. On a recent Friday evening, I wanted to join some old friends for dinner at a pub. I was restless and agitated, wondering what to do. I couldn't seem to figure it out on my own, so I prayed for direction. As I waited for an intuition or inspiration, my phone rang. The voice of a fellow alcoholic, one of those I sponsor, related her recent relapse. She tearfully asked if she could continue to be a member of the small group I was taking through the Twelve Steps.



With my "Yes," I understood clearly something that she, in her pain, could not. I understood that she, like me, would have this and many other experiences to offer others on their own journey to recovery. As an AA sponsor, helping others work through the Twelve Steps, I have found that those very things that once appeared to be the worst moments in our own lives often become useful tools in helping others. The most valuable things I could offer my caller were my listening presence and the story of my own recovery process.

When I got off the phone, I felt at peace. My restlessness and tension about what to do with my present dilemma had passed. My attentive waiting, a discipline that helps me open to my "higher power," had put me in the right place at the right time to help another – and helping her had helped me. Helping others is the cornerstone of my sobriety. I recalled the admonition from the *Big Book* that "vigorous help with another alcoholic" will save me.

**“– and helping her had helped me.”**

I have learned that I don't have to get myself all figured out before I can help others. I can answer the phone, offer a ride, tell my story, listen, and encourage others to trust the recovery process. ↵

## Banking on Being

by Bill Kelly, Administrator, PRH Western Division

***Nurturing life in others is at the heart of all PRH Education. You have used PRH tools to experience and develop the life of your being. Please join us in helping others nurture their inner life through the use of the PRH self-discovery methods. You can nurture the life in others through PRH Education by:***

- Telling others your personal experience of using the PRH tools
- Sharing PRH brochures and flyers
- Bringing a friend to an introductory workshop or information evening
- Participating in the workshop, "Talking About PRH Education"
- Volunteering your skills or time to support the PRH activities in your region

**You can financially support PRH Education locally or worldwide by:**

- Subsidizing the Newsletter Fund, Educator Training Fund, Marketing Fund or Scholarship Fund. *(You may mark your donation for a specific use.)*
- Designating memorial gifts in the name of family or friends
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- Donating securities, stocks, bonds, or annuities
- Contributing to the André Rochais Foundation for development of PRH Education in Third World Countries

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## One More Surprise!

by Marietta Fahey, PRH Educator  
Martinez CA

In my mother's final, very frail years, it became apparent that she needed more assistance than our family could provide. During those three years I coordinated her medical and residential caregivers, communicated regularly with my five siblings, and included them in what was happening. No one was left out of the loop. Peace permeated our family interactions and surrounded Mom, each person loving her as they were able. I am grateful for my years of personal growth work so that I could live the family interactions in peace and invite my family to love mom in their own special way.

I lived a conscious commitment to respect her dignity as a person and to preserve her freedom as much as possible. Often Mom and I did not talk, enjoying just being with each other. When she did speak, I listened carefully to discover if she was feeling confused, funny, or wise. I wanted another glimpse of her inner experience in this final chapter of her journey.



Marietta and her mom

My greatest surprise came the day Mom and I were sitting quietly, looking out into the patio garden which she loved. Mom turned to me.

*"I am so glad I've had these years with you,"* she said.

I nodded in agreement. *"Yes, me too!"*

I gently invited her to expand on her comment. *"Tell me what you mean,"* I suggested. *"Then I'll tell you."*

After a brief hesitation, Mom spoke such a simple explanation. *"I've just come to love you in a new way."*

With a full heart, I quickly offered my own affirmation, *"Me too!"*

Mom and I then shared many memories of my being her helper as she and Dad raised six children on a tight budget. We would chat after school, but chores were always waiting. When I left home to follow my aspirations, she did not hinder me in any way, though she did not agree with my choice. Through all the years, I never doubted that she loved me. Imagine my surprise and delight as I heard her say that she now loved me in a new way! Mom at 89 and I at 64 had never stopped growing in our love for each other!

Last July, my mother passed on. I felt then, and still do now, the newness and the truth of our love. My relationship with her deepened beyond anything I ever imagined. Beyond her death, her love continues to be life and light within me. ♡

**"That Love is all there is,  
is all we know of Love."**

~ Emily Dickenson  
in *The Single Hound*, #112



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