


# GLOBAL



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## EXPRESS

*self worth*

AN INTERACTIVE QUARTERLY FOR THOSE WHO CARE ABOUT THE FUTURE



## global club

From the magazine *Global Express* grew the initiative *Global Club* - to develop unity and trust between young people of different backgrounds and cultures. The first *Global Club* event took place three years ago in Melbourne, Australia. Since then it has been a monthly occurrence based around different activities and themes. April 3rd-6th saw the first UK *Global Club*, organised by young graduates from Australia, Brazil, India, Japan, Switzerland and the UK. Forty-five people came, representing 20 national backgrounds (including Ghana, Italy, Malaysia, South Africa and Taiwan) to explore a topic recently addressed in *Global Express* - Moving Out Of Your Comfort Zone. The weekend was structured around four main speakers - a Management Consultant of Jamaican origin, an Egyptian Paediatrician, a Texan Minister and a British Film Producer. Amidst the challenges they threw out, there was also time for workshifts, discussion groups, sport, drama, fun, games, music and croquet! Another highlight was a panel of four participants who spoke about what 'The heart of the matter' means to them. If you'd like to know more, *Global Club - The Movie* is available on video from Howard Grace at: 15 Lewis Walk, Newbury, Berks, RG14 6TB, Tel/fax: (+44) 01635 47196. And by popular request, the organisers look forward to planning UK *Global Club* 2.

Laura Trevelyan, UK



Global Club, Photo: David Channer

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## GLOBAL EXPRESS

## seeks to:

- be an independent media service
- establish and support a global network
- be culturally inclusive
- respond to a rapidly changing world
- connect personal and global issues
- encourage personal integrity and responsible attitudes
- encourage people to act on creative inspiration

## believing that:

- you matter
- you can make a difference
- goodness has an image problem and spirituality is marginalised
- sincere communication at every level is essential
- peace is possible if we face the causes of division and injustice in our own lives and communities
- time for reflection is essential to find direction

## Why Global Express?

*Global Express (GE)* was started to link up young people who care about the future. Dissatisfied with what we were being offered by the media, we felt an alternative was needed.

Our aim is to inspire and encourage people to fulfil their potential. In *GE* you can question the way things are, and search for solutions. It is also a great opportunity to make contacts outside your 'comfort zone'.

Most of the *GE* team met through MRA (Moral Re-Armament), which is a world-wide network of people working for personal responsibility and conflict resolution. Ideals of integrity, unselfishness and love, together with a search for inspiration from a higher source are central to this way of life. MRA is a Non Government Organisation recognised by the United Nations. For more information visit: <http://www.mra.org.uk>

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Global Express goes to:

**Africa:** Kenya and South Africa; **Americas:** Brazil, Canada and USA; **Asia/Pacific:** Australia, Cambodia, Fiji, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand and Western Samoa; **Europe:** Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Scandinavia, Serbia, Switzerland and UK; **Middle East:** Lebanon and Palestine.



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Not all opinions in GE are shared by the editors!



Photo: Bryan Long

## HOT SPOT

The last issue of *Global Express* struck me immediately in its layout - many shades of grey, lifted by sparse but elegant gold outlines. I loved it because I am into shades of grey! A few years ago, my life was two-toned: black and white. I wanted everything to be clear-cut and what I considered to be perfect. I tried going to different churches, in search of a religion around which I could base my life without having any doubts. Unhappy with my self, which was (and is) far from perfect, I let my body get thinner and thinner. I avoided trying anything new - meeting new people, going to places I hadn't been before, or even travelling a different path to places I had been - for fear that I'd fail in the attempt.

Since I have begun to take some new paths I have realised that the world is full of greys. Working a little on *Global Express* has shown that I can contribute something of value, and that it doesn't have to be all or nothing; whatever little bit I can do helps the many people involved in its production. With my mind no longer blocked out in black and white, I have space to think and to hear the opinions of others. Sometimes what I hear changes my own views, sometimes it does not. But the more I hear, the more new people and places I experience, the more shades I recognise around me and the more fulfilling I find life to be. A black and white world may be easy in some ways - I don't have to think or to feel - but it's a fantasy world in which I miss out on a reality which occasionally is outlined in gold.

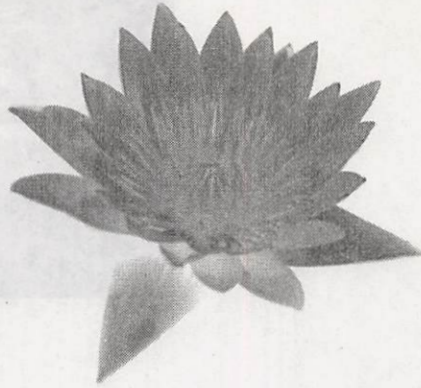
*Black and white was so easy for me  
 But shades of grey are the colours I see. - Billy Joel*

**Nicci Long, Australia**



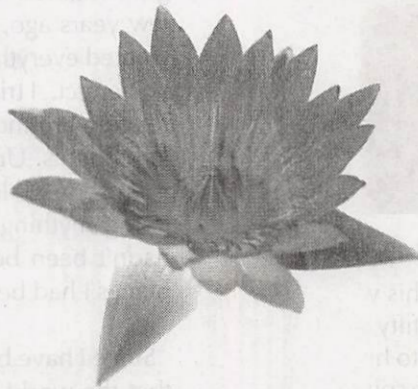
# self worth

❖ Self worth is the fine line between arrogance and ambition, and inferiority and feeling worthless.

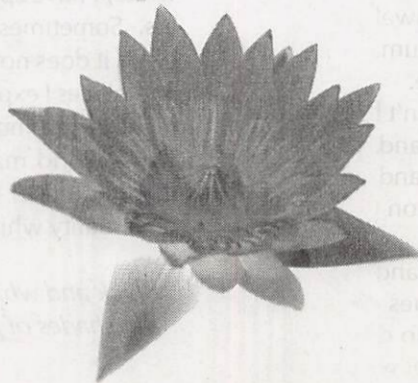


❖ In the case of my husband it was a teacher who gave him faith. People of faith who believe in you, help you achieve greatness by encouraging you to develop your talents.

❖ We Western people have destroyed the self worth of whole nations like the natives of the USA, Canada and Australia, and the Jews in parts of Europe, to name but a few.



❖ In all we do or say, we can build up a person's faith or self worth - or pull it down.



❖ We are like we are, and we are unique in the eyes of our Creator and each other.

❖ The soul is like a plant. It needs soil to stretch out its roots. It needs light to grow and water so as not to shrivel up.

❖ Today there are Olympic games for the disabled. How can you make the most of life if you are disabled or have a handicap? Think of the young Italian tenor who is blind but now known worldwide... how much joy he gives to people.

❖ To find self worth you need a goal way above yourself, otherwise you get self-centred.

❖ Self worth means acknowledging our talents. Comparison with others can stifle these gifts. The point is: are we developing and making the most of ours?

**Rita Karrer,  
Switzerland**

Photo: Christine Karrer



This young girl radiates happiness and self worth. She's selling scarves at Angkor Wat in Cambodia. Yet who knows what suffering she's experienced... how many family members she's lost... what her future holds. I took the photo whilst accompanying a group of Buddhist monks and nuns on a tour of the country in November 1997. Over four eventful weeks we climbed mountains, travelled by boat and van through five provinces, and talked of history, art and politics in the shade of varied ancient monuments. Leading the discussions was an American Buddhist monk, Ajahn Sumedho, who is Spiritual Director of the Amaravati Buddhist Centre in Britain. As a

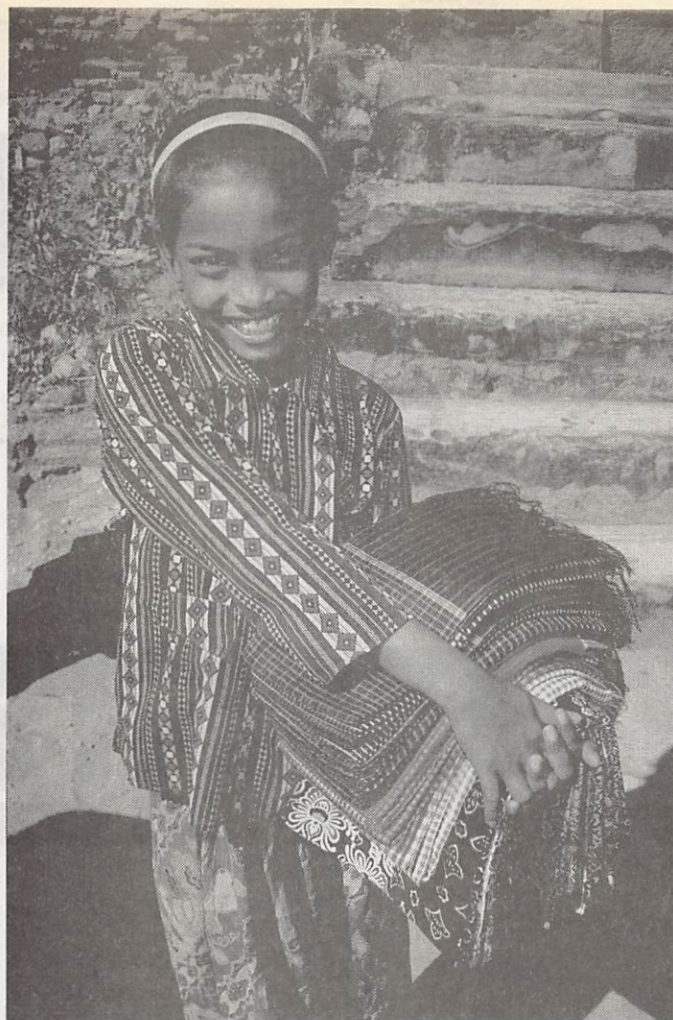


Photo: David Channer

teacher he has become well known for his warmth, compassion and humour. Two hundred and fifty students from Phnom Penh University listened intently to him and visibly relaxed as their minds were opened to the spiritual heritage of their country. Here are some extracts from his talk: "Cambodia has suffered immense tragedies. But it is also a land with a religion and culture of unsurpassed antiquity. A country of compassion, selflessness, tranquillity, beauty and generosity."

"The Buddhist teaching is about being awake - alert. Being awake to the way things are. As human beings we have the ability to reflect, to contemplate."

"The cats at our monastery in the UK don't have this ability. They roam in the fields killing mice and baby rabbits. But human beings can agree on moral standards and how to relate to each other. They can reflect on the instinct to kill."

"Our mission here is to benefit, inspire and direct the attention of the nation to the spiritual values of its heritage and the moral precepts of daily living. To develop a profound understanding of the dharma so that when we speak to the people we are able to tell them the truth."

"From what I have seen, in spite of the tragedies, Buddhism offers a tremendous potential for peace in Cambodia, but first peace has to come in the mind itself."

dia, but first peace has to come in the mind itself.

"The Buddha started his teaching with the truth of suffering. We all experience suffering though you have had more than your fair share of it. We suffer in the West. The Queen of England suffers. The King of Thailand suffers."

"Suffering is a common bond that we all have in our lives. For many of you, I am sure, you can easily see the causes of suffering as external due to wars, unstable governments, and economic poverty. In my background I don't have those things. I really cannot blame my suffering on the government or on the economy."

"In the Western world, even though it has political stability and economic affluence, people still suffer enormously because we think in the wrong way - always creating problems, creating issues. We are critical and discontented with things. Even though we have good governments, economic abundance and freedom, without wisdom we still create suffering. I can see that my suffering came from my own ignorance. So I want to encourage you to look at the causes of suffering even though this does not justify the unfair and unstable conditions that you might be experiencing here in Cambodia."

"If you look deeply inside yourself and learn to understand how your mind works, then you will see that the root cause, the real cause of suffering, is one's own ignorance of the truth - of the dharma. Realisation of this truth leads to liberation."

**David Channer, UK**

Ajahn Sumedho (Robert Jackman) was born in Seattle, Washington, in 1934. On graduating from university he joined the US Navy and served in the medical corps during the Korean war (1950-53). Returning to academic life, he took an MA in South Asian Studies from the University of California at Berkeley, and spent two years teaching English with the Peace Corps in Borneo. A growing interest in Buddhism took him in 1966 to Thailand, where he entered monastic life.



# STUDENTS

for \_\_\_\_\_

# SHEFFIELD

"I think a kind of magic touched us all," are the words a friend used to describe her wedding. The same could be said about the *Students For Sheffield (S4S)* mega-event back on March 8th. Magic... because it's not often that you witness the visible empowerment of four hundred 14-19 year olds. Magic... because it was free. And magic... because the whole *Adventures in Learning* day was orchestrated by volunteers - both student and professional. How?

Once upon a time there was a little boy who had an illness called Encephalitis (swelling of the brain). At the age of seven he went into a month-long coma. The doctors concluded he would need ten hours' sleep a night and that he would always be one year behind his friends. He was, and he left school having never tried. Later he encountered a phrase which changed his life, "By doing you become." And Richard Field OBE became a top British Industrialist and Business Consultant, with a driving passion for learning.



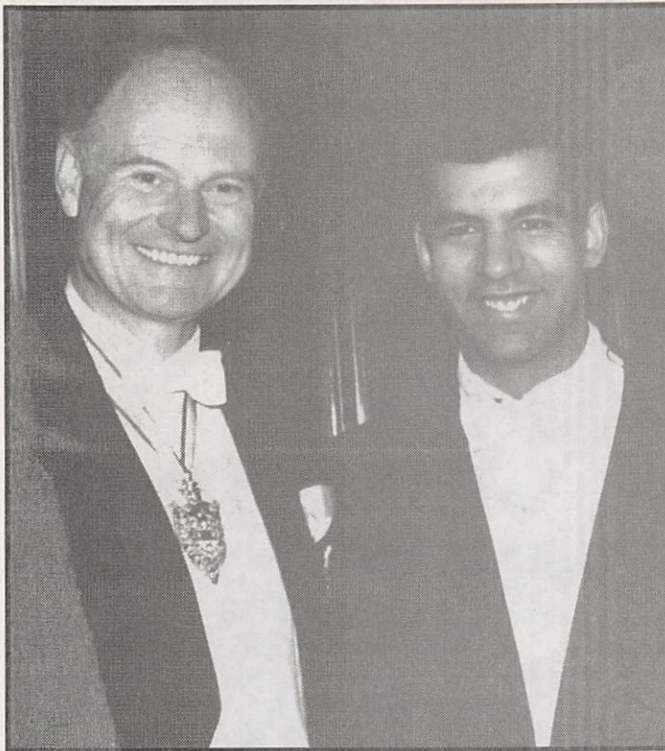
self worth...



Juggling is a regular feature of *Students For Sheffield*, Photos: Laura Trevelyan



## self worth...



Richard Field and Krish Raval, Photo: Seaman Photography Ltd.

Once upon a later time there was a little Indian boy living in Ethiopia. At the age of four, following the civil war of 1975, he and his family fled to Britain. Whether it was his propensity for daydreaming or the fact he was Asian, he was put into remedial classes. Unsuccessful at school he went to a sixth-form college. Through the students' union he discovered a talent for public speaking and became interested in social issues. His confidence grew. And grew. Now, at 26, Krish Raval is one of the youngest research scholars at the Department of Law at Cambridge University.

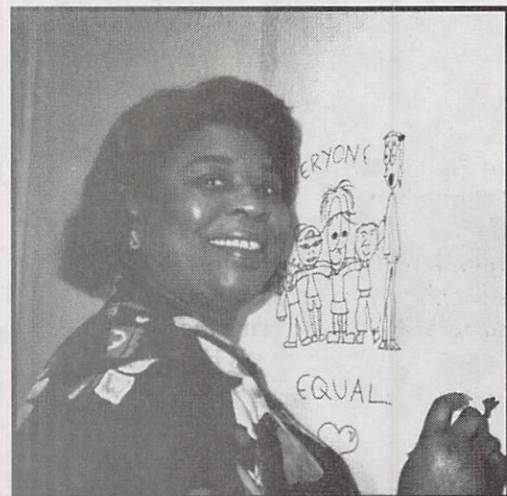
Three years ago their paths crossed at an international Business and Industry conference. From the platform Field voiced his concern for young people. His desire to help them resonated with Raval, "I approached him during a break and he showed me some time-management strategies he teaches to large corporations. Arrested by his friendliness and obvious teaching ability I asked if he would consider training multitudes in the way he had just taught me." Field agreed and over the next days they formulated a one year plan.

Returning to Sheffield, they assembled a training team (faculty) including District Commander of Police Douglas Brand, International

Business Consultant John Carlisle and several other leading public figures. "We invited trainers at, or near, the top of their respective professions who could relate to and learn from young people. Together we designed an interactive course which would fit into the academic year and be as much fun as possible."

Fifty students were selected, based on their willingness to serve in the community, and by February 1996 the first *S4S* course was underway. A two day intensive residential course, followed by further training on four successive Sundays, exposed them to a host of personal development skills such as lateral-thinking, negotiation, goal-setting, stress-management, visioning, teamwork, Tai-Chi, public speaking, values and ethics, and servant-leadership.

Subsequent initiatives included care-schemes for the disabled, and many returned the following year to undergird the training of 50 new students. By this point it was obvious that the skills acquired by the students (Phase 1) should be disseminated on a much larger scale (Phase 2). Enter the mega-event of 1997. Under the guidance of the faculty, the students organised a two day educational event to which over 1600 people came.



Wall murals - even the organisers have fun!



Amongst them was Engineering student Mike Murphy. Enthusiastic about what he learnt that weekend, he applied for the 1998 course and discovered what it's like to help pull off such an event. "It gives you wings!", he says quoting Muhammad Ali. "You acquire life skills not taught in the classroom, which help you realise your potential. It has focused my energies and given me a fresh awareness of society and my role in it."

Tony Buzan, author of 54 books on learning (including the BBC's best selling educational book *Use Your Head*) describes it as a huge energy exchange. This year he led the teenagers through four sessions - memory, mind mapping, reading and "that amazing bio-computer, the brain."

What motivates him? The sheer joy of it - helping people with learning difficulties because he was there once. His spirit is contagious. One of the participants commented, "*Adventures in Learning* was a new beginning for me. I never achieved the grades for university and I always thought I was stupid because I didn't do better in school. Now I realise I just didn't have the right techniques."

What next? Despite the huge effort



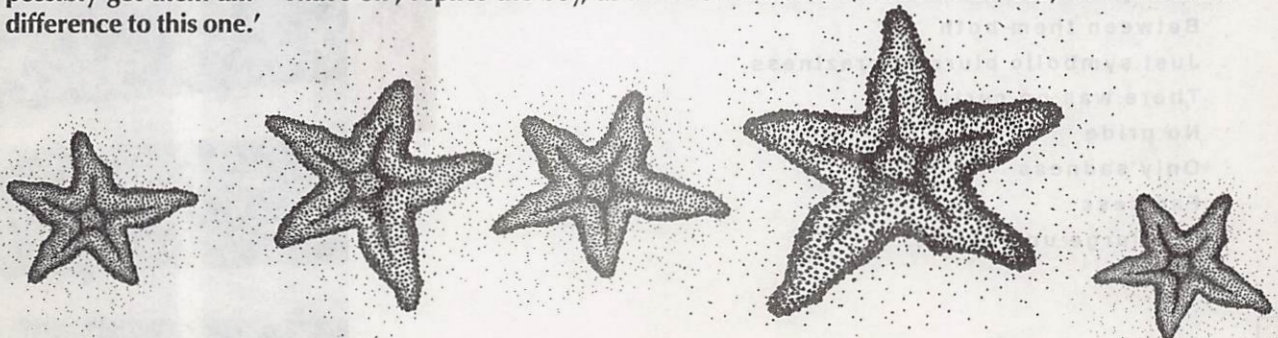
Students help participants with Mind Mapping

(and often pain) that goes into such an initiative, Raval and his team have taken the visioning exercises literally, "People are wondering why it hadn't been done before. Barriers have been broken between generations and cultures, and students of all ages have been able to support each other. We look forward to establishing sister programmes in cities across the country and beyond." As C S Lewis said, "The magic never ends."

**Laura Trevelyan, UK**



The compère of the *Adventures in Learning* day, Douglas Brand, concluded with this anecdote: Walking along a beach, a reporter observes a boy throwing starfish into the sea. The entire shore is covered in starfish. The man asks the boy, 'What's the point of throwing these starfish back? There are thousands... you can't possibly get them all.' 'That's ok', replies the boy, as he throws another back into the sea, 'It will make a difference to this one.'



Art: Lisa Kesby



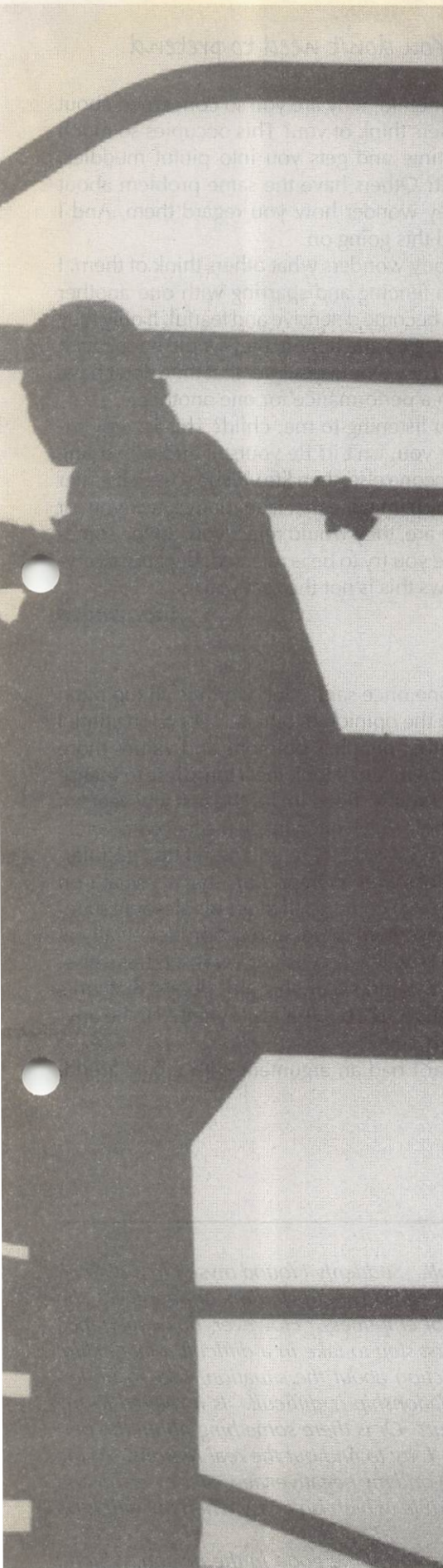
self worth...

# EXTRACT

My parents are not visually alive  
Young and foolish as they were  
I cannot see them  
I remember the blue ford  
He drove it for the last time  
His rare smile  
His authoritative ways  
But not him  
I remember her shyness  
As it became evident in myself  
Her black hair  
But not her eyes  
Save their arguments  
I cannot hear them  
I no longer remember the words  
We are in the galleries of time  
I remember  
Fatherliness  
Motherliness  
Their youth  
Simplicity  
My everlasting trust  
Which faded with time  
A reserved child  
The first born  
They were blind  
To the needs  
Of a destitute child  
My eyes turning grey  
Processed all  
Without a word  
As my heart was torn  
Between them both  
Just symbolic blurs of craziness  
There was no certainty  
No pride  
Only sadness  
Faceless  
In a large universe...

Photo: Lisa Kesby





I was born into a family that could not cope. My parents divorced when I was six. My mother was unable to cope financially or emotionally, and lived with us in her car for three months before the authorities moved in. We (my sister, my brother and I) were granted wards of the state. We moved into a children's home for two years, then into foster care for another two. My mother would write letters to me, saying 'I love you' one week and 'I hate you' the next. I remember being very angry at the age of 10.

Then my brother, my sister and I went to live with our Dad. We were poor and at times struggling, but we were happy. I remember eating carrot soup that my Dad had made; it wasn't very good, but when you don't have money, you eat what you can afford. Five years later, after a lot of rough patches, he threw me out. He was living with his future wife. My brother and sister were thrown out at a later stage, but all of us before the age of 16. How do you find self worth when your life has always been in turmoil, with no constancy?

I remember looking up at the stars one night when I was 17 and now living on my own. I was walking around my suburb thinking, 'There is something out there, protecting me'. Whether it was God or some other entity, I didn't know. It was like having a big coat wrapped around me. It felt safe, as if it would guide me when I needed it. I felt at peace because I knew millions of people had it much worse than I ever did. I have always felt lucky with the life I have been given.

My self confidence is something I have built, to some extent, on my own. I am the oldest of five children, and because of this have always been independent. But I was also different from the rest of the family. I am creative, and being an artist has built up my self esteem, especially through fashion design. I've learned how to be strong and to believe in myself - as an artist and a person.

This poem (opposite) illustrates the anger, sadness and loss I felt when I was about 10. Now I have the power to be confident in who I am. But I don't think it was totally my own doing because when people have confidence in you, then you have the power to let go of your fears. Self confidence and self worth come in waves. They are inconsistent throughout life with the balance of good and bad experiences. They control who you are and how you respond to life.

Recently I have been led to look back at my past, to find out why I am the way I am. My (survival) strength comes from my formative years, especially from 10-13. Despite my past with my father, I also respect him. A great deal of what happens to us as children has some impact and moulds us. Although my life hasn't always been pleasant, I have held a position of responsibility and have had to be strong for everyone else. I have found great power within, never to give up. Through the tough times I have been able to see the light.

Looking back, some of my best childhood experiences have been with my Dad, as he was building himself up from nothing. I admired and respected him for being willing to look after us. To look after three children on your own takes great courage and conviction. For many years he was a good role model. It wasn't until recently that I realised how important he was to my own strength. I love and respect him and now see our relationship through new eyes. It is amazing to see the self worth we have both gained through our experiences.

**Lisa Kesby, Australia/UK**



self worth is all  
too often based  
on the  
opinions  
of  
others

You don't need to pretend

My dear child, why are you so concerned about what others think of you? This occupies so much of your time and gets you into pitiful muddles, doesn't it? Others have the same problem about you. They wonder how you regard them. And I watch all this going on.

Everybody wonders what others think of them. I see them fencing and sparring with one another and they become defensive and fearful. If only they would be open and honest, they would be so much happier. They would discover that they don't have to put on a performance for one another.

Are you listening to me, child? This is very relevant for you, isn't it? Be yourself and stop trying to be someone else, then life will be so much easier for you. You imagine that if anybody knew you for who you are, they would reject you. So the somebody else you try to be is rejected, because everyone knows this is not the real you.

**Anonymous**

Someone once said, "Self worth is all too often based on the opinion of others." For a long time I valued other people's opinions and values more than my own. But it took me a long time to realise it. I never really 'fitted in' for the first few years of high school, which often made me feel completely worthless. I would try to tell myself that popularity and looks weren't important, that it's what's on the inside that counts. All those wholesome statements are so hard to put into action, especially at thirteen. I spent years wishing I was someone else. I wanted that girl's hair; that girl's looks; that girl's clothes; that girl's boyfriends. I wanted to be anyone but myself.

Last year I had an argument with a best friend.

Maria Lancaster, Photo: Simon Greenfield

## FAX-THINK-LINK

*The Fax-Think-Link is a gathering of ideas and opinions. Next issue we look at:*

**Who do you most admire and why?**

Contact [globalex@mraoxon.demon.co.uk](mailto:globalex@mraoxon.demon.co.uk) or fax the editors at +44-1865-311950, by 15th August, 1998.

*This issue: **How do you cope with difficult relationships?***

**Débora Rodrigues, Brazil**

*Dealing with people is a big challenge. Meeting others from different backgrounds, creeds and perspectives is a 'box full of surprises'.*

*For most of my life, I judged myself as an expert in*

*dealing with people. Suddenly I found myself in a difficult relationship which caused me frustration, unhappiness and a strange feeling of emptiness. However, this experience showed me the first step to take in a difficult relationship. After honest reflection about the situation, I try to understand why the relationship is difficult. Is it related to my personal behaviour? Or is there something about the person I do not like? I try to find out the real reasons. At the same time I go beyond my negative view of the person and try to be more flexible (which isn't easy when my will is on the table).*

*After this, I always find some good in the person, which I*



We had been close for four years, without any of the backstabbing rubbish that often occurs between friends. No major arguments either, which made this one all the harder to deal with. I said some stupid things which I didn't mean at all - but which were very hurtful. I felt frustrated at not knowing what was going wrong with our friendship, and took it out on her.

After not speaking to her for two months it suddenly struck me what the problem was. Ever since we'd met, I'd always wanted to be like her. She was popular, pretty, and had a constant flow of boyfriends.

We had a great friendship, accepting each other's different values and beliefs. Maybe that's why we were so compatible. We'd both been through rough patches, when there was no-one to talk to but each other. But underlying our friendship was a constant envy on my part. And after four years of wanting to be her, it was time to grow up.

I didn't want her lifestyle anymore. I became comfortable with my looks and didn't need hers. And for once in my life, I actually liked and appreciated who I was inside. I have found a sense of self worth that no-one can take away, because it comes from me.

In the end we all find self worth in different ways and at different times. But once you've found some sense of it, you will never want to let it go!

**Maria Lancaster, Australia**

When life becomes tough, when resources become scarce, and when dreams for a better future are shattered, humans need to find hope and vision to guide them through and help them believe in themselves. We often hear of a friend or a relative who becomes desperate after failing a relationship or an exam, losing a job or a loved one! Or if you are a resident of Gaza, you hear stories about suicide bombers who killed themselves and others - seeking to send a message to the world about how desperate a person can become if he/she loses hope for a better future.

I learned from the Koran that God created humans for a noble cause - to be his vicegerents on earth; 'your lord will

leave you as vicegerents on earth, so he may observe how you act', (The Holy Koran, 7-121). From this emanates hope and vision. Thinking in a positive, constructive manner, and offering what is good to humanity makes me feel confident about my own worth. I have learnt my sense of self worth from the word *Islam* which comes from the root word *salam*, which means peace in Arabic. Peace between me and God results in peace within myself - which reflects on all of humanity.

**Samer Abu Ghazaleh, Gaza Strip, Palestine**

The barrier to self worth is embarrassment. If only we could stand tall without worrying about what others think of us. If everyone looked a bit deeper they would see that the fear lies in themselves. We are afraid of ourselves and of how we will react to situations. We go through life and may experience or achieve the most amazing things. Success makes us feel good. Is this because we are pleased with ourselves or because we are impressing others? Teachers, managers, parents, friends approve of our success and in turn we feel pleased with ourselves. In this desire to impress others, we can sometimes forget to impress ourselves. It is no good if we are totally dependent on others to tell us that we are pretty, funny, clever etc. Why can't we compliment ourselves? When we are so intelligent and creative on the outside why are we so backward and enclosed inside? We must trust our own instincts and listen to our heart. Only by listening patiently to ourselves will we find true happiness and self worth.

**Sarah Tate, UK**

When St. Paul's Cathedral, designed by Sir Christopher Wren, was being built, a visitor was shown around. He saw a carpenter at work and asked what he was doing. "Cutting wood," was the reply. Next came a stone mason. "Laying stone," he said. Finally he saw a man sweeping rubbish. "What are you doing?" said the visitor. The sweeper replied, "Helping Christopher Wren build his cathedral."

**Anonymous**

## FAX-THINK-LINK

*explore further. It helps me understand the person as a whole, instead of just seeing them as a difficult relationship. In the end, I can even find a good colleague.*

**David Lih, East Timor/Australia**

*One of the basic foundations of a good, strong and healthy relationship is communication. Likewise, it is an essential tool for dealing with a difficult relationship. How else can we solve a problem without communication? Expressing one's feelings makes it easier for both people to work out what the problem is. With a clear conscience and respect for the other's point of view, a mutual understanding can be*

*reached. One of the reasons my last relationship didn't work was that we didn't trust each other enough to communicate our deeper feelings. It was not solely because of our age difference. With this realisation, I hope not to make the same mistake again.*

**Gail Trevelyan, UK**

*How do you define a 'difficult' relationship and what renders it such? Is it the nature of the relationship, the people or circumstances? I recently had a relationship with a young man from a different background, religion and culture to my own. We communicated in French, a*



Seventeen years ago, as a junior majoring in economics at Harvard College, I applied for a Harvard fellowship to return to Sri Lanka after graduating to study the ethnic conflict. In 1981, although the conflict had still not got out of hand in terms of its violence, I could see that it posed the biggest challenge to Sri Lanka's development and prosperity towards which I wished to work.

Having completed my degree, in mid-1982 I returned to a Sri Lanka polarised into antagonistic ethnic-based camps. Throughout that year and the next, tension in the country kept on building up as the Tamil militancy grew in strength. I saw the anti-Tamil pogrom of 1983 erupt before my eyes, and the tacit justification of many Sinhalese that "the Tamils deserved what they were getting for the terrorism they were resorting to."

But I also had several Tamil friends, and I knew that they perceived matters differently. Being a Christian Sinhalese, I was simultaneously a member of the majority community (the 74% Sinhalese) and of a minority (the 7% Christian). As I had grown up in an era in which there had been a major conflict, albeit peaceful, between the Buddhist majority and Christian minority over the issue of Christian-controlled schools, I was more aware that there were two sides to the matter.

During the two year period of my Harvard fellowship, I took on the task of being an interpreter of Tamil grievances and aspirations to a Sinhalese audience. I did this by writing up

# personal change is my best contribution to change in my country Sri Lanka

my research for the newspapers. I realised and appreciated the power of the printed word, which is said to be "mightier than the sword." Then I went back to Harvard to undertake a degree in law.

My decision to return to Sri Lanka after finishing at Harvard was not an easy one, though now it seems the obvious one. This was not because of any physical insecurity I felt. It was also not because of any children I had, whom I wanted to bring up

safely and with a bright future - as many who leave Sri Lanka give as their explanation. It was simply that the US offered financial security and the trappings of worldly success.

Apart from the excellent academic education Harvard gave me, it also provided me with two invaluable lessons which are etched deep within me. The first was to make me more aware that my privileged position in Sri Lankan society entailed a duty of social responsibility. It is remarkable that I learnt this lesson in one of the richest countries in the world, and not in my own country, where I lived amidst the poor.

It was in the US that I reflected for the first time upon the idea of service. I realised that most of the blessings I had, had come to me, not of my own effort, but by the grace of God, as it were. For instance, I had done nothing to deserve being born into a well-to-do middle class family. From grade eight onwards I had been educated on scholarships. In grade twelve I received a tennis scholarship from a visiting Pakistani school tennis team. It was offered to me on the tennis court; I did not apply for it. All my seven years at Harvard were financed by the university. "Freely have you received, freely give," was a compelling thought within me.

The second lesson I learnt at Harvard mitigated my concern for material things. The loneliness and sense of isolation I felt during my student days in the US are still a painful memory. I longed for the warmth of

## FAX-THINK-LINK

language second to our respective mother tongues (English and Tamil). To further complicate things, we were forced to live and work in different countries. He was a political refugee confined within the borders of a country that I could not work in. We eventually went our separate ways, albeit for reasons other than geographical location or cultural differences. For some time my instinct had been telling me that the relationship was not right. My feelings had changed. My head however refused to believe such a thing could happen. The thoughts festered at the back of my mind, growing in magnitude and nagging like an irksome toothache. I wish I had been brave enough to face up to

those feelings sooner. It might have prevented a lot of heartache. One of the most valuable lessons I have learnt from this experience is to be honest with myself. I wasn't, and as a result was dishonest to the young man in question, who deserved better. It may sound trite but if one is not honest with oneself, how can one hope to be honest with other people?

### Astrid Eskeland, Norway

Ever since I was a little kid my mother has always taught me to include people, especially the 'outsiders'. She used to say, 'There is always room for one more.'

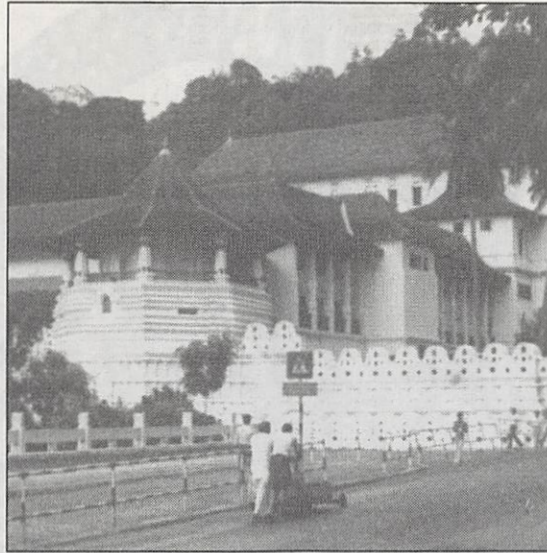


friends and family. But I was too hard-working to have time for others. In the loneliness of my room I realised that the greatest achievements and material things did not matter if they could not be shared with those whom I loved, and they were in Sri Lanka.

But having returned to Sri Lanka, I did not know what to do! At that time an MRA (Moral Re-Armament) conference took place in Panchgani, India to which I was invited. Those two months I spent in India were amongst the happiest in my life. Panchgani combined the best of east and west.

During that time, two principles which guide my life today became firm in my mind. The first was to recognise how little was my knowledge about the world or what should be done to put it right. So my first principle would be to say, "Not my will, but Thine be done." I would not be overly anxious about results and the future. The second principle was to accept the need for personal change as my best contribution to change in my country; "Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it lives alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit."

Over the past five years, writing a weekly newspaper column, which is published in



The Temple of the Tooth, Kandy, Photo: Jim Baynard-Smith

English, Sinhala and Tamil has been a major commitment of mine. This column focuses both on the ethnic conflict and the possibilities of conflict resolution.

I would describe my personal philosophy of co-existence as being an interpreter of the experience of the different ethnic communities, and being an intermediary who urges compromise between them. As a journalist I try to present to each community the different perceptions and aspirations of the others. The key to change in situations of protracted conflict is the ability and willingness to see things differently with a new perception and with new eyes. This calls for a movement of the spirit, an opening of the heart.

Two years ago I was part of a small group who set up the *National Peace Council* to build up a people's movement for peace, and to create the

ground for a negotiated political settlement of the war between the government and LTTE (Tamil Separatists). Activities have included numerous interactive workshops and seminars at the grassroots level, a national peace convention, peace festivals, exposure visits to Northern Ireland and the Philippines for MPs, media and poster campaigns, peace marches and a bimonthly newsletter.

Some of this work is done in cooperation with other civic organisations, as we have only a full time staff of 10. On January 4, 1998 a national peace convention was held with the participation of 1700 delegates, which represented the culmination of a five month period of mobilisation throughout the country.

If peace is to come to Sri Lanka it will have to come through sacrifice and compromise. Without trust as the basis, there is little hope of that necessary sacrifice and compromise. Trust has to be built at all levels, from the villages of Sri Lanka to the Sri Lankan community resident abroad. "How do you trust those who evidently cannot be trusted? Trust God, and then you will learn to trust the men who cannot be trusted." - Thomas Merton.

**Jehan Perera, Sri Lanka**

## FAX-THINK-LINK

*I have an old friend who always had great difficulties in socialising. As we grew older, spending time with her became a burden, but I knew it meant a lot to her. Two years ago her father died, and her mother went into a terrible depression. Naturally I was the one she turned to. She stayed with us a lot and we spent hours talking and I included her with my friends. Since she didn't have any friends of her own, she looked on my friends as her own, but they didn't really like her. I knew this but kept lying to her - maybe to protect her.*

*The summer after all this happened I went to an international conference in Switzerland. One day during a discus-*

*sion we talked about difficult relationships. I told the group about this friend and ended up in tears. I was sick of lying to her because she was definitely living a lie. I had no love left for her in my heart and actually felt incapable of facing her again. I knew I couldn't continue to spend so much time with her, but she depended on me. I could see no solution. Later on a woman asked me if I wanted to pray about it. I decided to let go of my worries and give it all to God. After that everything changed for the better. She got a job she liked and made new friends and I stopped over-protecting her. It took a while but now I am free to love her again.*





Sydney Harbour Bridge

Photo: Gail Trevelyan

# c i t y s c a p e

A clear memory. Newcastle-upon-Tyne in England. A family in a car. My father is driving. My mother beside him, the nurturer who turns to my brother and I on the back seat to give us chocolate and smiles. We are all chatting. We are a family who talk.

The car passes under a flyover. Soon we will go over the Tyne Bridge. The patterns of the city bounce off the windscreen. "What would you like to be when you grow up?" my father asks. I do not think for long. "Content," I say. We are almost on to the bridge. "That may not be as easy as it sounds," my father says. He looks at my mother. They smile.

I was a loner as a child. I had an imagination that thrilled to be cooped in my bedroom, creating lives for fleshy pink dolls with blonde curly hair and too many outfits. I read vast quantities as soon as I knew how. Without a book I became depressed. With one, I was able to inhabit hundreds of different worlds. I did not notice that friendships were lacking in my life. At ten I realised that mixing was a social must. Friends were fun!

I also began to realise that friendships were not static. Sometimes Jackie was much more friendly with Naomi than

she was with me. Sometimes Jackie was altogether too friendly with the naughty boys who played where they shouldn't. If relationships are the river which bears us through the journey of life, then the changes within these relationships are the swells and currents of that river.

It wasn't just friendships that amazed me by their ever changing fluidity. My brother kept changing. How small the time-span between him being 'the runt' (as I called him), a small-for-his-age boy, with a dubious taste in shirts, and him being a popular young man with a loyal and constant gang of friends and later, girlfriends. He ceased to hit me when I baited him. He had moved on; he merely ignored his serious, square sister.

Without relationships we have no life worth living, yet they are never preserved like a straight line. They bubble and froth, and sometimes they lie dormant.

My early twenties was a time of independence. Yet I spun around the earth's axis on my single stream as though I was in a bubble. The bubble was a preservative. It kept me safe but it did not let too much in. The course of my stream was aimless. I yearned

for that elusive contentment.

In Gibraltar I met the man who is now my husband. It's an interesting tale, but I'd need a few hundred words more than I've got to tell it properly. Suffice to say I came to Australia to be with him. He took me to Sydney. We tramped the city until we came to the Queen Elizabeth II Park. It overlooks the Opera House, behind which is the bridge that looks almost the same as the Tyne Bridge in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. He asked me to marry him.

This is a time like no other. I am bobbing down the river with a glorious companion. Stronger in this relationship, I hope it will steer me through the course of my life. The river is smooth and peaceful. Ahead I see flooding, and I don't doubt that there will be rapids hidden beneath the boulders that guide us. I have found profound love, but that does not mean easy contentment. Relationships need constant care.

I like the bridge analogy. Figurative, yet real, those kinds of markers are important beacons in our journey. And bridges have always been useful for crossing wild waters.

**Sarah McDonald, UK/Australia**



One of my concerns for the future is the global effect of the New Information Age. I have just finished studying International Relations and French at the University of Sussex, England. This has had a major influence on my fears and aspirations for the future; the study of international relations has not taught me anything so disturbing as the reaffirmation, with every changing period in history, of the gap between rich and poor. However we define the global system, the fact of the matter is that the majority of the world live in absolute or relative poverty.

The conclusion I have drawn is that morality must be put on the global agenda. Without it, more developed countries will steam ahead on the crest of an information wave, leaving the rest of the world behind. The capacity for greater inequality is enormous. Information is a self-perpetuating power - and the more one has, the more one can acquire. Is there nothing to prevent the

West monopolising all knowledge?

Without equal access there is nothing to stop those who have the information advantage from guarding it jealously. The 'information gap' not only exists between countries, but also within countries and between other global actors such as the all-powerful multinational corporation.

Unlike some of my peers however I cannot completely condemn the advance of information technology. This is for two reasons. Firstly, one cannot simply ignore the existence of these new technologies - whether or not we resent the intrusion of IT into our lives, it has become inevitable.

Secondly, the Information Age does not have to be a negative thing. A technologically illiterate underclass is not an inevitable by-product of these new technologies. What is needed is a transfer of technology from those who possess the advantage to those who do not. For the first time in world history there

is the potential for humankind to interact with one another using a non-exclusive pool of information. Such communication could lead to greater understanding between people of different cultures, races and religions.

At a conference I was at this year there were people, young and old, from all walks of life and multicultural backgrounds. The interaction I witnessed between these different groups illustrated a common willingness to exchange a diversity of ideas and beliefs. They were more inclined to draw similarities and focus on the positive aspects of their different cultures.

It is due to the potential benefits of the new technologies that I have decided to do a Masters degree in Information Systems. I feel computer ignorant, yet at the same time feel I ought to be part of this growing industry - and women are under represented in this field. The New Information Age is not in itself evil. Its potential for transcending cultural boundaries is enormous. I am committed to a world in which information is accessible to all. The skills I learn on this course will hopefully put this sentiment into practice.

*Clare Twelvetees, UK*

# information technology

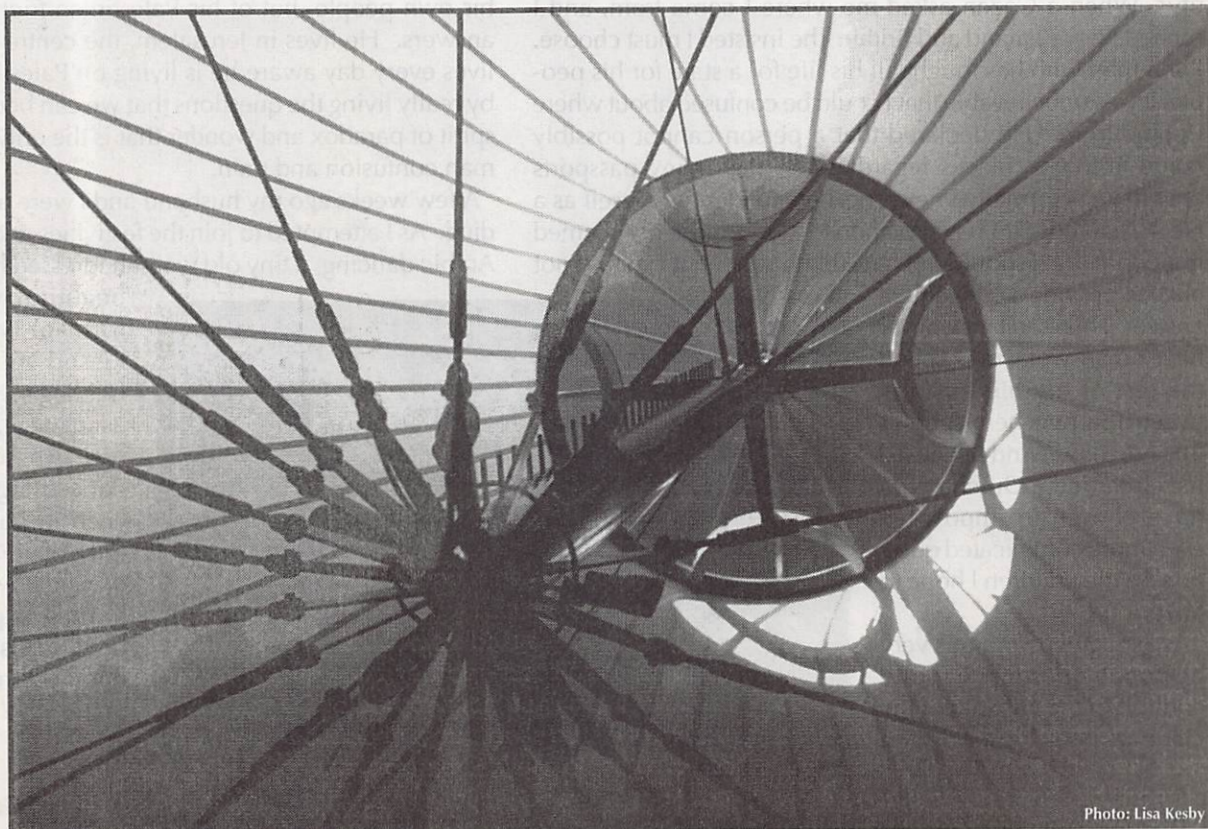


Photo: Lisa Kesby



## living the questions

Life fills me with questions. And living in the Gaza Strip, I am now filled with even more questions than usual. Almost every aspect of who I am and what I believe has been questioned by life here. Not just the simple questions posed by living surrounded by an alien culture, language, and religion. But the complicated questions posed by living with one million other people, on 81 square miles of sand, surrounded by barbed-wire and an army.

I often feel trampled by the enormity of the questions life here throws at me - about identity and justice, about pain and hope. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is perhaps one of the most painful and complex of this century, and living in the midst of it questions all your beliefs - your very humanity. Never in my life have I so longed for some answers.

I understand the pain of a Palestinian when the land where his great-grandfather is buried has been confiscated and given to a Russian Jew whose ancestors have never lived here, because he is a converted rather than Semitic Jew, and who arrived in the Middle East for the first time only two months earlier. But I am an immigrant myself, and I also understand that a land not yours by birth can still be your spiritual home. In a strange way I am an immigrant in two directions - born in my father's land, brought up in my mother's land. The hills of both Scotland and New Zealand are where my soul belongs - although I have never really lived in Scotland, and no longer live in New Zealand.

Here identity is something people die for. But what is identity? When a Gazan asked me where I come from, and I replied New Zealand and Britain - he insisted I must choose. For a man who has fought all his life for a state for his people, it was unbelievable that I could be confused about where I come from. He declared that a person cannot possibly come from two places regardless of how many passports they have. Normally I never hesitate to identify myself as a New Zealander if I have to choose, but it suddenly seemed important that I should not have to choose, that I should not have to provide a convenient answer. I realised I may never have an answer, I may spend the rest of my life torn between the two hemispheres that are mine. And because I have married a Dutchman, I have chosen to impose an even more complicated question on the children I hope to have.

As I struggled with this very personal question I found comfort in the wisdom of the German poet Rainer Maria

Rilke - be patient with all that is unresolved in your heart - live the questions themselves - and perhaps one day you will find yourself living into the answers. Gradually I have come to realize that I must learn to live all the questions in my heart, no matter how much I want answers. Questions about identity. Questions about a just settlement between Israel and the Palestinian people. Questions about pain and healing. Questions about peace and hope and human rights.

The human need for clear-cut, tidy answers to everything is perhaps one of our greatest failings. Answers can be very insidious deceptive things - we long for them, and once we think we have found them, we venerate them. But they can put chains on our hearts and minds. The ideologies which have ravaged our planet this century were all supposed to be ultimate answers.

There can never be a tidy answer to the tragedy lived by the Palestinian and Jewish peoples. The situation is in many ways unanswerable. No matter how it is finally settled politically there will always remain pain and unresolved questions. There will always be Jews who believe all the land should belong to Israel, and there will always be Palestinians who wonder why they have been forced to pay the price for Europe's persecution of the Jews. I am not saying there is no hope. But if there is to be a lasting peace in this Holy Land it will be created by people living the questions. The closest thing I have seen to peace is in the eyes of a Jewish Rabbi who is trying to live the questions - not only of his own people, but of his Palestinian friends. He has no answers. He lives in Jerusalem, the centre of his faith, but lives every day aware he is living on Palestinian land. It is by really living the questions that we can become part of the spirit of paradox and wonder that is the only solution to human confusion and pain.

A few weeks ago my husband and I were at a Gazan wedding. As I attempted to join the festivities and learn to dance

Arabic dancing, a tiny old woman, dressed head to foot in a beautiful white hijab (a form of Muslim dress), kissed me and danced holding my hand. Without a language, religion or culture in common, we danced together with joy, each in complete acceptance of the other as a child of God. A profoundly affirming experience. Perhaps that is what living the questions means. Perhaps that is who I am - a child of God.

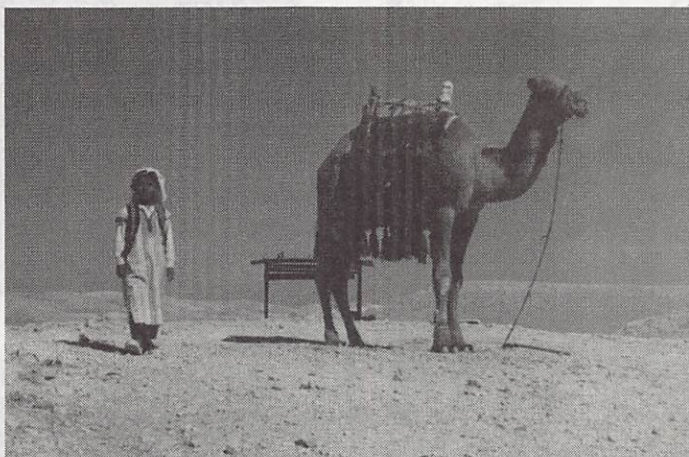


Photo: Howard Grace



*Two poems about friendship:*

*Who knows if he really is a friend?  
Who knows if she really at the end  
Will stand by me.  
While others curse me and revile me?*

*The eyes of love see clearly  
All my ugliness and imperfection  
But see beyond them  
To the shining diamond of my heart.*

*Who knows what he says behind my back  
Who smiles at me when I'm with him face to face?  
Who knows what she will do when I'm under attack.  
And maybe in disgrace?*

*The voice of love speaks clearly.  
Very down to earth and real.  
Setting up a resonance.  
Striking answering chords within my soul.*

*I promise you my friend that I will not betray you  
By agreeing with those who say you  
Have been at fault and wrong.  
That will not be any part of my song.*

*The ears of love hear clearly  
All the trivialities and gossip  
With which my talk is filled  
But listens for the wisdom words that come from deep within.*

*But I may openly and in private challenge you  
If ever I believe you are not true  
Unto yourself. And I ask of you  
That you will do the same for me.*

*The heart of love beats strongly.  
Never faltering, eternal.  
Beats in time and beats in tune  
With all the other hearts throughout the world.*

*I do not want to talk of blame.  
To my mind we are all the same.  
All fallible, sometimes strong and sometimes weak  
And so of shame and guilt we will not speak.*

*The mind of love knows clearly  
Without sentiment or bias  
With a wisdom that goes far beyond  
The wisdom of the world.*

*But we will try  
To hold our vision of each other high.  
That's what I'll do  
To show my love for you.*

*The hands of love reach out  
To touch, to hold, to steady me.  
If I become love's servant  
Then shall I be truly free.*

*Ian Mayo-Smith*



A curved line is the loveliest distance  
between two points. - Mae West

Military intelligence is a contradiction  
in terms. - Groucho Marx

A conclusion is a place where you get tired of thinking.

If everyone picked up one piece of litter a day  
the world would be a much tidier place.

The world is all gates, all opportunities,  
all strings of tension waiting to be struck.

We can only give what we are, not what we would like to be.

# scattered thoughts

The grass may be greener on the other  
side but it still has to be mowed.

And though I ebb in worth,  
I'll flow in thanks. - John Taylor

Those who deserve love the least need it the most.

Faithfulness can never be measured in terms  
of success, but only in terms of commitment.

Thing tyranny: the more things you own,  
the more you are owned by things.

The future is not what it was.

The truth that makes people free  
is for the most part the truth which  
people prefer not to hear. - H. Agar

We must accept finite disappointment,  
but we must never lose infinite hope.