

### EDITORIAL

### **ETHOS**

### Why Passion?

"I am passionate therefore I am." Excuse the corruption of Descartes' famous motto but it encapsulates my philosophy on passion. There's a lot of passion behind Global Express. If there wasn't, we'd have given up a long time ago. Passion is what drives us, against the odds, to produce a quality publication to counter the increasingly crass content of commercial youth magazines. The impetus to devote an entire issue to passion was born out of concern. Concern that its true meaning and essence was being eclipsed. That's why we asked ten young people from around the world to articulate their particular passion(s) in life. And what an inspiration it's been receiving their contributions. We also knew we'd be doing the subject of passion an injustice if we didn't address the issue of relationships and sexuality. A fair amount is revealed about this in 'The Real Thing' and we'd be interested to continue the debate, so please let us know what you think.

Meanwhile, how about trying the GE formula for passion?

Purpose	Purity	<b>P</b> ersistence
<b>A</b> im	<b>A</b> ction	<b>A</b> chieve
Sincerity	<b>S</b> uffering	<b>S</b> acrifice
<b>S</b> ervice	<b>S</b> trength	Smile
<b>I</b> magination	Integrity	Inspiration
Openness	<b>O</b> bedience	<b>O</b> pportunity
New!	Nerve!	Now!

Our cover girl says it all... that almighty 'Yes!' to life and all it holds. May that be our stance this year and beyond...

Laura Trevelyan, UK

Next issue: Freedom - is it free? Deadline: January 18th, 1999



A Brazilian in Wales! Photo: A. Panybratova

### **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 R. Armament), which is a worldwide 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, Nigeria 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, Czech Republic, France, Gemany, Italy, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Russia, Scandinavia, Serbia, Switzerland, UK and Ukraine; Middle

East: Lebanon and Palestine.

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Photo: L. Trevelyan

If you looked for me at any time during the past four years, chances are you would have found me standing in front of a classroom in America talking about Shakespeare or Dickens or where to place the comma. Not this year. Now I am sitting in front of a computer in Oxford writing about and producing Global Express. What happened?

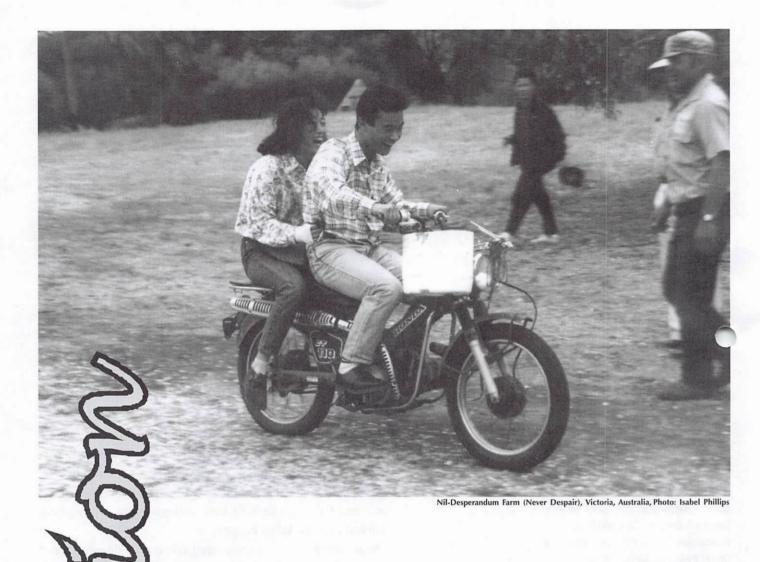
To answer this question, you need to know a little more about me. Let's start with what I like: I like magazines with their glossy photographs and absorbing articles; I read all kinds, all the time. I like writing and literature, as you may have figured out by my choice to be an English teacher. I love art, and it's a talent I want to develop, but I've too often given it last place in my life. Finally, I love Britain. The first time I came here I knew that one trip would not be enough.

Here's where Global Express comes into play. Being a part of GE offers me the opportunity to delve into a combination of art and writing, and it gives me the chance to do so in Britain - a dream! It also fulfils the aspiration of doing something worthwhile that may benefit others.

I have seen many publications that may influence people negatively. Global Express offers a balance. It's a great option for young people worldwide.

For these reasons I feel very fortunate to be working for Global Express. I was either lucky or blessed or both. And that, to at last put an answer to the question, is what happened.

Christine Kenny, USA



In the newspaper I saw a tag-line for an airplane engineering company that stated, "Engineered with passion". I found myself pondering how this simple statement could radically relate to life. The company thought that passion was a positive element in the production of superior flying machines. What if we could say that o. lives were "engineered with passion"?

I define passion as an inherent, soul-driven desire to follow a particular career path or opportunity. Passion is the quality which guides us into the most rewarding of experiences. It is what constitutes the core of our being, the gut instinct that animates, invigorates and motivates. Passion brings recognition to who we really are and ultimately inspires us to push humanity forward. Sadly, many of us do not listen to our passion or pursue its subtle persuasion. Often, we spend so long silencing our inner passion that we do not even know how to identify it.

While driving with my father the other day we began talking about his future career goals. I asked him my "passion question" - the question I ask others to enable them to identify their core passions in life. Until then I thought I knew my father (a successful insurance agent and financial planner) quite well. His response revealed that I did not. "If you could do anything," I queried, "and you knew you would have all the money you needed to support you and your family, what would you do?" He hesitated and then replied, "I would be an abstract artist." I was shocked! I had no idea he had a passion for art. In fact, I discovered that for several years he had drawn

# "What if our lives were engineered with passion?"



Traci Fenton, Photo: Christine Kenny

many of the abstract art pieces he saw in his mind's eye in hopes that one day he might have the courage to pursue his passion. What held him back was fear - fear of not making enough money, fear of what others would think, fear of failure. We cannot live an inspired and fruitful life if it is directed by fear.

When I graduated from college I found myself fearful for several months as I tried to figure out which career path I should pursue in order to make enough money, build a good resume, and start on the road to assured success. Finally, I decided to get really honest with myself. I silenced all the voices in my head - those of my parents, my professors, my friends - regarding what they thought I should do

Indicate the "passion question". I did not have an instant answer, but it was gradually revealed the more I put aside my pre-packaged life plans and listened to my inner compass. I soon realised that I was passionate about helping people to establish free societies, live democracy and embrace universal values. As soon as I gave myself permission to pursue what I loved, knowing that if it was right I would naturally meet with success, then the necessary direction to proceed became clear. I decided to start a non-profit company called *World Dynamics, Inc.*, working with young, emerging global leaders to establish and live democracy politically, socially and economically in their countries. Today I find that pursuing my passion nourishes both my soul and intellect and provides me with a feeling of profound fulfillment.

Allowing oneself to follow one's passion is a liberating experience. Cultivating passion is not the same as pursuing your dreams. Dreams often comprise our passions, but passion is the substantive, core feeling inside that directs one toward what one loves most. Opening thought to one's passion is the first step towards identifying it, because we

naturally gravitate towards that which we most love. I believe pursuing one's passion is the fulfilling of a divine law, and obedience to divine law meets with assured success. When we follow our passions we actually give ourselves permission to be ourselves. Perhaps then we will truly be able to say our lives are "engineered with passion".

Traci Fenton, USA (traciwd@juno.com)

I have always been passionate. When I first learned to crawl, I crawled with a passionate speed and disregard for anything that stood in my way. Passion can be like that bulldozing over obstacles and loved ones until the goal is reached. But passion is also what produces beauty, ingenuity and commitment without which the world would be a dull place. To be passionate is to be alive. It is just a matter of channelling that passion.

My great passion is the relationship between the West and the Middle East. I first visited the Middle East in 1987. As I looked out over the West Bank where the Palestinians live under Israeli occupation, I could feel the pain my Palestinian friends felt at seeing their land taken. Eight months earlier, the death of my best friend had forced me to think about the meaning of my being alive and I had decided to use my life to try create a better world. This decision had begun to take me out of my little world and sensitise me to the feelings and needs of others. The pain of the Palestinians struck me therefore doubly hard.

A passion took hold of me for the Palestinian cause - to the point, I am ashamed to say now, that I felt justice had been done when Israeli soldiers died in skirmishes.

When I visited Lebanon in 1992, felt the pain of 17 years of civil war, brother killing brother, often

### Passion...



(Left to right) Rabbi Jeremy Milgrom from Jerusalem; Omar Amira, a teacher from a Palestinian refugee camp near Bethlehem; Jeroen Gunning

for the sake of foreign powers playing their game in Lebanon, it struck me how much of the problems of today's Middle East can be traced to European meddling, first as colonial powers, now as masters of the 'New World Order'. This realisation made me long to improve relations between the West and the Middle East, change the relationship from 'divide and rule' to one of genuine respect and service.

This passion was flawed, though, because it excluded Israelis and anyone pro-Israel. My passion fed on injustices - I sought them out, seethed with anger and felt virtuous because I was on the side of the victim. My passion craved success - I would not feel satisfied unless my vision of justice was implemented. Though born of compassion, it had become bitter and self-righteous. It was self-centred, for I did not give much thought to how my passion helped or hindered my Palestinian friends.

Then, a friendship with an American Jew made me confront how destructive I had become, like the child crawling like a bulldozer and how one more passionate hatred merely further inflamed the passions in the Middle East without solving anything. My passion needed re-channelling. I decided to open my heart to Jews and Israelis and began to visit Israel - as well as Palestine - regularly. I still long for a just solution for the Palestinians and mourn when a Palestinian youth is shot dead for throwing stones at a heavily armoured Israeli army post - but now I also long for a just solution for the Israelis and mourn for the death of an Israeli child, blown apart because his parents wanted to live with their own people. Slowly I began to gain admiration for Judaism and compassion for all that the Jews suffered. I started to see the people behind the cause I had

so identified myself with - the Palestinians but also the Israelis with their fears and hopes. Now that I "My passion was flawed... it fed on injustices."

was more concerned with people than a cause, I began to appreciate the beauty of Arab civilisation and Islam more than, ironically, I did before. I long even more for peace but have less answers than before.

I long even more for reconciliation between the West and the Middle East but realise how much I as a Western Christian have to learn - from the past, from Judaism, from Islam.

Passion is what gives life much of its meaning. But it needs regular check-ups. When it excludes others in the name of a grand goal, we become destructive. When it makes us feel self-righteous, we are cut off from reality and compassion for others. When it becomes disillusioned because the goal is not reached, it dies and takes joy out of life. Passion needs constant balancing with compassion and humility, constant distancing from the goal so that even if the goal is not reached - or reached differently - passion still remains.

This is a never-ending process full of new discoveries. Recently those close to me told me that my passion was blinding me to their needs and made me ignore them. Recently, too, I was depressed for days because I felt so traumatised by a year of living in Palestine and sharing the pain, that my passion was giving way to disillusionment. I'm still wrestling with this one but know my disillusionment comes from a naive understanding of the harshness of reality. The way of passion can be painful. But it is always enriching. It is what makes life worth living.

### Jeroen Gunning, The Netherlands/UK

Some people have commented on the amounts of ice cream that I am capable of consuming. I do like ice cream, but it's not the leading passion in my life. My real passion is opera. I love both theatre and music, so opera seemed a good combination of the two. A day with no singing is a day in which I have not existed, just done some sleepwalking.



The desire to sing on stage was a surprise, because I was very shy and used to be teased. Singing, however, can actually lift your spirits (scientifically proven!) and this helped me through some awful years.

For various reasons I had to devote too much time, it seemed, to things not related to singing. As a result I stressed o much and this harmed my whole "instrument". Add to this ill health and low spirits and you have a deep, gloomy well.

Last spring my situation was so bad I could hardly do anything physical without collapsing. The only thing that came out of my mouth was thick, yellow phlegm. A doctor said I would have to accept having reduced strength for the rest of my life. My singing teacher put me on a diet of no practising for two months. Facing a future as an invalid with no serious singing was very discouraging. What else would I do?

Miracles, however, do happen. Through a friend I got in touch with a specialist who could untangle the medical problems. After a few wobbly lessons due to the long pause in training, something happened and my voice came out as never before. My teacher exclaimed that hope was restored.

A lot remains to be done but I have hope in the future again. The passion is still there, but I'm not clinging on to it with tight fists anymore.

Elina Gundersen, Finland

"I like ice cream, but it's not the leading passion in my life."

> On Sunday nights I'm not particularly passionate about life. The TV goes on and the brain switches off. Eggs on toast for dinner. The dog yawns comfortably in front of the fire. No-one can be passionate, creative and enthusiastic all the time.

> Passion is a demanding creature. When you are passionate about something it becomes almost fully absorbing. You find yourself thinking about it a lot, playing around with ideas. I've been known to drive off the road at such times.

> For me, farming in New Zealand is my passion. It's my job, my lifestyle and my interest. I love the challenge making a living from the land, finding ways to produce better wool and lambs. I love watching things grow and change with the seasons. I chat to people who share my love for farming whenever I get the chance.

> Farming is more than turning grass into dollars. As an agricultural writer I'm lucky enough to immerse myself in the new technologies of farming (organic production, cloning) and to spend time thinking about how the world's farmers can feed the world, make a decent living and protect the environment. Don't get me started on that one.

> Sometimes our farm business can give us a kick in the teeth - an horrific drought with the army carting water to us and our stock for two months, a drop in wool prices for the second decade in a row, a world economic crisis.

> So why do we go on? Madness? No, it's passion. A desire to live out a dream, to do something you think is worthwhile and to do something you enjoy.

### Jo Grigg, New Zealand

I'm an outdoor person, so I like sports and travelling. At the moment I'm mad about tennis. When you get an ace and that ball hits the line on the other side of the court, it's the best feeling.

As a South Korean, I've committed myself to working for the peaceful reunification of the Ko-

### Passion...

rean peninsula. Korea has been divided into North and South for the last 50 years. Many Koreans are shouting "Reunification" without doing anything. I really want to see our divided nation and families join together in my lifetime. For this I will do everything I can.

I'm also passionate about learning Japanese and Chinese because I'd like to improve relations between Korea, Japan, Taiwan and China. I long for a better understanding and a better future for our region.

Yeon-Yuk Jeong, Korea

Debate continues as to whether music is a means for the expression of ideas, experiences and feelings or a distinct system or way of thinking in its own right. For me, it is a form of personal expression, communication, common understanding and a mode of thought. It will be my passion for eternity!

It is precisely the mystery of her origin that accounts for the charm of her beauty. The chief delight of every living creature, all are attracted by the magnetic magic of music. It was with music that Orpheus could win back his beloved wife from the hands of death. So sweet is music, even wild beasts forget their nature under its magical influence. There is music in nature too. The stars, the sea, the wind, the clouds have their own music.

Music purifies and ennobles. It is a balm for the sick heart, a remedy for worries and woes and it breathes peace into the soul. When tired of my day's work, I amuse myself with songs. Music is the fountain of purest pleasure... adding a few notes of sweetness to the sad song of life.

Nehal Gandhi, India

I left the United States when I was 19, because I'd grown afraid of the seemingly overwhelming violent society around me. I found freedom from fear by furthering my education and living in Britain where the threat of guns and physical confrontations seemed less.

I attribute much of the aggression, unhealthy competition and violent trends in our society to television's harmful messages. Advertising often creates a need in us that wasn't there before.

Understanding crime involves further complexities of economic, psychological and historical situations, I'm aware, but sensationalised news reports, talk shows, advertising, even soap operas have exacerbated a culture of insensitivity, alienation and spiritual deprivation in America.

I am, like others, angered by the manufacturing of such a society and disturbed by the suffering of American youth. It is so frustrating that people in the media industry keep producing harmful messages either because they don't care or because they are too ignorant to understand the effect. The other aggravation is those who come

from privileged backgrounds and perpetuate their lifestyle at the expense of those less fortunate than themselves. Unfortunately, many of them do not know the damage they cause because they've never experienced the damaged society.

My answer to finding a way to help this situation was studying documentary-making to provide broadcasting material aimed at societal regeneration. I was fortunate to get work in this field right away and complete my first documentary on conflict resolution in Kenya.

During the months of production I visited some sixth form colleges in the country to talk about why I left America and how it influenced my career decision. My story was as strong as my film! Teachers asked me to come back. response, I began this academic year visiting sixth form general studies classes and colleges, one or more per day across the country, telling my story.

Now I am trying to build a network of people and organisations, public and private, who share this conviction. Together we are so much more powerful than individually.

I used to work in Washington, DC and lived in a dangerous part of town. There I was enlightened to the realities of being "disadvantaged". Now, always in my mind, is



the truth that I could get out and others could not. I hope the work I'm doing now is like a rope to those I met.

I am still actively in contact with those working to cure these problems in the States, specifically a researcher from the University of Pennsylvania who "used to stand at the edge of the water saving the drowning but decided to walk up the stream and see who was pushing them in."

Fortunately, there is a tremendous amount being done in America, but after living here I can see the susceptibility of British society to the same fate as her American counterpart. Therefore, I believe that prevention may be the most valuable investment.

My passion continues to be easing the unnecessary suffering of our generation by learning from our mistakes.

Allison Kenny, USA

I have a passion for computers. It all started when I was ten, and we got our first computer at home. It was an impressive machine in those days, an XT with an IOMB hard disk. First, I loved playing games, but soon I started to learn how to program. Very quickly, I got addicted to the idea that, when writing programs, you can actually make the computer do what you like! In those days, I used every free hour to program and realised that this passion for computers would be a big part of my life.

At the end of 1995, I discovered the Internet and realised that this network of millions of computers was even better! Not only can you let your own machine do what you like, you can show what you are doing to millions of other people and spread what you write very easily. It's an absolute superior means of communication which is why I enjoy running the Global Express website so much: http://www.mra.org.uk/globalex/ Check it out!

It 22, I've just started my first job which involves the Internet and security. I have no car, but I have four computers, and I hope to start my own Internet business eventually. I let my passion lead me on the path of life and have not regretted it yet!

### Ward Vandewege, Belgium

Since the age of three when I first learnt to ride, my passion has been horses. It's hardly surprising because my grandfather won *The Grand National* in 1882! My father's philosophy about life (as a steeplechase rider himself) was that life is like a steeplechase. To win the race and complete the course, "Throw your heart over the fence first. Then you and your horse will follow. Hesitate and doubt that you can really get over the big jump, and you will end in the ditch!" A helpful philosophy I have found in making big decisions or even small ones!



Photo: Ward Vandewege

Sade's 'Diamond Life' was the first song I heard on the radio this morning. I'm not sure what it's all about, but in a wild way, it gave me a starting point to this piece. In the last week I had been grasping for inspiration, for catchy words. But I was stuck - pathetically short for words. And I thought to myself, 'Is this the make of a passionate person'?

When I worked for a department store, I learnt how a diamond is valued. It is in the C's - the colour, the clarity, the cut and the carat are amongst the defining characteristics. The value of a single precious stone lies in the combined quality of each characteristic.

I'm not saying I'm a gem. Goodness no! Nor that I have a 'brilliant' life. What am I trying to say? Allow me to let my emotions flow freely...

I love being caught in the rain and hail on a long mountain hike - the cold and wet sensation against my skin. But that's only because I can look forward to warm clothes and dry socks. I like stillness, and I like noise pollution. Give me blazing sunshine so that I may sleep in the shade. But give me falling snowflakes so that I may slip and slide to catch. I'm enjoying my home-away-from-home here in London, yet I am happily preparing to depart for the streets of Mumbai in India. And chocolates and chips... Yes please! Well, maybe I have been blessed with a beautiful life.

Life is precious. Each person's is a uniquely cut gem. I'm not passionate about anything I can name. I'm passionate about everything in life - my free life!

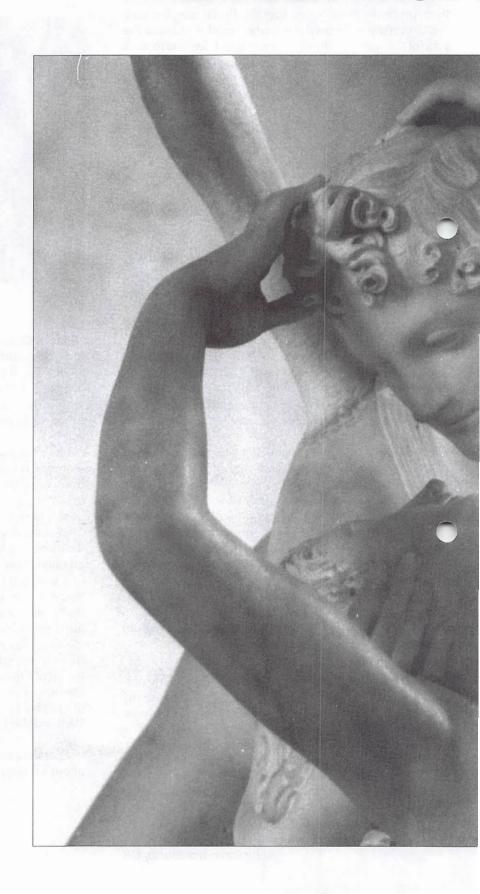
Goretti Nguyen, Vietnam/Australia

# The Rea

Which do you prefer? Pleasure or pain? It's not such a stupid question... because when we're looking at the twin issues of passion and sexuality, the issue of pleasure or pain lies behind the whole debate. You see, to my secular colleagues I'm one of those repressed Christians who goes to the pain of denying himself wild, liberated sexual expression today because I'm saving myself for some dull, and probably sexually hung-up marriage down the line. A relationship which, incidentally, I seem to have no prospect of entering in the medium, let alone the short term. (First I've got to find a girlfriend...)

Now, of course, I respond to my sexually liberated friends that they are the ones who miss out on the pleasure stuff in the long run. As they ricochet through their series of pleasure first relationships, they become caught up in a series of sexual encounters in which the pain increasingly outweighs the pleasure. Not much fun, for man or woman, when the person you gave yourself to last night doesn't want to see you today. Not much fun for parents - or children - when our 'modern families' keep dissolving. The 'Cosmopolitan' Gospel of Pleasure is read by a generation which seeks happiness but finds it more of a mirage than the proverbial oasis in the desert.

There's truth in both perspectives. But both are based on the false notion that what we really, really want is pleasure. Not true. What our souls crave for is secure relationships. Being loved for who we are, not what we can do. Unconditionally. For it's when our friends and family, colleagues and lovers, demonstrate that they will stick by us through good and bad times, that we gain the confidence to value ourselves. And it's in such committed long-term relationships that we find ourselves surprised by joy - a quality much more enduring than mere pleasure. Yet here's the real problem. Not the pleas-



# l Thing



ure or pain debate. No, our dilemma at the end of this century is that commitments are increasingly hard to find. Increasingly elusive for both Christians as well as non-Christians.

The whole of society is wedded to freedom philosophy. 'Don't tie me down' is the attitude behind everything from our romantic relationships to our work contracts. Commitment is fine... so long as it's convenient. Yet our commitments are the very things that shape us. The decisions we take and stick to are the ones that become the girders in our lives. They don't only give us structure, but also strength. For every time we exercise our self-discipline muscles they become stronger - and our character, that is our capacity to achieve in life, grows. (You and I both know that when we look back at our lives, anything that we have achieved so far was done through discipline.)

But isn't it so tiring developing our selfdiscipline muscles when the rest of our society is getting flabby on self-indulgence! There's something very lonely about working out on the treadmill in the gym when all my mates are having fun in the bar next door. Intellectually we are salmon swimming up stream. Yet swim up stream we must. For unless we both live the life and are willing to suffer ridicule for telling liberal Britain that it has got it wrong on sex and wrong on relationships, there is no chance that our nation will change course. Otherwise, the only reference points our friends have are those who are living life by the same values as them.

Like passengers on the ocean liner SS Great Britain they look around at the others on the pleasure cruise and think nothing is moving. Yet only you and I can tell them that there is an iceberg straight ahead. An iceberg of wrecked relationships, divorce, unhappy adults and insecure children. So with increasing urgency we must warn them.

But just as on the Titanic, the passengers on SS Great Britain don't want to listen to anything that disrupts the party music. So how do we communicate? Well, our holy lives talk. And so does an attitude of compassion

By compassion I don't mean a shallow touchy-feely empathy. No, compassion is -'with' passion - paying the price of understanding the joys as well as the pain of our secular friends. It is the passion of the Christ-

"Think of the Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, and Sikh religions. They would not dream of allowing their young, their future, to drift away from their communities because they could not find a partner within the faith. They will not only go the second mile to help form relationships within the faith, they will go thousands of miles - across continents - to find a faith match." page 28

mas time message of 'Emmanuel - God with us', who gets involved with the messiness of our fallen world and is swift to bless and slow to chide. Yet we are so swift to judge when it comes to sexual immorality. John 15v1 tells how tax collectors and sinners were all gathering round Jesus to hear him. Do sinners gather around us? If a colleague's cohabiting relationship breaks up, is my attitude 'they're reaping what they sowed' or weeping with them?

Casual sex and semi-committed relation-

ships are pale imitations of the glory of marriage. Yet for so many in our insecure nation, it is the only intimacy they know. It takes courage to leave behind that relationship with no certainty of anything better to replace it. If they are not coming to us and our churches, it is because our compassion is not as attractive as their fleeting moments of passion.

Nor is our dating scene. Because, as I wrote in my book *No Sex Please, We're Single,* non-Christians coming to church often find they're jumping out of the frying pan into the freezer. They may have found worldly relationships too hot to handle and just been burnt by someone. But do they see in the church a happy, smoothly functioning romantic process? Or do they find people struggling in their inability to find a marriage partner - depressed in their loneliness, frustrated in their longing for emotional companionship, physical intimacy and children?

I am convinced that so much of the gradual decline in church attendance over the past 30 years has been down to single Christians despairing about their marriage prospects. Both new Christians and long-time believers ask themselves, 'If I stay here what chance is there of my finding a marriage partner?'

So what can we do? It is not just a question of how we get more 'same faith' marriages. It is about seeking to make it more fun to be a believer than a non-believer - for at the moment the pagans seem to have all the best parties! Still more fundamentally, it's about how we build up community for single people. Gone, at least for the moment, is the culture of early marriage.

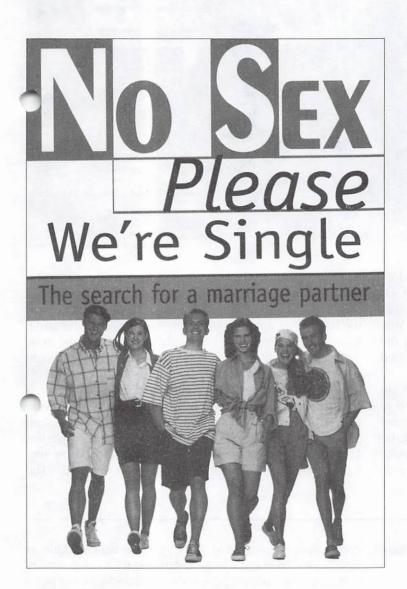
So how can we help create more intimacy in the lives of single believers who have left their parents' home but may have many years of singleness ahead? Some of the answers lie in the local church becoming more single-friendly. A church where sermons show at least as much understanding of singleness as they do of marriage. And one where singles are given real responsibility and respect within their congregation.

If we accept that society has been radically transformed over the past generation - has become so much more atomised - so we need to accept the need to explore radical new solutions. For my part, I've set up an events organisation - holding glamorous balls and parties for Christians in their twenties and thirties. Called SimpleIdeas, our last event was a Dance with the Dinosaurs at London's Natural History Museum in October. We had 1100 people dancing the night away from scores of churches in south-east England, at an event sponsored by the Christian holiday company MasterSun,

TearFund and Kingsway publications.

Now we're planning a series of events for 1999 in London, Birmingham and Manchester. The emphasis is on making events both glamorous and affordable with tickets under £25. With lots of prayer and help this organisation may develop into something really useful. Certainly the need is huge. Would you be interested in attending an event or helping organise one? SimpleIdeas: 0171 352 2221 or e-mail: iangregory@easynet.co.uk

Ian Gregory, UK

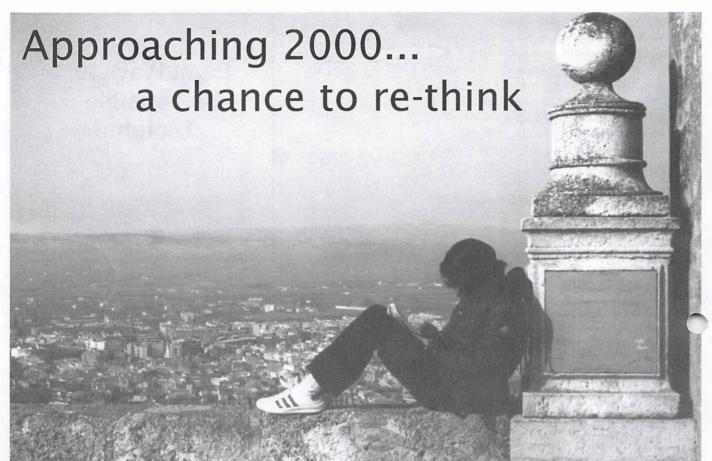


Ian Gregory studied politics, philosophy, and economics at Oxford University. He is a BBC TV news producer. His book, *No Sex Please, We're Single* is published by Kingsway publications, £4.99, ISBN 0-85476-715-0.

### Eight Ways to Be Sensible Tonight

- 1. Decide that you are not going to be influenced by either your or your partner's previous sexual history.
- 2. Decide that you are not going to fall for any rubbish lines like, "If you loved me, you would want to show it."
- 3. Be wise to the anxieties in your friend's life that are pushing him or her to go further than is appropriate.
- 4. Don't buy into the lie that being sexual will make your partner more committed. The opposite will happen.
- 5. Be very, very sensible about how much alcohol you drink.
- 6. Be wise to the effect that tiredness can also have on your judgement.
- 7. Don't go into bedrooms or any other place where you are tempted to lie down together.
- 8. Don't leave home without your self-respect, and make sure you bring it back with you.

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Alhambra, Spain, Photo: Peter Sisam

Last January I was standing in Victoria Station, London, when one of those huge advertising billboards caught my eye. It simply said "JAN ONE". A cigarette company was making fun (and money) out of all those whose New Year resolution was to give up smoking. I had to smile at the ingenuity behind it, but on a deeper level I was reminded how crushing cynicism can be.

With one last rehearsal before the big showdown on Jan 1st 2000, dare we hope for change? Are we doomed to carry all our personal baggage into the new millennium? This is the challenge behind the *Clean Slate Campaign* to be launched in March '99. It's an invitation to all of us to make at least one needed change in our lives. What we do with

that brief is entirely up to us. Suggestions on 'how to clean our slates' range from letting go of a hurt and forgiving someone, to being honest with ourselves and others about where we have been wrong. And at the other end of the scale, there's invariably money to be paid back, a bad habit to be dropped, or the garage to be cleared. With a little thought we'll all know what to do.

In the midst of expensive domes springing up, and rumours of *Chanel No5* bubbles wafting down the Seine, this see to me to be a Millennium initiative really worth shouting about. Why? Because it works. The experience which lies at the heart of this idea had a profound effect on my life, long before the campaign itself was even invented. The

### FAX-THINK-LINK-

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

**Does Hollywood rule our imaginations?**Contact **globalex@oxford.mra.org.uk** or fax the editors at +44-1865-311950, by 7th February, 1999.

This issue: What is humanity's greatest strength?

### Ailsa Hamilton, UK

I think that humanity's greatest strength is our not-knowing
- our knowing that we don't know, and wanting to
find out. Where this consciousness of not-knowing

comes from is mysterious; it seems to me we could just as well have turned out like ants, satisfied with our programming and busily obeying it, securely surrounded by our peers doing likewise. Instead, something within - whether mind or brain or soul or genes, scientists and theologians can't agree - takes some of us beyond our safe kindergarten of known facts and unquestioned rules, and requires us to find out for ourselves what is real, what matters in life and what doesn't matter beyond today. To test for ourselves the reality of relationships and of eternal truths, to see through our own eyes the beauty and the pain which far better qualified people have already been describing for thousands of years;

best I can do is share my story in the hope that others will accept, what has the potential to be, a very precious gift:

I like to think of myself as slightly zany, but deep down I've always been a traditional kind of girl. Even as a non-believer in my late teens and early twenties, the idea of waiting for the right man was inherently appealing... magical even.

University was tough at times because I felt like a "square" beside my friends, some of whom juggled several relationships at once. Then one night, the summer before final year, a friend and I went out to celebrate the exam results. I don't remember discussing it but we were definitely "on the pull". It was surprisingly effortless (the wine helped) and I went home with a rugby player who'd paid me a few compliments in the pub where I worked. This was risky, I knew, but I made it clear that I didn't want to have sex with him and he was happy with that.

When he didn't call the next day I began to get that sick, inking feeling. I'd fancied him for a while and was hoping at a relationship would develop. Two weeks later I saw him at a party. He seemed pleased to see me so I thought, "He does like me after all!" He asked me back to his flat again. Once we got there the whole atmosphere was different. He wanted more than I was prepared to give (Why was I there if I didn't want to have sex with him?) and what ensued was painful.

The next day I was in a complete daze. Whilst I had my own brokenness to deal with, I still wanted to see him. I wanted to know that somehow I meant something to him, that I was more than just a one-night stand. When I did see him that night he ignored me. That really hurt.

My Mum would've been the ideal person to talk to because she's always been my best friend, but I couldn't face the thought of disappointing her. I was frightened our relationship would change, so I confided in friends instead. As the weeks went by, however, it became increasingly obvious that I would have to tell her. I couldn't live with myself symore. To my amazement she reacted with the utmost compassion and understanding. The bond between us was instantly stronger. I felt so blessed.

Another university term elapsed during which time I had begun to find a real faith. Whilst home for Christmas I met the man in question at a party. He gently took me aside and

said, "I just wanted to say sorry for what I did to you." His apology meant more than I can say. I felt so happy and free. It was the best Christmas present I've ever had.

Baring one's soul is never easy... it can't have been easy for that guy to seek me out and apologise... it wasn't easy for me to be honest with my Mum... it hasn't been easy sharing this with you. So why do we clean our slates? I think conscience has a lot to do with it... those insistent thoughts which haunt us until appropriate action is taken. How about taking ten minutes right now (armed with pen and paper) to reflect on what needs cleaning up in our lives?

Ten minutes later. My thought was to run this article by my family before it goes to print. I was also reminded of other times in my life when I've come clean with people, be it apology or confession. What relief and euphoria followed! And you? Did any particular thought(s) come to mind? To help you follow them through, how about making the *Clean Slate Promise*? Here it is: "I promise to take at least one practical step during 1999 towards wiping my slate clean." And let's not restrict ourselves to '99. Why not make it a regular feature of our new lives?

As I've pondered this, the words of priest and writer Gerard Hughes have been particularly helpful. "We are tempted to ignore our inner life because we do not like what we find there... (but) ...our treasure lies in our inner life. It is our inner life which affects our perception of the world and determines our actions and reactions to it. We tend to ignore this inner life, but it refuses to be ignored either in individual or in national life. If ignored, the inner life will erupt in some form of violence." Challenging stuff. So, too, is the fact that my actions impact the whole of society. An erudite professor once tried to tell me that we are nothing more than ants, and therefore not important at all. I refute that. If "The flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil can set off a tornado in Texas", we've got a lot of re-thinking to do.

Laura Trevelyan, UK

The *Clean Slate Guide* is available at: *Clean Slate Campaign*, 73 Victoria Road, Oxford, OX2 7QG, Tel: 01865 510734, Fax: 01865 311950, Email: info@cleanslate.org Website: http://www.cleanslate.org/

### FAX-THINK-LINK-

to think new thoughts and do new things and discover new territories. And so the human family grows up, slowly and with delight, with mistakes and hurts, and with each generation we get nearer to understanding the wonder of the gift of life and of its giver.

### Elena Diacanov, Moldova

By the millennium people might think that it's the end of everything: love, hope, art, life itself. We are scared of the unknown. The cure is hope. Poets have said that "Beauty will rescue the world", but not without will-power. I think that humanity's strength lies in youth. The old generation passes away and if we want to re-generate what is important to us, we must take the initiative. Let's not leave things to other generations. Let's make them better now.

### Fiona Cardosi, Australia

I believe humanity's greatest strength is its resilience. An essential component of that is bravery. So often we see news of a community suffering a tragedy or a nation suffering the effects of a natural disaster. It astounds me how people can just get up and literally pick up the pieces of their lives. I feel this way because I have never suffered a major trauma, i.e. death of an immediate family member,

"How come," an editor asked me the other day, "that you are still so enthusiastic about what you do at your age?"

The question came as something of a shock. Part of it, of course, was the impact of the last two words. The truth is that - in blissful contradiction of my expanding waistline, sparse grey hair, and fast growing-up children - I still think of myself as a rather young 26.

This gets me into strange situations where I find myself giving the respect due to age to people who turn out to be no older, or even younger, than me. Better than being born middle-aged like some people, I suppose, but perhaps not entirely appropriate for a journalist of 51 who increasingly finds the disconcerting word "veteran" attached to his description in the public prints.

But it's more than that. Despite - or I would say because of - nearly 30 years at the grindstone, I really am still enthusiastic both about journalism and about the particular speciality I cover.

I know there are a lot of people who think I shouldn't be. A recent survey of young people found that journalists easily came top of a list of those they least respected, even outdistancing MPs (the fact that the survey concluded that the young it questioned were "materialistic" and "self-centred" makes me feel a bit better). And an invitation from a group of respected columnists has just landed on my desk inviting me to a conference on the Media and Public Confidence.

"There is widespread and legitimate concern," says the invite, "that the press and television are increasingly directed towards the lowest of human interests and that editors and journalists are more than happy to lay aside ethical considerations in the interests



Young Geoffrey Lean, Photo: Peter Sisam

### FAX-THINK-LINK-

serious illness, or a car accident, etc. I don't know how brave I would be in the above situations, but I am sure it would only change me for the better.

### Joshua First, USA

Humanity's greatest strength is in its individuality. The ability for a person to think and act differently from the so-called "norm" is very powerful. A person may wear what they feel is right for them, not what is right for the general consensus. Individuality means new ideas, thoughts, and ways of doing things. Each difference brought into humanity makes us re-evaluate our feelings on an idea or topic. By appreciating our differences we can learn, grow, and change.

#### Judy Davidson, Australia

While travelling through the Scottish Highlands, I put this question to my fellow travellers. Responses were as varied as the people who gave them: Wai Ling from Malaysia was confident with creativity. Jen from California thought communication. Alesha from New Zealand believed conscience to be our greatest strength, and Graeme, our Scottish guide, was in favour of fishing (in a free Scotland of course)!

of an increased audience."

This, I have to say, is not my experience. True, I have worked with some people who I would not trust as far as I can throw them. But the great majority of my colleagues on the three papers I have worked for - *The Yorkshire Post, The Observer* and *The Independent on* 

Sunday - have exhibited a truthfulness, idealism and capacity for hard work that, if applied in in-

dustry or politics, would have made Britain a very different place. It's not at all what I expected when I entered jourpalism, and I have found it humbling.

low, I know I have been lucky - no, that's not true, I have taken considerable care - to work for papers that encourage such standards. Others do so too, but a fair few do not. Though newspapers are, indeed, far more concerned about circulation than they used to be, I can honestly say that I have never been put under pressure to distort or sensationalise a story to put on sales.

So I remain passionate about the importance of a free and awkward press, without which there can be no democracy. At its best - and Britain has some of the best, as well as some of the worst, newspapers in the world - the press is one of the few defences the individual has against the powerful. It can give an bonest, objective account to the peodo of what its leaders are doing, and in return represent their concerns to those in power.

I also remain enthusiastic about spe-

cialising in the environment and world development. Again, I never expected to be. I fell into it by complete accident. I was told to cover it just shortly after joining *The Yorkshire Post* as a graduate trainee in late 1969 by a farsighted editor who spotted a coming issue and reached for the nearest un-

"I had seen myself, in my dreams, as a high-profile political or foreign correspondent."

committed body. I was far from keen - I had seen myself, in my dreams, as a high-profile political or foreign correspondent, or something of the sort - but, as the newest kid on the block, I was in no position to refuse.

But I slowly realised that my luck had been in, not out. These were clearly emerging issues of great importance that caught the public imagination long before they attracted serious political attention. And, as one of the first in the field, I was being given the chance - which comes to only a few journalists in each generation - to help define a new speciality.

For years after I joined *The Observer*, I was the only environment correspondent in what used to be Fleet Street. Now all quality, and some popular, papers have them and there is an excellent collection of environment and development specialists, not just in Britain, but worldwide. As with anything new, they often have to work harder and with more imagination than those covering better established specialities to get

space in their papers, but they develop such fascination for the area that few leave to do other jobs.

Being enthusiastic about covering an area properly and honestly is of course very different from espousing a particular cause, or aligning oneself with one side of an argument. The environment

and development pressure groups, for example, need to be watched just as critically as industry or govern-

ment. They are now big organisations, wielding considerable influence, fuelled by a great deal of money entrusted to them by ordinary people - and just as prone to partiality, half truths and occasional sharp practice as any other protagonist.

But if half what the scientists tell us is true, we stand on the brink - as we enter the new millennium - of one of those times when the tectonic plates of world society shift, creating a new landscape. We appear to be approaching both the 'outer limits' of the pollution that the planet's systems (such as the climate) can take without cracking, and the 'inner limits' of the build-up of poverty and deprivation that human society can take without breaking down. And yet solutions are increasingly emerging. Covering this monumental change in human affairs, and perhaps contributing to elucidating some of the solutions, is indeed something to get enthusiastic about, even at my age...

Geoffrey Lean, UK

### FAX-THINK-LINK-

Originally I thought imagination was the answer, because without it, human endeavour would not exist. Without dreams and visions, we would never move forward, never consider a better condition, never see possibilities or potential, and never explore or experiment. But what if imagination is turned to darker pursuits? Hitler imagined a "pure" Germany and the result was tragic. What about love then? Jesus said: "Love one another as I have loved you." He was using "agape", a Greek word for the highest form of unconditional love. Each of us has the capacity to love this way with a passion for justice, without succumbing to violent

measures to see justice done. We have the capacity to forgive again and again; and we can love so gently, as when we weep for another's suffering.

Why is it that so many justify violent action by claiming they care so deeply, so passionately? The outcome is always grief. Ultimately, it comes down to free will. We are always free to choose - to love, to hate, to create, to destroy, to fish or not to fish at all, to sleep instead, and let someone else worry about it. Humanity has so many strengths, but agape is my first choice.

### The Silence

If anyone were to explain or define silence as absence of sound, I'd say I've got news for you. Silence is a powerful dynamic with the power to change your life and alter your motives - that is, if you play its game. Silence is as essential as air or water for our well-being, even survival as a species. How do I know? I've been catapulted into the awareness of silence, essential silence, so I know through personal experience. I also know by reading about other people's experiences and by comparing notes with those who have come

into the same knowledge. And sadly, I am beginning to think that we may be about to lose track of one of our most powerful renewable sources of energy, a transformatory power available to all who care to make a go for it. Unless, of course, we try the experience and make it known worldwide. After all, it is not a new discovery, it is as old as mankind and lies at the heart of all great civilisations, until they begin to neglect it.

We need again to be taught the need for it and how to make full use of it. We are meant for more than physical satisfaction and fulfilment.

Silence is a commodity meant for use in the mastery of life and in understanding ourselves and each other. It is directly related to the development of our potential as human beings. I'd like to say that silence is our most essential tool for

survival, for discovering who we are, what we are meant to do and how to evolve into a species capable of a higher civilisation and an exquisite culture based on understanding love and creative, purposeful living.

Once in deep inner silence a poem came sailing into my awareness and I wrote it down: "He practises the greatest art who finds a way to another's heart." It expresses my first revolutionising experience of silence. That silence is inside me, even in the midst of outside noise. I can heave myself inwardly over a sort of threshold or barrier, by an act of will. But my will is elusive. I easily slip out again and find myself in the grey, busy, scattered gnawing of my thoughts and emotions and habits. Again and again I have to make the effort of getting over that threshold.

The most startling feature of the silence is that there are messages in there, clear direction, vision or inspiration. Of

course, part of discovering silence as a force is to discover that it has conditions. You can't enter into

its secrets if you have no intention to follow its promptings or if you just want a sensation of euphoria. Silence is a sacred space where you meet the Divine essence of all life, by some called the still, small voice. You take off your walking shoes, strip yourself of selfish motives and enter on tip toe to be led in unexpected ways by unexpected means, and it gives you the spunk to play the game the way it was meant. You begin to sort out and shed attitudes and habits which dull the power and purpose of the silence.

Photo: Christine Kenny

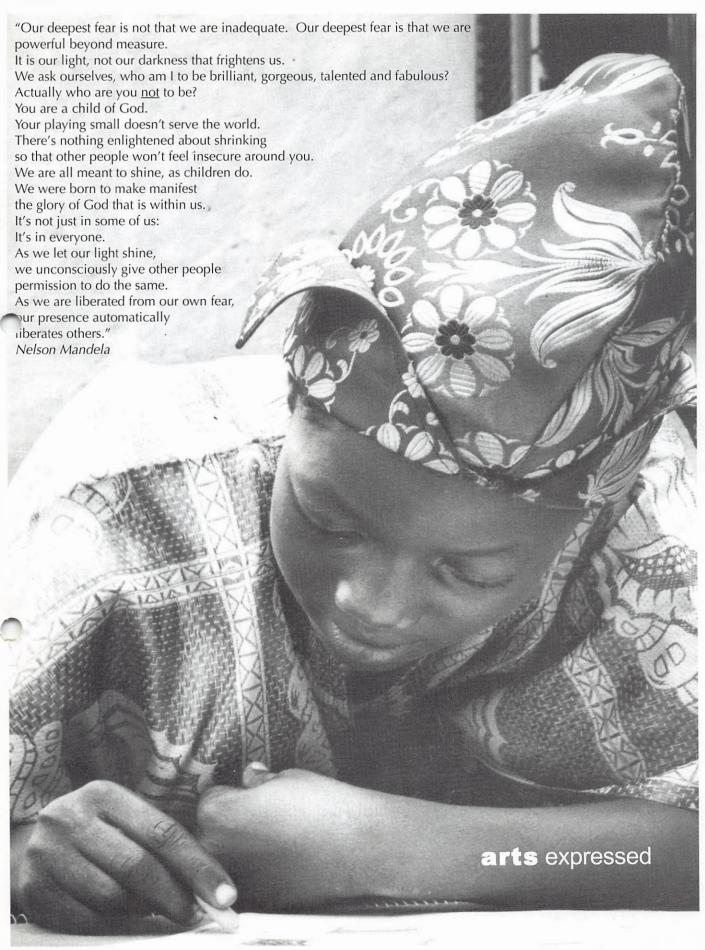
When you enter the heart of the silence, all you want is to align yourself with it, and be part of it. Y know intuitively that you were meant for it, and you have always secretly longed for it. Your whole being is filled with a passionate feeling of "Eureka!" (I have found) and with it an exhilarating, overflowing sense of love which takes you out of yourself, headlong into a new venture of further discovery. You know you are meant for something great, something special, something only you can do, just because you are you. You know that you are part of a pattern. You know that the future depends on us finding our part in that pattern and that we must help each other find it, and give each other courage to do our part. Suddenly you find you have a passion - a quiet but insistent passi to help mankind, poor suffering mankind, develop a new awareness of

these inner realities which are so predictable and certain, yet so near to being forgotten.

You are never the same once you have discovered the silence. You will tire, you will despair, you will meet difficulties. But nothing can take away your experience of that inner space where Silence is and Truth speaks and Wisdom leads. It is always up to you whether you heave yourself over that threshold again and enter.

### Signe Lund Strong, Sweden

The front cover of this issue is by Signe Strong. It appears in her book *Window* with many other paintings and writings. Knowing the inspiration people have drawn from it (from the 500 letters she has received), she is offering complimentary copies to GE readers. To cover postage, please send a cheque of £10 (outside Europe £13) or dollar equivalent to: S. Strong, Kopparvagen 31, 791 42 Falun, Sweden.



# Scattered Thoughts

Passion is the starting point, skills can then be learnt, doors can be unlocked and dreams can become reality.

If you are simply yourself, no-one can say you're doing that wrong.

In its purest form truth is not a polite tap on the shoulder. It is a howling reproach. What Moses brought down from Mount Sinai were not the Ten Suggestions.

- Ted Koppel

A Company of the second second

51 of the top 100 economies in the world are companies.

Wonder is the beginning of wisdom.

Never pay a compliment as if you expected a receipt.

Don't ask for a light burden - ask for a strong back. A celebrity is a person who works hard all his life to become known, then wears dark glasses to avoid being recognised.

If you are seeking creative ideas, go out walking. Angels whisper to a man when he goes for a walk.

To the dull mind all nature is leaden. To the illuminated mind the whole world burns and sparkles with light.

The price of visions is the headaches in between.

goes for a walk.

Learn

Learn from other people's mistakes - you just haven't enough time to make them all yourself.

The critic stands on the outside and judges. The prophet stands on the inside and weeps. - Conrad Hunte

The teeth are smiling
- but is the heart?
- African Proverb