



THE LITTLE BAY OF HERE AND NOW

**The Alchemy of Love
A Story
(Very nearly a true story)**

Allen W. Stacker
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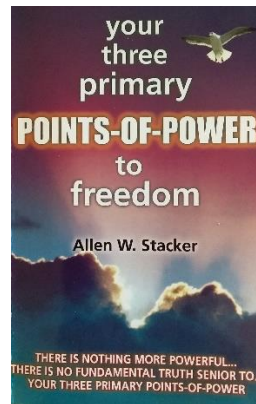
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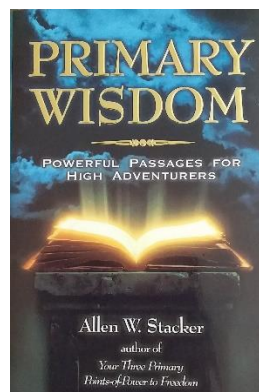
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The Little Bay of Here and Now

The Alchemy of Love. A Story. (Very nearly a true story).





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CONTENTS:

Foreword (From Debbie)	Page 5
Prologue	Page 8
The Meeting	Page 10
Epilogue	Page 42



Foreword

It is now four months since Allen transitioned from this physical plane (as at August 2021).

Allen wrote three books (two of which were published), and in the coming weeks and months I will be working on converting all of them to digital format for free download (under Allen's guidance from the other side of the veil)!

'The Little Bay of Here and Now' had only just been completed in manuscript form when I met Allen in 2001. It captures the essence of the man I met and loved. He was a dedicated 'warrior' of the light. Allen knew who he *really* was, remained authentic to his core self, and never betrayed himself.

Allen was inextricably drawn to live and 'play' at his beloved 'bay' before we met. He would sit and weep not knowing why, on the very park bench where he eventually penned these words, which was also the very park bench where we met some months later. Perhaps the tears were a 'knowing' of our imminent meeting, and the potentials being borne in the timeless now.

For some reason this little book sat in our wardrobe for 20 years and other writing projects were subsequently undertaken by Allen – namely the www.pointsofpower.com.au website.

The day before Allen transitioned at home, he turned his head slowly, looked directly at me and quietly said, "love will conquer everything." This was, I know a parting reminder to me, and no other words were necessary in that moment. Some hours later, as I got up to leave the room, he tenderly remarked to me "Don't forget the 'Little Bay' book is up in the wardrobe".

The day after Allen's transition, those words echoed through my being, and I felt instinctively, almost magnetically compelled to re-read this manuscript. As tears scrolled down my face, I knew I should transcribe it. Twenty years just vanished in the blink of an eye... time in that moment did not exist.

Somehow all those years ago in another 'now' time, this book was a self-prophecy and was waiting for the right 'now' time to be shared and read.

I miss you my darling, your physical presence... oh so very much... but in your words 'love never forgets itself, for love is outside linear time. Love is always NOW, and now is all that exists.' I continue to feel your gentle love and guidance with me through the veil in every moment.

Thank you for the great gift of love that you so openly shared. We were both teacher and student to each other. You taught me what love is, (and isn't). It was my privilege and honour to be your partner.

I wrote the following words on what was to be Allen's last birthday in August 2020 'All That Is remains forever changed through your great contribution.'

The alchemy of love is indeed the great transformer.

I know you are soaring at One in perfect union with your divine spirit... we will continue our 'light' work together through both sides of the veil... until we inevitably meet again.

And So It Is.

Debbie





To You,
With Love and Blessings.
May this little book serve to dethrone
all worry, fear and despair,
for beyond their illusion
lies your sacred right,
your forever gift –
the Gift of Joy.
This Gift, however,
can be found
only in
The Present.

PROLOGUE

The following is a true story. Well, almost a true story. My 'chance' meeting with the couple from England's Northwest did take place at the little bay (Cockle Bay, Sydney, Australia), and the rather unusual conversation we had on that cordial summer's afternoon is transcribed here word for word – or in any case, as close as possible from memory.

What is not true to life, however, is the ending or epilogue – my second meeting at the little bay some time later. There was certainly a big celebration at the little bay that night, and some very impressive fireworks, but alas, no-one from England's Northwest, At least, no-one that spoke to me. The little conversation on that particular night took place only in my imagination. But then, does that mean it wasn't real?...

*"The distinction between what is real and what
is imaginary is not one that can be finally
maintained... all existing things are, in an
intelligible sense, imaginary"...*

John S. MacKenzie

So, there we are. Perhaps my second 'imaginary' meeting was every bit as real as the first. Somehow, I think it was. Anyway, let's begin with the first meeting – the 'real life' couple, and our rather unusual conversation. I have included some relevant quotations throughout the story – small but potent capsules of truth, and the odd little 'disquisition'. I know the couple wouldn't mind, especially 'the missus', as the missus and I agreed on everything. Well, nearly everything. We did have a minor problem with heaven and its whereabouts, but apart from that, the missus was 'heaven' all the way.

It was her husband who had the problem, bless his heart. But as we'll see, things are not always as they seem. Indeed, when at last her husband saw what the problem *really* was...

But then... can love ever *really* be a problem?...



THE MEETING

They were visitors, a couple, perhaps in their seventies. They'd never been to the bay before. You could tell. And they were in love. You can always tell that.

There are park-type seats at the southern end of the bay, in front of a grove of palms and a vintage carousel. All were empty, but the couple sat down right next to me.



Some children were chasing seagulls down in front by the water. The seagulls were way ahead in the game. Children are smarter than grown-ups, but seagulls are smarter than kids.

Our seat faced north towards the old restored bridge – better than new. The view took in all the bay and the city skyline – better than anything. Very pretty.

"Pretty, isn't it," he said, without turning.

I realised he was speaking to me. "It is", I replied, "indeed".

"Few things as pretty as this back home."

"Oh."

"England... the Northwest. Know it, do you?"

I shook my head.

The kids had put flight to the seagulls. Their game was now with some pigeons. The couple watched, unsmiling. I watched too. It really was pretty.

And I waited... and waiting means expecting.

But expecting what, I didn't know. All I knew was that we had met for a reason – that our meeting was not by chance, but by design. That was the feeling, and we're seldom wrong when something feels right.

Anyway, I thought, whatever the reason, our meeting was not about to change the world. Besides, changing the world would be pretty difficult to do while relaxing at the Little Bay.

I kept waiting.



A seagull landed nearly at our feet. It seemed to watch the three of us. I think it winked, but the couple didn't notice. The man slowly turned towards me, and his eyes I noticed were filled with tears. He looked very, very sad.

I stopped waiting. We were on our way.



"It's okay, whatever, it's okay," I said gently.

He was hurting. They both were, but he far more, I could feel.

It wasn't long before tears were freely flowing, and a few were even mine. At times like this you don't speak, there's no need to. You just love, that's all you need to do. There's no force more powerful than love. It's the ultimate therapy; the consummate healer. Love can heal and transform anything. We only have discord, both personal and global, for one reason; we don't love enough.

When we 'love enough', whatever we do is in perfect order.



So true, yet how much love is enough? And, indeed, what is love in the first place? Everybody talks of love – some everlastingly – but what is it? How can we love enough if we don't know what it is?

Are we confused on love? How often do we say 'I love you' when we really mean 'I need you'? how often do we take love to mean security, sacrifice, duty or dependency? Do we equate love with worship? Do we confuse love with pity, self-pity or sorrow? Can love hurt? Is it jealous? Does love obey?

Our confusion with love has lead to our confusion with hate. For hate, contrary to general presumption, is not the opposite of love. The opposite of love is fear. But this polarity of love and fear only exists within the duality of human experience, where everything is defined by its opposite. Ultimately, however, nothing opposes love, it is all encompassing – the very essence of the universe – and what is all encompassing can have no opposite. (And no agenda).

So love is absolutely everything, including us. It's what we are. It's not something we have to 'find' – it's never been lost.

Perhaps love eludes us, as we are ever searching for what it isn't.



"I'm sorry," he said, wiping his tears. "Sometimes..."

"If you'd like to tell me," I said, "I'm a good listener. There's plenty of time, I'm not going anywhere, really."

"That's kind of you", he said, "but we don't choose to bother."

"It's not a bother at all, truly it's not. As I said, I'm a good listener."

"Thanks, but it's really between us, the missus and me, and the kids. The family, you know. We've always kept our problems to ourselves; never been keen to bother others. They all have quite enough problems of their own."

For a moment I thought I could hear the carousel at the back of us. The happy sound of the old calliope organ. I looked around but it was all shut down. Funny. Sounds from another time, perhaps.



"There's really no such thing as a problem," I said. The words just fell out.

"She's going you know," he said softly. "The missus here... six months... maybe."

I looked at her and she looked up. "Come," I said, "let's take a walk around the bay awhile. It'll do us all good. We don't have to talk, not if you don't feel the need."

It's always a joy to stroll around the bay, though it's easy to miss the magic, if your thoughts are far and away. As I walked along between them, I could sense what was coming next. "What do you mean there's no problems?" he asked.

"Well, give me a problem that you have, one that only exists right here and now – this very moment."

"You really can't be serious," he said in a suddenly firm voice.

"Deadly," I answered as we quickly hopped from the path of the mini-train. The bay's little people-movers have this truly amazing way of arising from nowhere.



He looked at me blankly. "I don't understand you," he said, "I really don't."

"There is one reason and only one reason why fear or sorrow arise," I explained. "We have moved out of the power of the present. We are anticipating the future or reliving the past – we are not in the now." Primary Wisdom, straight from the text.

We soon arrived at the bay wharf fountain – a real little welcoming spot, one of my favourites.



"Let's sit here awhile," I suggested, "and enjoy a nice cuppa." We couldn't possibly go wrong with a cuppa tea, I thought, England, Northwest and all.

"A cuppa tea would be lovely," she said.

They sat holding hands watching the frolics of the fountain. But I knew he was not here, not at the bay, not really. He was not here now, but was someplace in the future, a sad and lonely place. A place in fact, that didn't exist.

It was time to come back to the bay. "Is she with you?" I asked him. "Where you are right now, is your wife with you?"

"Yes," he answered, a little bewildered.

"Is she truly?"

"Yes, well of course she is," he said, "obviously".

"Right", I responded after a few moments. "Then tell me why you're sad."

"You know that," he said. "Near fifty years for us, and now she's going. The missus is going."

"But the missus hasn't gone yet," I said. "She's right here now, holding your hand, enjoying a cuppa, grand as life, every bit. That doesn't sound like sad to me."

He looked at her, and then at me. "But the missus won't be with me always."

"Yes," I said, and I looked straight into his eyes, "but she is NOW."

"But my wife is dying," he said, almost whispering.

"And that is difficult to come to grips with," I said. "The human heart is a very tender instrument. But what is both consoling and empowering, is to know that when you die, you are still very much alive; and that in fact, there is no such

thing as 'the dead'; it's only ever the physical body that dies. The entity, or soul, is eternal."

"We've heard that before," he said. "All the books we've read on the subject are saying basically the same thing – that we're eternal".

"And it's true," I said, "Physical death is never the end of...".

"It's still very sad, though," he said.

"That it is," I agreed. "We all miss our loved ones, and we all grieve. And we should never deny our true feelings, either. We should always express them because that's how we release them. But we should remember that our dear ones don't cease to exist, and are certainly never 'lost'. Love never forgets itself – not ever."

*Know, therefore, that from the greater silence
I shall return... Forget not that I shall come back to you...
A little while, a moment of rest upon the wind,
and another woman shall bear me.*

Kahlil Gibran

He looked at me, a slight frown. "Well, all in all, it sounds like I can't really lose the missus then."

"No, you can't lose the missus," I said, "that's truly impossible. You can never lose a loved one regardless of what you've heard or what you believe. Loved ones, at any age, are never lost."

He paused. "Are you sure about this?" he asked. "Really sure?"

"I'm absolutely sure," I said. "This being or soul, the one you love, is not her body, remember. Your wife *has* a body, but she is not her body. Her true self is eternal. Rest assured, you're both forever."

"Hmmm... righto... well... how much for one of these then?" he asked, nodding toward the fountain.

"I really have no idea", I said surveying the fountain. "I'm not too wise on the cost of fountains."

Though it's just the perfect question right now, I thought. It announced he was back from the future. He was here with us now, at the bay.

"If what you say is right," his wife said, "and we don't really die, then what about heaven? Don't we go to heaven?"

"What's your ideal of heaven?" I asked her.

"Well, it's supposed to be this beautiful place where God..."

"And what do you call where we are right now?"

"I'd call it a little bay," she said with a grin. "It's very pretty, but it's not heaven."

“And who says it’s not?”

“But that’s just ridiculous,” she said.

“Okay, so where do you think heaven might be then?”

“I think everybody would like to know that”, she said.

“Well let’s see if we can find it for them. So we agree that heaven exists – it must be somewhere. Do we agree on that?”

“We agree,” she said, still with the gorgeous grin.

“Good! Now... if everywhere is here, and all time is now, which it is, then obviously heaven must be here and now. So here it is then...”

“But this can’t be heaven,” she said, the grin now a frown. “It just can’t.”

“Then where else is it? Remember, now, everywhere is here, and it’s always now. There’s nowhere else but ‘here’, and there’s no other time but ‘now’. There’s no future and there’s no past – they don’t exist.”

The beautiful brown eyes did not leave mine.

“But this missus and I got wedded in the past,” he said, “so there must be a past.”

"You can't get married in the past," I said, "you can only get married in the present. You two got wedded in the present, not in the past. Nothing can happen in the past, and nothing can happen in the future. Everything that happens, has ever happened, or will ever happen, happens in the present. The present is the only time there is. Everything is now, and now is all that exists. To be right here now, in the moment, is to be in heaven. People think heaven is someplace you go, but heaven's wherever you are, and wherever you go, there you are. You accompany yourself always. Heaven can't be anywhere else but here, for there simply is nowhere else but here. And heaven can't be in another time, for there simply is no other time."

He thought for a moment. "But what about the times when we're worried or frightened? How can we be afraid in heaven?"

"We can't," I said. "Worry and fear are not of the present. There's no worry or fear in heaven. Worry and fear are not about what's now, they're all about what's not now. They're only of the future, which doesn't exist. It's the same with regret, of course. Regret is of the past, which also doesn't exist. Just think of something you fear, and watch your attention shift out of the present and into the future. Do the same with anything you regret, and observe yourself in the past. You have stepped out of reality and into illusion, for here and now is all that exists. Try to eat an apple in the past or the future. You never can. You can only eat an apple here, now. We can't meet or say our farewells anytime but now. It's all here and now."

He looked at me, thoughtful. "No we can't can we."

"We can't...?"

"Eat an apple in the past or the future."

"No, we can't," I said. "We can't do anything in the past or the future, we can only ever do it now, because there *is* only now."

"Here's a little secret," I said. "There is actually no such thing as time. It simply doesn't exist. Time and eternity totally contradict each other. If there's no end, then there's no time. And if there's no time, there's only now."

He studied my face.

"It's perfectly alright, even desirable, to think of nice things to happen," I said, "and to have fond memories. But there's oceans of difference between fond memories and regret and remorse. And despite their illusion, the phantoms of worry and fear are not exactly nice things."

There was a lengthy silence. "It's all just our freedom of choice then, isn't it," he said. "That's really what it is. It can't be anything else, it just can't"

"No, indeed it can't", I said. "In every moment we hold the profound position of absolute authority. Moment by moment we choose, and every moment is now. Truth or illusion, love or fear, the choice is always ours, and the choice is always now."

He pondered the words. "Hm, they're hard lines of yours... But it's true, isn't it. There's really no compromise, is there."

Not really, I thought but didn't say.

"Here's another little secret," I said. "While it all appears to be taking place 'out there', it's really all taking place 'in here'. For 'out there' is only a reflection of 'in here'. Everything is an inside job. Peace, happiness, healing and all miracles, happen from the inside out. They *never* happen, as most believe from the outside in. Whatever the experience, we are the very source of the experience, and it all begins in heaven. Heaven is not 'up there', for there is no up or down in the universe. Heaven is here and now, in us. The Kingdom of Heaven is within you."

"Yes... but if there's no up or down in the universe," he said, "then what about the stars? We always look up at the stars, they're always above us."

"Are they?" I said. "If the stars are above us at the North Pole, aren't they also below us at the South Pole? And from there, wouldn't we then look down at the stars?"

"He looked at the sky. "So there really is both up and down..."

"Not in reality," I said, "not when we look at the bigger picture. When we take a cosmic perspective everything changes. We then see the Earth moving around one star, which is but one of the many billions of stars of the Milky Way Galaxy, which in turn is just one of the many billions of galaxies in the universe. In the midst of this incredible immensity, up and down are meaningless, it's all the same."

He frowned, perplexed. "So, if there's really no up or down," he said, "or above or below, then..."

"...wherever we are, it's all here and now, in us."

He looked at me quizzically. "You do seem to have a logical answer for everything, so how do you know all these...?"

"Good God!" I said, "I hardly have the answer to everything, and I've yet to meet anyone who does. I'm no stranger to the metaphysical bigger picture – the way reality works, but apart from that, you'd know as much as I would – probably more."

"Yes, he's very clever," she said. "My dear man can build anything, and what he doesn't know about music and art..."

I looked at him. "Well, there you go then."

"But that's not a lot of help at the moment," he said.

"No perhaps it's not," I said "...and that's where the family comes in."

"Family?"

"No matter how impersonal the universe seems to be," I said, "pleas are always answered – help in the appropriate form always shows up at the right moment. Of course, we can always choose to put this down to mere coincidence."

He looked puzzled. "But what do you mean by family?"

"We're all the one family, you know. We're all just one great big family in fact. Not always a happy one, though."

"You mean every single..."

"Absolutely" I said. "We're all from the same place, or fountainhead if you like – the same source. We're all part of the One. We live in this deception of severance and separation, a duality of sorts, but there's really only One. The One includes absolutely everything and everyone. The One is all inclusive."

"We're all really one then," he said, still looking puzzled.

"It's not that we're just one common huge blob," I said. "Each of us is totally unique of course, just like flowers are. But first and foremost, we are of the One. Each part of the One is equal, and no part is better than any other part. There is no greater or lesser in the One. There's no hierarchy."

"And what about God?" she asked. "Where is God in all of this?"

"That's just our name for the One. Nothing exists that's not God," I said. "When we think we hurt another, we are really hurting ourselves, for in truth there is no 'other', there is only One. There's never a need to join anything or form brotherhoods, for we *are* a brotherhood. And no-one needs a rescue team or saviour, as we're all forever part of the One. Everyone, all things, emanate from, and are part of the One eternal source. There is nothing exclusive of the One – absolutely nothing."

"Just imagine then," she said, "if all at once everybody in the world realised their true oneness. Why, the whole world would change."

"It would," I said, "and very effectively. For then the whole world would understand that the cry of a solitary babe was not less than the cry of all humankind. And that the One in its vastness was not complete without the solitary babe."

She smiled. "So it's really true then. God does live in heaven after all."

"It's very true," I said. "And we know where heaven is, don't we. There's nothing more sacred than what's inside the human. And it's the same in every human, regardless of culture, creed, race and gender."

The greatest temple ever created

was not made of marble,

gold and sacred stone.

It was made of living flesh and blood.

- Anon

Glorious indeed is the world of God around us,

but more glorious the world of God within us.

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

No idols

No leader

No following

No mediator

No superior

No master

No guru

No dogma

Know You

- Allen William Stacker

The Kingdom of God is within You.

- Yeshua ben Joseph (Jesus of Nazareth)

"You know, I believe you're right," he said "...about our meeting and coincidence. I'm sure we didn't meet by chance. It just feels so..."

"Actually, there's no such thing," I said. "Nothing ever comes about by chance or coincidence. The design is always perfect, every inch perfect. We're always in the right..."

He frowned. "How can that be? How can it always be perfect?"

"It can't be any other way," I said, "because we're the designer. All that transpires is designed by us. That's our gift from the One – the gift of creation."

He looked at me for a moment, concerned eyes. "Well, if it's true that we're the designer, then that's a little frightening."

"And if it's not true," I said, "then it's very, very frightening. For that would mean, in effect, that everything in our lives is an accident – a random happening for no reason – and every single event in our lives is the result of fate, chance or luck.

"Well it certainly seems that way at times," he said.

"And I don't think there would be too many who would disagree with you", I said, "for it certainly seems as though events – both good and bad – happen to us from out of the blue. However, as difficult as it may be for us to understand, this is never the case. Our personal reality is ever our own creation. From the beginning to end, we create, or co-create with others, all events in our lives. And if this were not true, then all the great teachings and every self-help book ever written would be invalid – null and void, because if we don't create our own

reality, and it's all just random happenings or predestination, then it would not be possible to change. We would all be completely powerless to heal, create and change anything, which is clearly not the case.



So true. If we didn't create everything in our lives, we couldn't change anything in our lives, for if anything is by chance, then logically, everything is by chance. It is simply not possible to have a reality (a life) that is partly by design, and partly by chance, fate or accident.

Now this raises some big questions. If our reality is our very own creation, then why would someone create a chronic disability? Why would anyone create hardship and suffering for themselves? Why wouldn't everyone just create a wonderful trouble-free life? And why do people have very different likes, dislikes, loves, hates, passions, talents, fears and phobias? Why are some born into royalty and others into adversity? Why, when we meet certain people, does it feel like we've known them forever? Where does déjà vu come from? Where do we find the answers?

A good percentage of people believe in life after death – our ongoing eternal soul. However, not all of them believe that we're eternal in both directions. That is, they believe we're eternal beings now, but before this life we didn't exist. So where exactly did our 'eternal' soul come from? We seem to have great difficulty with something that 'always was', while readily accepting something that 'always will be'.

All the things that ever will be or ever were, exist now, because now is all that exists. Every unhealed wound we have ever borne, and all our unfinished business, is with us now. This is where many of the answers lie. But also with us now, ever awaiting our claim (and our awakening), is the glory of unlimited

possibility. As Albert Einstein wisely reminded us – ‘in the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.’

In truth (and at the deepest level we all want truth), there is a solution to every challenge we have or ever will have, and the solution is often grander than we can ever imagine. Indeed, there is always a solution – a way out, and we are always safe – NOW! Now is the place of absolute safety, peace, joy and power.



“While it is true,” I continued, “that we are the designer and creator of our personal reality, it doesn’t mean we ever have to justify our existence. Simply ‘being’ is its own justification. All we really need to do, is do what brings us happiness, and no-one can know where our happiness lies, but us.

“Always beware of anyone, anywhere, who proclaims to know what is best for you, or induces you in any way to feel less than you truly are. Mind those with vested interests. No-one is greater or less than you – absolutely no-one.”

“Let go of all the limiting ‘shoulds’ and ‘supposed tos’, and simply remember your immortality and be joyous with your mortality. Your joy alone is truth. Dismiss your age in years, and discern your joy and creativity in the present. Have lots of fun, follow your heart and be gentle with yourself always and in all ways. Be true to yourself no matter what.”

He nodded. “That makes good sense and it’s sound advice, but how could anyone be happy all the time? How’s that possible for anyone?”

“By choice perhaps?... But that’s only a suggestion.”

He frowned "It can't only be choice."

"Then how else?" I said. "If it was circumstances that determined happiness, then all the healthy and wealthy would be blissfully happy, and all the disadvantaged would be totally miserable. But as we all know, this is not..."

"Yes," he said, "but there are some things..."

"What some things?"

"Well... what about loneliness then, and old age?"

"While we may indeed 'feel' lonely at times," I said, "we are *never*, as part of the One, alone – never for a moment. And our eternal soul never gets wrinkles – never a one."

"Still, there appears to be all sorts of things out there that oppose our happiness. There's always something to bring us down."

"But remember," I said, "out there is only a reflection of in here. It's only a mirror."

"Yes, you've said that, I know. But there always seems to be some little thing..."

"Those 'little' things," I said, "just do not deserve our attention. They're all just so much traffic noise. And as for the so-called big things, they're only illusion

anyway. Despite all the prophets of doom and gloom, nothing can hurt us, years cannot age us, and death cannot kill us. Fear is the grandest illusion, because we're never actually in danger. We can't be in danger and immortal at the same time."

"Honestly," he sighed, "I'm quite convinced there's no winning with you on these things."

"And you're right," I said. "There's no winning with me, or indeed losing with me, because you're not competing with me."

"Even so," he said, brushing this truth aside, "it's still sometimes really hard to..."

"Alright, here's one more little secret," I said. "The third in the 'little secret series'. They're not really secrets of course, it's just that many people are unaware of them. This one is enormously powerful. It's the one to use whenever we're feeling distress or despair over any inexplicable event in our lives that's not open to ordinary means of validation. In truth, there's a reason behind every event in our lives, but as we're rarely seeing the 'bigger picture' – the greater growth and learning process behind the event – understanding in the moment is uncommon. So, here it is then... surrender."

"Surrender! But surrender is giving up, isn't it?" he said. "That's admitting failure."

"You're both right and wrong there," I said. "First, there's no such thing as failure. Failure is not a bad thing, it's a label we put on things. We can never fail, we can only ever learn. But then you're right, surrender is indeed giving up. And here we have a little irony, for surrender and its ally acceptance come from a

place of great power and authority. Now we often confuse surrender with resignation and compromise, but there's a vast difference. Resignation is all about anticipated consequences invariably connected with the present situation. Resignation or resigned compromise tends to keep us fused to futility, dread and despair. Surrender, on the other hand, sets us free *within* our present circumstances. Paradoxically, when we totally surrender and give up trying to control, we gain total control."

"If we've given up control," he said, "then who's in control?"

"Why, it's our Greater Self dear," she said, "the Spirit. We've stepped aside and allowed the Big One to take command. We really should remember to do it more often."

Hm, who *was* that, I thought, who said we're all both professor and student.

"Are you absolutely certain that it's safe to surrender?" he asked me.

"It has to be a certainty," I said, "when we let go and trust the source of all creation – the very power that drives and is the universe. I don't think there's much chance that we'll come undone, do you?"

"Well no, not at all," he replied. "At least not when you put it like that."

"Of course, the secret that's veiled within the secret," I said, "is that whenever we totally trust ourselves, we are trusting in the One, because that's who we really are. The Spirit or Holy Spirit – the fundamental resource of all life – is not some elusive power residing somewhere in the depths of space. To have faith in God, is to trust yourself."

So true, yet how ready and willing we are to put our trust, our total trust, in anybody and anything *but* ourselves. Indeed, we gladly put our trust, our very lives, in the hands of others and 'things' constantly.

We put our trust in engineers and builders of bridges and high-rise buildings. We put our trust in drivers of oncoming vehicles and the mechanics of our own. We put our trust in pilots, aircraft, and even barbers wielding razors. And whenever we sit, we never doubt for a moment that the chair will support us. We live in a constant state of great faith and trust – until, that is, the moment we have to trust ourselves.

Why? Where, suddenly, does all our trust go and our doubt come from?

Perhaps we've learned to doubt ourselves, by believing all those experts and doctrines we trust. Perhaps it's all to do with love... if we're filled with love, then there's not much room for anything else.

"That's straight after my own heart," she said. "I always taught the kids to trust in themselves, but I don't think I realised then just how powerful that really is."

"I'm sure your sage advice has served them famously," I said.

"I expect so," she beamed. "As you'd say here in Australia, they're very happy vegemites."

"We would have a whole wide wonderful world of happy vegemites if everyone trusted themselves," I said. "The world is not the way it is because people trust themselves, but precisely because they don't. many speak obsessively about faith in God and the love of God; and its true, God *is* love, and love *is* the

supreme power, but you *cannot* mistrust your own being and at the same time say that you trust God. And you *cannot* say you love God and say you don't love yourself."

"No, of course you can't," she said. "That's so obvious. It's hard to imagine anyone not seeing that."

"Some people have quite interesting reasons for not seeing things," I said. "The 'somewhere in the sky' God is made responsible for all manner of triumph and disaster. And our culture itself strongly underwrites a belief that authority and expertise lay outside the self."

She smiled. "When in reality it all lies *within* the self, including God!"

"Precisely," I said.

"We have more freedom than we think we have, don't we," he said. "If that's putting it the right way."

"It is, and we do," I said. "And freedom is not something we are ever free to give up, but only free to deny."

"When you stop and think about it," she said, "we do spend a lot of our time in porridge."

"In what?"

She laughed. "In porridge. It's our name back home for confinement."

"Oh," I said. "Then what you say about spending time in 'porridge' is very true. Although it's wholly self-imposed confinement, or all 'home-made' porridge. While it often appears to be the contrary, limitations are never imposed on us by an outside force. As I've said, everything is an inside job."

"It's as though at times we're both the prisoner and the guard in our own private jail," she mused. "We're the jolly one holding ourself captive."

"A perfect illustration," I smiled.

"And where do you suppose it all ends?" he asked.

I looked at him. "Ends?"

"Well surely it's all got to end somewhere. We can't just go on and on forever and ever."

"And why can't we?" I said.

"But that's inconceivable. It all has to end sometime. Everything comes to an end."

"But how can it end some 'time' when there is no time," I said. "Remember, there's only now, it's always now."

He sighed. "Righto... then how long is now? Just how long does 'now' go for?"

"Forever and ever," I said. "Eternity."

"Eternity," he echoed solemnly. "Then we ..."

"You guessed it... we are our forever friend."

He just stared at me.

"That would be a daunting prospect for just about anybody," he said. "Who would wish to put up with themselves and their limitations forever? That's even scary when you think about it."

"It could only be daunting or scary," I said, "if we could never change those limitations. But we can – unquestionably, and we have all the help we would ever need to do so."

He looked at me, knowingly. "From our Spirit, you mean."

"That's the one," I said. "That unlimited power is forever there to help us. All we have to do is ask. There is nothing impossible to the Spirit, because each individual Spirit incorporates the *whole mind* of God."

A little smile. "We really have our own magic genie then."

"We do," I agreed, "only better. Genies always retire after three wishes, but the Spirit, the God within, is forever."

"How can we really know that?" he said. "I mean, how can we come to trust and depend on something we can't even see – that's intangible?"

*Just because we can't see something
Doesn't mean that it doesn't exist.
Can we see the stars at noonday?
It's only during the darkest hours
That we can see the stars.
The Spirit's a bit like that.
- A.W.S.*

"Only through direct experience," I said. "That's the only way any of us, including me, can ever know anything. We can read all the books and do all the seminars, and some are excellent indeed, but at the end of the day, it's all dry philosophy until it's experienced. Take our apple for instance – the one that's impossible to eat in the past or the future. The only way to 'know' about the apple is to eat it. Anything other than the direct experience of eating it is just information. It may well be fascinating apple information, but it's not true knowledge. All true knowledge is direct experience."

"It would be the same with love, wouldn't it," he said. "It's in the experience."

"Absolutely," I said. "And it's interesting to see the extraordinary lengths some people go to for the experience. They look everywhere hoping to find what's not actually lost in the first place – it's always right there inside them. Once they experience the love within – the love of self – they will see love simply everywhere. In fact, they'll see nothing *but* love. As always and forever, it's as within – so without.

"And while we're on the subject of love..."

"You know, that's really the whole problem," he said, "it's love. To be perfectly honest, if I didn't have so much love, then..."

"... you wouldn't have a problem?"

He blushed slightly. "Oh dear! That doesn't sound quite..."

"Actually, it sounds quite beautiful," I said. "There is a way, however, to lessen your problem. It won't get rid of it altogether, but..."

"I can't wait to hear this," they said, almost together.

"It's really very simple," I said. "Just give some of your love away. Then everyone you give it to will have the same problem. Don't we always feel better when we know that others have the same problem?"

He laughed. "It's so true, isn't it."

"Seriously though, the love you two have, which I'm sure even our seagull friends here have noticed, could indeed change your whole Northwest. It *is* that powerful. You see love is not a word, or even just a feeling. Love is the..."

"Yes, but how could our love change a whole district? Doesn't that only happen in Hollywood?"

I smiled. "Very easily," I said. "Just a silent 'I love you,' with pure intent, to everyone you meet. It'll spread like sunrise"



He turned to his wife. "Well, here's the very first silent I love you."

"The second actually," she said.

He looked out across the bay, thoughtful. "It's funny, but everything feels so good right now... I never thought I could ever feel..."

"As good as you do right here and now."

"That's right," he said quickly. Then he paused. "I'll try to remember how good this..."

She touched his hand. "There's no need to remember dear," she said softly. "It's always here and now."

After a long moment she turned to me with that gorgeous 'little bay' grin. "You know... another cuppa tea would be lovely." Then to my astonishment she leant over and kissed my cheek.



He's going to miss her, I thought. But then, only for a little while. They'll meet again of course, as loved ones always do. That's how destiny works. It's how the universe works. Love never forgets itself, for love is outside linear time. Love is always NOW, and now is all that exists.

And who knows, all three of us may meet again one day. Not by chance though, as there's no such thing. There will be a reason – there always is.

In the meantime, I should write a little memoir... In fact I will someday, I know I will. It'll just be a matter of waiting for the goddess of inspiration – that magic moment when you instinctively reach for a pencil...



EPILOGUE

The spiral turns. The passing of the seasons. Endings and beginnings subtly woven together in the timeless now.

Each moment at the bay is imbued with the charm of that moment. No two moments are ever the same at the bay, and every moment is now. It's always now at the bay.

There's a big celebration here tonight, the new Notice Board said. Music, performers and fireworks too. It's soon to start in fact, so I'll make myself at home and simply take in the view awhile. It's pretty.

"Pretty, isn't it," the voice said.

Until he spoke, I hadn't noticed him there.

"It is," I replied. "Very pretty indeed."

"Come here much?" he asked, after a while.

"A bit."

"What's that thing over there in the water?" he asked, pointing.

"Oh, that. That's the barge for the fireworks."

"And that over there, what's that, the big shell-like thing?"

"That's for the orchestra", I said.

"Concert on the water! Well, I'll be... nothing like this back home."

"Oh."

"England... the Northwest. Know it do you?"

A perfect pyramid of water-skiers skimmed across the bay. The crowd roared. The celebrations had begun.

"You know, it's funny," the man said, "but it's not the same back there now that I come to think of it. The whole area is real different somehow than it used to be. And you know, I only realised that now. Fancy that!"

I looked at him. "Back home, the Northwest you mean?"

"Yeah. Dunno what it is, can't really lay my finger on it. Just feels so different back there now. Much..."

"Better?" I said.

"Yeah, that's it. Better, much better. Now isn't that the strangest thing."

I smiled. "You wouldn't by any chance happen to have a pencil on you, would you?"



*The mark of your ignorance is the depth
of your belief in injustice and tragedy.
What the caterpillar calls the end of the world,
the master calls a butterfly.*

- Richard Bach

