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Reverend Cecil Williams of Glide Memorial Church
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“Delta’s goal is not to be all things to all people, but to be able to provide its clients with access to all things ... Delta is visionary.” – Karen Green, CEO, VNA Care Network and Hospice
The Caring Imperative
By Val J. Halamandaris

This issue of CARING magazine celebrates the human spirit. Through the stories of the people profiled, it strives to promote positive values and underscore the importance of service to others in the belief that the solution to most problems lies in the love, understanding, and caring of one human being for another. We believe Albert Schweitzer was correct when he observed, “We are all so much together, and yet we are dying of loneliness.” With CARING, we seek to break down barriers between people and build bridges among them.

We strive to redefine wealth and success in America. We believe that both should find their meaning in service to human-kind, instead of only in the accumulation of money and material things. We believe Albert Einstein also was correct when he said, “Only a life lived for others is worthwhile.” We emphasize the importance of hard work and seek to promote a positive work ethic in America. We believe there is no such thing as a menial job; each occupation in its own way is essential to society.

Through our interviews with men and women of achievement, we underscore the fact that one person can make a difference. In doing so, we provide positive role models for our nation’s youth. We search for genuine heroes, particularly among those who have overcome disability, pain, and suffering to serve others.

We strive to remember and celebrate those whose selfless contributions to society have been forgotten or gone unrecognized.

In CARING, we focus on the positive rather than the negative side of the news, in the belief that there is a hunger among the citizens of this nation for such stories. We seek to promote the solidarity of the American family, which we perceive to be the bedrock of our society. It is an institution we believe to be presently threatened by dangerous influences.

We do our part to shatter myths about aging and the prejudices that keep the disabled from their full share of the American dream.

We believe that we must change from a materialistic society to a caring society, and that the words “caring people” are two of the most important ones in the English language.

We believe that “caring” is the very essence of the Golden Rule, the thread that connects all great religions of the world. It implies empathy, sensitivity, and placing the welfare of others before self. It involves community service and community cooperation.

We believe that the 21st century will be known as the “Era of Caring,” and that society’s adoption of this positive value will produce economic as well as sociological gains.

We believe that Luciano de Crescenzo put it well when he said, “We are each of us angels with only one wing. And we can only fly by embracing each other.” We invite our readers to join us on our flight into the future, and in our endeavor to build a better and more caring America.

Val J. Halamandaris is the founder and executive director of the Caring Institute and President of the National Association for Home Care & Hospice, and editor and publisher of CARING Magazine.
The 21st Annual Caring Awards

“We are each of us angels with only one wing. And we can only fly while embracing each other.”

The logo of the Caring Institute is an angel with only one wing. It has its derivation in the quotation from contemporary Italian poet, Luciano de Crescenzo, who said: “We are each of us angels with only one wing. And we can only fly by embracing each other.”

The award itself is a fine crystal angel holding a globe signifying the world in her outstretched arms. The Institute believes there is no more fitting image than this to give to the living angels, who devote their lives in service to others. The second part of the award is a photograph of Mother Teresa, who inspired the Caring Institute, along with one of her favorite quotations and her printed signature, neatly framed with a certificate naming the recipient as one of the most caring men and women in America. It certifies the individual’s induction into the Hall of Fame for Caring Americans, a museum established by the Institute three blocks east of the U.S. Capitol in what was the first Washington, D.C. home of the great abolitionist, Frederick Douglass.

The Caring Institute would like to thank everyone who generously support the Awards, Scholarships, and Dreams 4 Kids programs.

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Mission Statement

The Caring Institute is a nonprofit organization which was founded in 1985 to promote the values of caring, integrity and public service. It was inspired by Mother Teresa who urged the Institute’s founder to “do something” about the “poverty of the spirit” in the Western world using the power of caring “the one-word summary of the Golden Rule which runs through all the great religions of the world.” The Institute seeks individuals who are large of spirit and holds them out as role models to be emulated by others. Caring Award winners are chosen by a secret ballot of the Institute’s Honorary Trustees and are inducted into The Hall of Fame for Caring Americans located three blocks east of the U.S. Capitol in what was the first Washington, D.C. home of the great human rights activist Frederick Douglass. By celebrating those individuals who in transcending self devote their lives in service to others, the Institute hope to inspire people of all ages to understand the wisdom of Dr. Albert Einstein’s admonition that “only a life lived for others is worthwhile.”

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Special Thanks

The Caring Institute’s past caring award winners would like to thank the Honorary Trustees, the Board of Directors and the staff and volunteers, particularly Richard D. Brennan, Jr. and Kathleen Brennan, for all their hard work which has helped make the Institute such a vital and dynamic organization. The Institute would also like to thank CARING Magazine, its production staff and advertisers, and the National Association for Home Care & Hospice for underwriting this special issue of CARING honoring the most caring men and women in America.
Simione Consultants is the first organization of its kind dedicated entirely to home care and hospice. Our uniquely qualified team of operations, clinical, and financial experts work together to provide superior guidance, helping our clients achieve their business goals. More than 800 home care organizations have trusted our experts to get them through the challenges of yesterday and today, and gain the leading edge for tomorrow.
Hubert Humphrey gave us a vision of what we can become. The senator and former vice president was a driving force behind the civil rights acts of the sixties, Medicare, and the Peace Corps. These legislative landmarks did much to cure society’s ills, but Humphrey never thought political action could replace caring people. “The greatest healing therapy is friendship and love,” he once remarked. Perhaps you’ll agree after reading about this year’s Caring Award winners.

Dick Grace sees “wine as a catalyst for healing the planet.” Most of the profits from Grace Family Vineyards go to the needy in Asia. And that’s where you’ll find him much of the year. He’s committed to meeting the people he helps and letting them know they have a friend.

Just listening to someone’s problems can go a long way, as Sister Adele O’Sullivan knows. She is the head of Health Care for the Homeless and is starting Circle the City. She’s both a doctor who tends ailing bodies, and a nun who treats “wounded spirits” at her free clinic for the homeless.

When you lose your home, it helps to have a warm meal and hear a warm voice. Hurricane victims found that and more at God’s Katrina Kitchen. As head of the group, Greg Porter repaired hundreds of damaged houses and rebuilt thousands of broken lives.

It takes love “to heal the whole person,” says Reverend Cecil Williams of Glide Memorial Church. He gives it to all alike at his multicultural church and his foundation for the poor. It’s manned by volunteers of all ages who share his uplifting dream of “a beloved community.” He knows “young people must be included in our plans to make the world a better place.”

Diverse as their causes are, these young people share one quality in common. It’s a profound sense of character, the trait John Wooden always looked for in his players. The former basketball coach is yet another of our honorees and star center of a special story on success. Wooden believes it’s based on cooperation not competition, self-fulfillment not scores, and decency not slam dunks. He dislikes the dunk because he thinks it encourages selfishness and showmanship. He never allowed it in 27 seasons coaching the Bruins at UCLA. Yet his teams won 10 national championships in 12 years. This unbroken record reflected Wooden’s attention to detail, demanding training, and belief in leading with love.

This year the Institute also honors five young adults who have made amazing contributions. They include environmental activist Jami Harper, the founder of H2Owood Squares; Alexandra Holderman, the founder of Baby Bundles; self-defense expert Dallas Jessup, the founder of Just Yell Fire; Ashlee Kephart, founder of Kids for a Better World; and Vasanth Kuppuswamy, founder of the Tamil Nadu India School Fund.

Real leaders give their followers love and strength. That’s the essence of leadership, says Dr. Deepak Chopra, featured in a talk with NAHC president, Val J. Halamandaris. The renowned mind/body expert thinks “a leader is the symbolic soul of a group.” It doesn’t matter whether that group is a family, nation, or basketball team. What does matter is that leaders have the mind, heart, and soul to be calm and empathic agents of change.

And they must be willing to embark on a “quest for vision,” Dr. Carl Hammerschlag adds. The “healing doc,” as he’s known, shares some of his penetrating wisdom in an interview with Halamandaris. A Yale-trained psychiatrist and author, he thinks great leaders take risks to impart their picture of tomorrow. “A visionary,” he explains, “is the one who learns to see in the dark, not the one who describes it.”

Closing this month’s magazine is a tribute to Childhelp founders Sara O’Meara and Yvonne Fedderson, who have been nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize. Next year these amazing women will be celebrating 50 years of fighting child abuse.

Senator and former vice president Humphrey was a visionary leader who shared many of the qualities of this year’s Caring Award winners. He was the very personification of caring. He often wept openly when he heard of the travails of others. “A man who cannot cry has no heart,” he said. He remained the conscience of the Senate long after losing his bid for the presidency in 1968. He developed cancer in 1973, and towards the end of his life, he was in great pain, but he continued to work hard to help those who were less fortunate. To his last days, he left the bed in his hospital to go and bring comfort and cheer to those he said were less fortunate than he. He added that, “There are incalculable resources in the human spirit once it has been set free.” The 2008 National Caring Award winners would all agree on the basis of their first-hand experience.

About the Authors: Lisa Yarkony, PhD, is a staff writer with CARING Magazine who volunteered her talents to bring these stories to life.

Richard D. Brennan, Jr., MA, is the Managing Director of the Caring Institute.
**Mr. Dick Grace**

Dick Grace 30 years ago left behind a successful career as a stockbroker to establish **Grace Family Vineyards**. His goal was not retirement or a life of ease but enterprising philanthropy. His high-quality wines have generated more than $25 million in profits, which have been used to help ill, abused, or homeless people the world over. ........................................page 10.

**Sister Adele O’Sullivan, M.D.**

Adele O’Sullivan’s dream of serving God by helping humanity led her to join the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet 31 years ago and fired her subsequent decision to become a doctor. Today, the lady known as the “Mother Teresa of Phoenix” runs **Health Care for the Homeless** and is starting **Circle the City**, another nonprofit to help still more needy people. ........................................page 14.

**Mr. Greg Porter**

In response to Hurricane Katrina, Greg Porter left his home and business, moved to Mississippi, founded **God’s Katrina Kitchen**, persuaded 22 religious denominations to help him get food, and recruited 13,000 volunteers who worked with him for over two years to prepare 3,000 meals a day and build homes for hundreds of homeless people. ........................................page 18.

**Reverend Cecil Williams**

Reverend Cecil Williams became pastor of **Glide Memorial Church** in San Francisco’s Tenderloin District in 1963. Parishioners were few because they feared going through the throngs of drug addicts, prostitutes, winos, sick and homeless people who lined the streets. Reverend Williams did what Jesus would have done—bring everyone inside. He created programs, from housing to health care, from meals to education, to help meet the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the thousands of people who crossed his threshold. ........................................page 22.

**Mr. John Wooden**

John Wooden is well known as the coach of the **UCLA basketball team** that won an unimaginable 10 national titles, some years with great talent and other years with average talent. The secret to his success, he says, is that he lived his life according to the Golden Rule and he inspired—insisted—that those who played for him do the same. It was not something he had to consciously think about. It was just part of who he was. In short, he took caring to a high art. ........................................page 26.

**A Tribute to Deepak Chopra, M.D.**

The Indian-born physician is the world’s most famous guru. As an author and public speaker, he brings together the best of Eastern and Western thought. In a wide-ranging interview with Val J. Halamandaris, Dr. Chopra, who has authored more than 50 books, answers the great cosmic questions, such as “What is the purpose of life? Why do people get sick, and why do they get better? And, “what is happiness and how do you achieve it?” This interview is must reading for people of any age who are in pursuit of the great secrets of the universe. ........................................page 38.
Ms. Jami Harper
Ms. Jami Harper is an environmental activist, the founder of H2Owood Squares which raises awareness about water pollution. Consumerland, which she authored, preaches conservation, and she has designed an anti-smoking board game. Her programs to date have entertained and educated thousands of young people..............................page 32.

Ms. Alexandra Holderman
Ms. Alexandra Holderman wasn’t much more than a baby when she started Baby Bundles. But she gave up dressing dolls when she saw how many real babies didn’t have winter clothes. Their plight inspires her yearly routine to find donors, shop, and distribute bundles of things poor moms need to keep their babies warm..............................page 33.

Ms. Dallas Jessup
Ms. Dallas Jessup is a self-defense expert who founded Just Yell Fire. To promote her cause, she raised $500,000 for a self-defense film and made it available online for free. So far, 2 million people in 37 countries have pressed “download” for pointers on how to fight back against aggressors..............................page 34.

Ms. Ashlee Kephart
Ms. Ashlee Kephart, the founder of Kids for a Better World, helps people in America and Africa. She raises funds for “care” packages and distributes them to U.S. disaster victims, along with the message, “I CARE ABOUT YOU.” She also donates books, shoes, and clothes to orphans in Liberia and Kenya, making their world better too..............page 36.

Mr. Vasanth Kuppuswamy
As the founder of Tamil Nadu India School Fund, Mr. Vasanth Kuppuswamy is a hero to kids in a remote village in India. Single-handedly, he’s provided them with books, better classrooms, and hope. He spends every summer teaching in India, and the rest of the year he is raising funds in the U.S. and urging American teens to volunteer..............................page 37.

Childhelp:
Celebrating 50 Years of Fighting Child Abuse.
Emerson said that behind every successful organization there is always a charismatic figure. This is certainly true of Childhelp, formed in the late 1950s, which is blessed to have two such beloved leaders, Sara O’Meara and Yvonne Fedderson. Childhelp has accomplished amazing things in the years since then. The number of Americans who recognize child abuse as a major problem has increased dramatically. April has been observed every year as Child Abuse Prevention Month, and the first Wednesday of April has been set aside as a National Day of Hope. Thanks to Childhelp’s leadership, federal legislation was enacted in 2006 establishing a national registry for those convicted of child abuse. For their amazing work with children, Sara and Yvonne have been nominated for a Nobel peace prize; Childhelp will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2009..............................page 48.

A Salute to
Carl A. Hammerschlag, M.D.
Physician, author, and healer, Carl helps people mend their lives. His unique perspective draws on a knowledge of both the clinical and traditional cultures, gained through years working with Native Americans. This combination of empathy and erudition earned him a Caring Award and acclaim from audiences across the globe..............................page 50.
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THE RUGGED ORIGINAL.
This year marks the 23rd anniversary of the creation of the Caring Institute as inspired by Mother Teresa. It also marks the 21st Annual National Caring Awards Ceremony. This year the Caring Institute Board of Trustees has chosen to honor five adults and five young people. They will receive their awards on April 7, 2008, and simultaneously be inducted into the Hall of Fame for Caring Americans, located three blocks east of the U.S. Capitol in what was the first Washington, D.C. home of the great abolitionist Frederick Douglass. In addition to honoring individuals who are large of spirit, the Caring Awards express the hope that increased public awareness will lead to financial support for their charitable activities. The Institute also hopes that the honorees will be seen as role models to inspire and be emulated by others all across America.
Dick Grace 30 years ago left behind a successful career as a stockbroker to establish Grace Family Vineyards. His goal was not retirement or a life of ease but entrepreneurial philanthropy. He succeeded in creating several high-quality wines which sell for $250 to $1000 a bottle—one going for $100,000 in a charity auction. To date, Grace has generated more than $25 million in profits which have been used to help ill, abused, or homeless people the world over.

Grace is very proud of what he has achieved but even more excited about what the future holds. He notes that a bottle of wine that sells for $800 will educate, house, and feed a child in Nepal for a year. With the passion of youth coupled to the wisdom of experience, Grace looks forward to being more successful in order than he can generate more profits to be used to help the needy in the U.S. and throughout the world.

His laser-like focus on generating income and helping others explains, in part, why he is reluctant to drink his own wine. Obviously, it is a very valuable commodity. The rest of the story is that Grace is a recovering alcoholic who stopped drinking over 20 years ago. But Grace does not regret the past because it brought him to California’s Napa Valley where he learned what it is like to thirst for a cause.

“I got here,” he explains, “by learning from the mistakes I made, and using them as a way to live a life with more meaning and value.” That means listening to your “internal heart,” as he phrases it. “Don’t stifle that inner goodness because you’re worried what other people will think of you, or involved in things that you know are really silly.” Too many of us are distracted by “busyness and materialism” though they “will never bring us internal happiness.”

By his own admission, much of his own life was consumed by such distractions. He grew up in a traditional family that thought competition was the key to success. The desire to test himself led him to join the Marines. And he probably would have wound up in Vietnam if an old football injury hadn’t cut his military career short. Out of the service with two kids, he applied for a job as a stockbroker, and ended up with a successful career in San Francisco. “I loved people, and I loved the risk,” he says. “I did well financially.”

Soon he started to acquire the things people want, including a nice home in the suburbs. But his ferocious urge to compete drove him into a hectic routine made up of hard work followed by party time. He begun to suspect there was more to life and that “happiness is a quality of contentment not accumulation.”

Can you go out and hunt down happiness? Grace would say no: “I think you let it happen, and the primary ingredient in letting it happen is to do away with the fears that limit us so profoundly, whether it’s fear of old age, fear of illness, or fear of financial insecurity. Now those realities might not ever leave us, but the fear of those realities is what inhibits us from moving forward.”

Grace, who was always a decisive man of action, decided to make a change for his family’s sake. “I was concerned,” he says, “that the kids would think life consisted of tennis, golf, and cocktail parties. I wanted to give them something more.” He found it in 1976, when he and his wife, Ann, were visiting in the Napa Valley. The owner of the inn where they stayed was a part-time realtor, who took them to see a lovely Victorian home that had sat vacant for 40 years. “I had an almost mystical experience as we toured the grounds,” he recalls, and they bought the house on the spot.

At the time, they had no plans to plant vines, but a friend suggested that the olive grove in front of the house would make a great vineyard. “Up to that point,” Grace says, “my only attempt to grow anything was putting a radish sprout in a dish at school, and it died overnight.” His second go at agriculture was more successful. The first harvest yielded a superb Cabernet Sauvignon that soon gained its own cult among connoisseurs.

Despite the growing success of the vineyard, Grace knew something was still missing. “When I reviewed my life, I saw it was all about self,” he admits. “Not that I was exceptionally selfish, it’s just that everything I did, every decision I made, was self-generated, self-willed. And I realized that a self-willed life was doomed to failure. We are here for another purpose.”

His determination to take stock of his life led him to AA and Buddhism. Then he found his calling when he donated a magnum of wine for a charity auction sponsored by Magic
Moments, a group that grants special wishes to gravely ill children. When his magnum sold for $24,000, he realized he could use his wine to help a lot of people. One of them was nine-year-old Anthony Frasier, whom he met through Magic Moments. He took the boy to the zoo, and called him every week until his death from cancer six months later.

The passage of time has not made Grace forget how Anthony just radiated love. “This incredible kid,” he recalls, “had made sense of things I’d read in books, heard in churches, and paid psychiatrists to hear. What I do now wouldn’t have happened without him.”

As head of the Grace Family Foundation, he says he “has used wine as a catalyst to change the planet.” In doing so, he has become one of the finest examples of enterpreneurial philanthropy, mirroring the success of another Caring Award Winner, Paul Newman. The more than $25 million he has given away has helped to provide medical care, to provide housing for the homeless and to fight abuse. Much of the funding has been used to support projects in Asia because Grace and his wife Ann have visited there often and know first hand that the needs are infinite. Much of their time has been spent with children, who Grace points out are both our present and our future. His generous donations have helped build clinics, and housing or provide supplies needed by orphanages and hospitals.

These trips have caused them to meet some extraordinary people, including the Dalai Lama. “I love being his friend,” Grace says, “and I love the universal awareness he has of the need to incorporate interdependence into our conduct, our thinking, our speech, and our actions.”

Much as he reveres His Holiness, Grace has found his greatest mentors among the struggling, but spirited people he assists. Many of them have become his friends and taught him much about kindness, compassion, and community. The first of them was little Anthony, who knew so much about loving life to the end. And he was just one of many kids who’ve led Grace to think, “Children have been my greatest gurus.”

They are the inspiration behind his quest to change people’s lives and get others to join in. “I’m trying,” he says, “to make people aware of our opportunity, if not our obligation, to be compassionate caretakers of our underserved sisters and brothers throughout the world.” And it’s not enough to just make donations toward filling their basic needs.

Grace hugs lepers and volunteers in hospices because he’s committed to “being a friend to the friendless.” It’s one way
we can all make a difference, as he insists: “I get a little up-set when people say to me, ‘There’s really nothing I can do.’ I would argue strenuously that sometimes an extraordinary form of kindness and compassion can be eye contact.” In fact, the highest form of caring may be “letting a homeless person feel human and visible, respected, and regarded.”

Of course, Grace does a great deal more with both his time and his wine. “I have a genetic trait,” he explains, “that comes to me whenever I see a problem, whenever I see a person in need. I say, ‘What is the problem, and how can I help?’ I just pray this particular approach lasts for however long I have left.”

That should be a while since Grace still bubbles over with a youthful passion for his cause. His upbeat approach comes partly from his Buddhism, as you can tell from the words on the cork in every bottle of Grace Vineyards wine. These words are “Be Optimystic,” and it’s a mantra Grace wants us all to repeat, even those far along in years. “Forget the age thing,” he advises. “Know that you can think and act like a 20 year old.”

Grace does even though he’s already 70. “I don’t even think of my age,” he laughs. “In fact, somebody told me recently, ‘Dick, act your age.’ I said, ‘Not even a chance.’” He still wakes up every morning knowing he’s going to experience joy that day.

Put simply, he’s hooked on helping others. And that’s one high he can’t give up since an inner voice keeps egging him on. It tells him not to let fear stop him from doing good. It urges him to turn his cause into something that will last. And Grace listens because he thinks caring – like booze – can become an addiction. “But it’s an addiction that leads to happiness.”

What Grace does for others warms him more than the finest vintage. So he savors his Cabernet, though he never does more than sniff its deep, fruity aroma. “My winery has taken on a real destiny,” he believes, “by helping to close the gap between haves and have-nots.” As long as that gap exists, Grace urges us all to “let our inner goodness come forward.” We can all share the wine of human kindness with those who are parched for love.

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They say you should love another person if you wish to see God’s face. Cultivate a garden if you wish to see God’s hand. It’s a place where we come close to His daily miracles of birth, death, and rebirth. This makes gardening like a journey through the different stages of life. And gardening, like life, can be messy, dirty, and hard, as Dr. Adele O’Sullivan has learned. The “Mother Teresa of Phoenix” is both a constant gardener and a compassionate caregiver for some of society’s poorest members.

Adele first learned about caring while tending her family’s vegetable garden in Los Angeles. This early experience taught her the pleasure of patiently nurturing life. It’s a pleasure she now finds in her own garden and in her work as medical director of Health Care for the Homeless. The Phoenix nonprofit, like her garden, is a place where she connects with God by drawing life from the dirt. In fact, it covers many of the people who come to her for help, but she tries to treat each one as though she were caring for Christ himself.

Most doctors don’t think about their patients this way, but Adele is a nun who considers medicine to be her ministry. She says her mission is to treat “the whole person” since her patients “need much more than a doctor.” They also need care for their “wounded spirits” and someone to “just listen to their stories.” What she’s heard over the years has shown her “how very much the same we all are, and how God simply leads us on different paths.”

Her own path to the homeless clinic began in a Catholic home where she read a lot about the saints. But the person who impressed her most was her dad, a genial Irishman who helped anyone who asked. “Homeless people would knock on our door asking for food,” she says, “and he would take a sack of groceries into the kitchen and put it into bags.” He never turned anyone away, and Adele longed to be like him. This led her to join the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and take her vows in 1968. “Being a nun was my calling,” she says. “It’s what I find life-giving.” But she also wanted to save lives as a doctor, so she convinced the sisters to let her attend medical school. After graduating in 1984, she taught residents, did rural medicine, and worked at a psychiatric facility. “I had no idea at the time,” she recalls, “how valuable that experience in mental illness was going to be.” She would find out in 1996 after getting an important phone call. “They needed a doctor at the homeless clinic, and that’s how I got here.”

She divides her practice between the clinic and the street. “My job,” she explains, “is to have one foot in the exam room, and the other out there meeting people and learning about their needs.” Many of the homeless have no contact with the established medical system and don’t know her clinic exists. By going out to treat them, she “helps them view medicine as a person who cares, rather than a system to be feared.”

And they don’t have to fear getting a sermon from Adele; she doesn’t evangelize or preach. She just looks at them kindly and leans in close as they describe their problems. On a typical day, she might meet people with infections, hypertension, diabetes, contusions, and stab wounds. She examines them, gives them some initial treatment, perhaps some medication. Then she asks them to see her the next day at the clinic.

Three thousand of them come every year, and they’re not what you’d expect. Even Adele admits being amazed when she first began serving the poor. “I think what surprised me most is how similar we all are. The needs are very much the same across the board, particularly the need for love and care, for someone to lay on hands, for someone to heal your wounds. It doesn’t matter whether you’re rich or poor.”

And forget the stereotypes about the homeless. Adele knows “they aren’t true.” Despite what you hear, they’re not all mentally ill, and many have fine educations. They come from all backgrounds and age groups, but what they have in common is a loss. “Sometimes it’s the loss of a relationship, a parent, or a child,” Adele says. “Sometimes it’s the loss of the one paycheck that would have let you pay the rent. And sometimes, it’s the loss of health in this country, this fine rich country where you lose your insurance when you lose your job.”

No matter the reason, the homeless all need care. But Adele says she has to gain their trust before she can really help them. “The healing begins in listening to their stories. The next time it’s take care of some medical thing.” Finally “we get down to the real hurts, life’s real hurts that are underneath: the rejection, the addiction, and the mental illness.”
Adele encourages her patients to open up by washing their feet. And you can imagine how comforting this is for the many homeless people with serious foot problems. “It’s medically important,” she explains, “and it’s important for forming a spiritual connection with our patients.” It’s also one of the ways Adele shows how she feels about the clinic. “I have this tremendous conviction,” she says, “every day when I go into these rooms that what I am doing is holy and this is holy ground.”

Her sense of fervor has inspired the community to support her in giving the homeless more services. She’s been able to put over 130 people—more than half of them children—into safe, permanent housing. She has also marshalled the community to create a new nonprofit dedicated to building a recuperative care center for the homeless. “We’ve decided to call it Circle the City,” she says, “because we are trying to circle our city with love.” Someday she hopes every homeless person will receive the kind of loving care her clinic gave one suffering man on a hot Friday in summer.

Jerry came in drunk with his clothes stuck to him from a rash. Adele and her nurses soaked them off, put cream on his body, and wrapped his wounds in gauze. They gave him new clothes and fed him. He said, “Nobody’s ever been this nice to me before,” and promised to return on Monday. But he didn’t come back, and a few days later the police found him dead in an alley. “We all looked at each other,” Adele recalls, “and said, ‘Do you realize what we did for Jerry? We prepared his body for a funeral.’ That’s what you do— you bathe, you anoint, and you wrap.”

So Adele doesn’t know where her work is going to lead, but she never loses her sense of hope. “I see people who walk out of the clinic and say for the first time, ‘I see a way out. I see how life might be better.’” And whatever they go on to do, she hopes they’ll remember her as “a friend.”

She knows it’s been a privilege to walk with them over the years. “I think of the people I have met in exam rooms, in river bottoms, on canal banks, and railroad tracks. They’re wonderful people who have enriched my life, and I think how sad it would have been if our paths had never crossed.” There are many more of them out there, and they need more love and care than she alone can give. “We’re exhausted when we go out the door at night,” she sighs. “We also say, ‘What a wonderful day. Where would these people have gone if we weren’t here today?’”

She’s committed to being there because it’s part of her pact with God. “He graced me with much,” she says, “and now He’s telling me to go out and give it.” Besides, she admits getting something extra in return. “It gives me life to watch someone who’s suffering and find some way to make it better.”

As for her failures, she tries to be philosophical and remember that death is part of the natural cycle. She thinks about this when she goes home after work and cares for the garden in her backyard. It’s full of robust vegetables, like the garden she tended as a girl. She loves watching them grow, but she sometimes thinks, “What a crazy thing to be doing in my spare time. It just means more caring and nurturing, feeding, and tending.”

Still she draws comfort from putting her hands in the earth and realizing how much is beyond us. “When I plant in my garden,” she says, “I get to witness the miracle of life. It’s the same miracle I see at work, and I can no more influence healing in that exam room than I can influence that seed coming out of the ground. It’s this holy God that affects it all.” We can’t understand his “wonderful mysteries,” as Adele knows. We can only take part in them by caring for the struggling shoots of life.
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Greg Porter took the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina personally. He left his family and business behind, and moved to the Mississippi Gulf where he founded and operated God’s Katrina Kitchen. For more than two years he worked 24/7, persuading 22 church denominations to bring food and building materials, and recruiting more than 13,000 volunteers. Porter and friends cooked and served an average of 3,000 meals a day and built hundreds of homes for the homeless.

For Porter, a successful businessman from Kentucky, this ambitious undertaking is only the latest in what has become a lifetime of caring and giving back. It all began with an epiphany that occurred 18 years ago when Porter opened his Bible, and in reading Isaiah 58, he felt called to fulfill God’s command to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and house the homeless. Porter says a disaster of biblical proportions drove this point indelibly home to him.

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina made landfall on the Gulf Coast. It destroyed lives, leveled homes, and left survivors with the same story: “We lost everything.” Their plight moved people across the country to join in the recovery. Porter, too, got involved and it launched him on a life-changing mission. In the course of two years, he provided thousands of victims with hot meals, home repairs, and hope.

Before that, he enjoyed a comfortable life in Kentucky. He had a successful business maintaining shopping centers, and lots of free time to play tennis. But everything changed when he and his wife caught the news about Katrina. Porter found himself weeping as pictures of devastation filled the screen. When he turned to his wife, she said, “You’re going to go, aren’t you?” He answered, “I have to.”

Suddenly, he’d lost interest in all the things he normally found “so cool.” How could he have fun when so many people were suffering? He knew he had to follow his heart. “When you feel like you’re being called to do something,” he maintains, “you have to go on and do it. You can’t worry if family and friends think you’re crazy. You can’t wait until everything in your life is perfect. It’s just not going to happen. If something is meant to be, you just need to forge ahead”—or in Porter’s case, south-west to Mississippi.

Soon he and four members of his church piled into a truck loaded with food, water, and stoves. Once on the road, they headed for Pass Christian—a community literally leveled by the storm. Along the way, they passed by scenes of incredible destruction. “The debris was plowed off the road like snow,” Porter recalls. “People’s belongings were strewn everywhere. The trees were filled with personal items. The beach was littered with water heaters and automobiles. It was really heartrending when you saw all the things somebody had once worked for.”

You can imagine how Pass Christian residents felt on September 14th when they were allowed to return home. Porter saw it for himself because that was the day he pulled into town. He parked his truck and began grilling hamburgers on the median of crippled Interstate 90. “It was perfect timing by God,” he says, “because people were coming back devastated and dehydrated.” There was no food or water for miles, he recalls, so that hamburger stand was an “oasis.” Soon it would provide fertile ground for a major relief operation that attracted over 13,000 volunteers.

This wasn’t Porter’s original plan, as he admits: “If I had known that I was going to be down here serving over a million meals, I might have stayed home.” Glad as he was to help, he intended to stay just a week and serve meals to 30 volunteers a day. His family and business were waiting for him back home. He wasn’t all that young a guy, and volunteering on the Gulf Coast was no day at the beach. “Just trying to keep up,” he remembers, “taking care of the people, and cooking the meals took long, hard hours. It was very, very hot after Katrina. There was no power or air conditioning, and we were doing everything outside.”

The glare of the blinding sun did not stop him from noticing a serious gap in the recovery plan. “There were 500 campus crusaders coming down each week,” he relates. But FEMA was doing nothing to support them. “I thought that if I could make it possible for these volunteers to have a place to come to—a good bed to sleep in, a nice shower, and three good meals—then they would continue to come.”

That they did, after a flood of donations allowed Porter to act on his idea. Representatives of 22 religious denominations brought truckloads of food. Mexican missionaries contributed building supplies. Porter teamed up with some church groups,
set it all up on Highway 90, and **God’s Katrina Kitchen** began to draw in crowds.

It was hard to miss the big red and white circus tent where Porter fed anyone who came – relief workers, police, road repairmen, and hungry locals. But the kitchen was more than a mess hall. It provided housing for volunteers, served as a community meeting place, and offered somewhere to pour out your woes. “We found that it meant so much to people,” Porter says, “just having someone to listen to them.” Folks were also grateful for the teams he sent out to do home repairs, clothes he distributed, and help he provided in getting federal assistance.

Porter was doing any number of things to help people rebuild their lives, and this allowed him to make good use of his diverse volunteers. “You had your women,” he says, “who were happy to cook, clean tables, and wash dishes. Their husbands wanted to get out and run the chainsaws. And then you had your young people, ready to muck about and help people drag stuff out of houses.” They came from different denominations, Porter explains, yet shared a commitment to “being God’s hands and feet.”

The spirit that united them was summed up in the kitchen’s motto: Many churches, one God. “There were never any denominational disputes,” Porter says. “Everybody worked hard together and then just relaxed and worshipped together at night.”

“It all worked really smoothly,” Porter says, though not everyone thought he would succeed. “This lady came down in the beginning,” he recalls, “and she said, ‘You guys remind me of the story about the guy walking along the beach after a storm. All the starfish had washed up on the shore, and he’s throwing them back in the water. Someone asks him, ‘Why are you doing that? It’s not making a difference.’ He throws another starfish back in the water and says, ‘It’s sure making a difference for that one.’”

So “yes,” Porter concludes, we can all do something to help others weather the storms of life. Still, it’s good to have some know-how when the floodgates open wide. The success of the kitchen owed much to Porter’s background in business and hands-on approach to life. “My role here,” he explains, “has developed like it did with the company I started back home. Every position at the camp I have done at one time or another.” He’s washed dishes and completed paperwork. He’s coordinated teams of volunteers and met with city officials to get power and water.

“I just give credit to God,” he says, “for giving me the experience and knowledge to deal with plumbing issues and power issues and construction. I built my own home in Kentucky. I set up portable showers when my church at home started a mission in South Dakota. All this was great training for what we did down here.”

Local officials closed down **God’s Katrina Kitchen** last July, saying that they could not handle the influx of people it continued to attract as word of its existence spread. Although Porter stopped feeding the public, he continues to provide food and housing for the volunteers. He has also launched a new group, **God’s Kitchen**, with an even broader mission, to help disaster victims throughout the country. He even created his own first response team – **Cavalry for Christ** – made up of people who have helped him during the past 2½ years.

Porter and his team have a wealth of practical knowledge and the tools to apply it. Generous donations have allowed them to acquire a 60,000-gallon water truck, a 50KW generator truck, a 6,000-gallon propane truck, building supplies, and a mobile kitchen that can produce 4,000 meals at a sitting. “We’ll be so much better prepared to go into another disaster,” Porter says, “plus, we have so much more experience of what to look for when we’re going into a situation.”

One such disaster occurred last May, when a tornado tore through the nation’s midsection and ravaged Greensburg, Kansas. Recovery efforts had been strained because much of the needed equipment had been sent to Iraq. But city leaders knew just who to call, and asked Porter to come there and do what he had done in Mississippi. He’s also involved in discussions about going to New Orleans and assisting with the city’s efforts to rebuild.

He wishes his help wasn’t needed, but he admits, “I love what I do.” It’s how he strives to be a “repairer of the breach” and a “restorer of the streets to dwell in.” These phrases stirred him when he looked at that old Bible passage so many years ago. At the time, he didn’t realize just how prophetic they were. But what he felt on the coast finally showed him the truth. Porter sheds tears of joy when he tells you, “Isaiah 58 is my life.”
Mother Teresa

There is joy in transcending self in order to serve others.

Mother Teresa is shown with Caring Institute Founder Val J. Halamandaris at their last meeting, which took place in New York in June 1997, a few weeks before she died. The first of many meetings took place in June 1985. She took an active interest in the Institute, which she had inspired, offering advice, nominating Caring Award candidates, and accepting an International Caring Award. Famed sculptress, Blanche Baker, designed a statue of Mother Teresa, which was presented to Val J. Halamandaris, who in turn presented a copy of it to Sister Nirmala, Mother Teresa’s successor. To nominate someone for a Caring Award or for more information, please visit www.caring.org.
Reverend Cecil Williams became the pastor of Glide Memorial Church located in San Francisco’s Tenderloin District in 1963. Parishioners were few because they feared going through the throngs of drug addicts, winos, prostitutes, sick and homeless people who lined the streets. Reverend Williams did what Jesus would have done— he brought everyone inside. He made it clear that everyone was equal in God’s eyes. He raised funds and created programs, ranging from housing to health care, from meals to education, tailored to meet the physical, mental and spiritual needs of the thousands of people who have crossed his threshold.

God and Reverend Williams, aided by his wife Janice and able staff and hundreds of volunteers, have truly worked a miracle together. Today Glide Memorial Church is a model which is being replicated all across the nation. It was not easy to build what Reverend Williams calls “a community of humanity.” The key to success is to let people know through your actions that you have a passionate interest in their well-being. “Folks, we love you unconditionally,” he used to say in the pulpit. “No matter what we are going to continue to love you unconditionally.”

Reverend Williams made good on his promise, or in the parlance of the streets, he “walked the talk,” reaching out to those who were hurting and unable to find their way. He reached people who were hurting first by listening to them. He began by serving one meal a week to all comers. He added drug rehab when the crack epidemic swept the Tenderloin. AIDS programs followed when this new killer began to appear on the streets.

The reverend’s youth in the segregated South taught him what it’s like to feel sick in your soul. He was a promising 12 year old – already pegged as a future preacher – when he had a sudden mental breakdown. For weeks he cowered in bed while “aliens” disguised as white folk urged him to die. Then one morning he sat up, filled with a sudden sense of destiny. He would create a church such as no one had ever seen; a church of all colors where the Lord’s talk of love and brotherhood would become real.

He held fast to this vision through college and seminary school. It remained with him while he began his career in Kansas, and it filled his mind when he first walked into Glide Memorial Church. “All of a sudden,” he recalls, “I realized that this church was located in an area that has more poor people, more people who are on the edge of society, more people who are in great need, and more people who are really trying to find something that would lift them up.”

After digging deep into their lives, he knew most of them “felt they had an endless journey that would never bring them any relief or any recovery.” So he resolved to counter their lack of hope with the hopeful message of God. “We’re going to bring you good news,” he told them. “You can be loved, you want to be loved, you must be loved,” he insisted. And he began to nurture a new church founded on love for all.

His inclusive vision didn’t exactly thrill Glide’s original parishioners. There were just 35 – all white, rich, and conservative – and many of them stormed out as the new minister preached his first sermon. But Williams was willing to take risks for his dream, and he wasn’t afraid of being labeled. “When I came to this church,” he says, “I decided that I was going to be different. I had to be different. And I wanted to be different.”

Down went the cross. Up went a sign that said, “Everybody welcome,” and Williams opened the church to all races and creeds. More protests ensued because Glide’s old guard did not welcome everybody to their church. But Williams said “There’s nothing you can do” to stop us from embracing one and all. And there sure was a lot of hugging as dogma gave way to diversity and dancing. By 1969, the church throbbed with the sounds of jazz, gospel, and the blues. The crowds that flocked in to pray got down to the beat of the Glide Ensemble.

A typical Sunday at Glide in the 60s was exciting, at least as pieced together from several newspaper accounts. Reportedly Reverend Williams was splendidly attired in a dashiki and sported an afro while “roaring out his words of hope.” On stage more than a hundred singers of all ages and hues rocked and clapped while performing a gospel rendition of the 70s hit: “People all over the world, Join hands/Start a love train/Start a love train.” Newspapers say that Glide was in all the tourist guidebooks as a mandatory stop for tourists visiting the City of San Francisco, just like riding a cable car, visiting Chinatown, or having a drink at The Top of the Mark.
Glide became a mecca for the hip and happening, as Williams combined social protest with food for the soul. Everybody from Bill Cosby to Billy Graham came there to discuss the day’s issues. Williams hosted political rallies and brought the Black Panthers in to speak. Angela Davis, Jane Fonda, and Oprah Winfrey made appearances. Bill Clinton attended services. So did poet Dr. Maya Angelou Williams’ hero and “dear sister,” with whom he’s long shared a goal: “We want to be able to care for people no matter where they come from, no matter who they are.”

That’s Glide’s guiding credo, despite the glitz and glamour some visitors brought in. “We have always focused on the poor,” Williams explains. “From the very start, we said we are going to find the poor and love them first. Now some folks have criticized us and said, ‘You know there are many of us who need loving also.’ And I say to them, ‘We will love you, but we want the poor to know that they have people who will risk loving them first and foremost.’”

His dedication to the poor has sometimes come at the cost of his personal life. “I have a son and daughter who went through pain and suffering,” he reveals. “I think I was so engrossed with doing things for other folks that I may have left out doing things for them. But everything’s all right now.” And the struggles he went through with his kids left him determined to see life through the eyes of the young.

“They’re not only the present,” he says “they’re also the future. They love in so many ways.” He’s convinced they can be “great proponents of spirit and understanding,” especially if they draw on the help of their elders. “Seniors,” he says, “have a lot of information that could change us in many ways.” So “young people need to explore the possibilities of what older people can do for them.” And seniors have to realize, “You don’t need to give up. You don’t have to put your life on the shelf.”

Williams certainly won’t, though he’s reached a point in life when you’d expect him to slow down and relax. Some years back he turned 70, the mandatory retirement age for ministers of the Methodist Church. He said “no way, not me” and took legal action. “They hired me back in a few weeks,” he chuckles, “and I’m going to be here. I’m just having too much fun.”

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Granted he’s no longer the firebrand in the dashiki, who cried out for revolution. He’s evolved, and so have his programs. They now have extensive public funding and support from corporations like Safeway, Bank of America, and the Gap. The Black Panthers and Angela Davis are gone. Williams’ fans now include Warren Buffet, Charles Schwab, and Senator Diane Feinstein of California. But all the mainstream approval has not made Williams complacent. He’s still radical in his resolve to reach out to the poor.

“Love always risks something,” he muses. “You know, you’ve got to go all out. You can’t go part of the way. Love lifts you up, turns you around, and says, ‘Try me. I belong to you now. You try me.’ The love I know is always on trial.”

That’s a lesson he’s drawn from the street, as he explains. “Those folks out there, who stand on the corner, who sleep on the sidewalk, who stay close to Glide, have taught me more about love than anyone else. It has to do with risk. If you can’t risk who you are, you can’t love who you have become.”

Williams took that risk to fulfill the dream of his youth. As a “minister of community involvement,” he wants to leave people with the knowledge of “what the church really is and who the church really is.” He’s dedicated some four decades to showing that the true church is a beloved community. It’s made up of people “who share love, live love, and express love” to help others find their way. That was the groovy spirit of the 60s – and you can still rock to its beat at Glide.
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John Wooden is the legendary coach of the UCLA basketball team that won an unprecedented number of national titles, some years with great talent and other years with average talent. The secret to his success, he says, is living his life according to the Golden Rule and insisting that those who played for him did the same. Like his great hero, Mother Teresa, he believes that caring is “love in action, the one-word summary of the Golden Rule which runs through all the great religions of the world.” Like her, he refined caring to a high art.

He also believed in hard work and in paying attention to details right down to beginning each practice with instructions for his recruits on how to put on their shoes and socks so as to prevent blisters. “Think small, work hard and get good,” he would tell them. This homespun wisdom brought UCLA together as a team with amazing results. Wooden won 10 national championships, the last in 1975. He won 88 straight games between 1971 and 1974. It was a winning streak that led folks to call him a “wizard” who worked magic with teams.

Wooden was always embarrassed by all the fuss. “Basketball coaches aren’t famous,” the 97-year-old still insists. “I think someone famous is someone who did something good for mankind. Nobel Prize winners are famous. Mother Teresa was famous,” and not just for her “ability to put others first.” He reminds us that “Mother Teresa also created a large and powerful team, the Missionaries of Charity, who helped the poor in Calcutta and around the world.”

Her portrait is the first thing you see when you enter Wooden’s condominium. It’s crowded with trophies and knickknacks. And it’s not very big since Wooden never made more than $32,500 in all his years coaching. These were also the years he lived with his wife, Nell. She was the only woman he ever loved, and she died in 1985. In the years since, the furniture has begun to wear out. But Wooden won’t change a thing, especially the pictures in his den.

“Everything on this wall, my wife put up,” Wooden says as he shows you the framed photos of the national championship teams. Nell arranged them in the shape of a pyramid because “it’s what I’m known for.” The famous Pyramid of Success was the basis for Wooden’s basketball triumphs and the foundation for his life.

Wooden worked on the pyramid for 14 years and discussed it with his teams before each season. Its 15 blocks show values that Wooden believes will help people reach their potential. They include friendship, loyalty, cooperation, and enthusiasm. At the top is personal best, and it’s not just about winning, as Wooden learned early on. He was only a boy when his father said, “Johnny, remember this and remember it well: Never try to be better than someone else, but never cease trying to be the best you can be.”

Joshua Wooden was a struggling farmer who taught his son to be strong, but gentle. When John graduated from grade school, Joshua gave him a hand-written card with seven points: “Be true to yourself. Help others. Make each day your masterpiece. Drink deeply from good books, especially the Good Book. Make friendship a fine art. Build a shelter for a rainy day. Pray for guidance, and count and give thanks for your blessings every day.”

“Those seven suggestions deeply influenced my behavior as the years went by,” Wooden recalls. They stayed with him as he became three-time All-American at Purdue, taught high school English, and played semi-pro basketball. After three years in the Navy, he coached at Indiana State Teachers College. His success there brought him an offer from UCLA, where his homespun values would lead to victory.

His title was “Coach” Wooden, but Wooden always thought of himself as a “teacher.” And he seemed like one too, as Abdul-Jabbar once joked. “With his hair parted down the middle, Coach looked like he fell off a box of Pepperidge Farm cookies. But that was misleading. In the gym he was a very tough man, extremely demanding. He wanted it done a certain way, and he would get out there and demonstrate what that way was.”

Despite his enormous drive, Wooden never prayed to win during all the time he spent coaching. “I rarely, if ever, even uttered the word ‘win,’” he says, “or exhorted a team to be number one.” Instead, his words and actions always reflected his roots. “Success,” he maintains, “is peace of mind that is the result of self-satisfaction in knowing you did your best to become the best you are capable of becoming.”
Sure, Wooden was eager to help his players excel, but they had to play by his rules: “No profanity. Don’t criticize a team mate. And never be late.” He also required them to be clean-shaven, and frowned on hair longer than two inches. This went against the swinging styles of the time, and led some of the young men to rebel.

One day, All-American center Bill Walton showed up with a full beard and insisted, “It’s my right.” Wooden asked if he believed it strongly, and Walton said he did. “That’s good, Bill,” Wooden replied. “I admire people who have strong beliefs and stick by them. I really do. We’re going to miss you.” Walton shaved his beard on the spot, and there were no hard feelings. He calls every week to tell Wooden he loves him, and he’s not the only one. Most of Wooden’s players still phone to check on his health and pick up advice to use on their kids.

They knew Wooden considered them “family” and sought ways to show he cared. “The small considerations,” he says, “often mean the most – a genuine expression of interest or concern, a helpful hand, individual recognition. I didn’t place a wall between my professional and personal life, and at appropriate times, I invited players and coaches to our home. I knew about their families and their challenges away from basketball.”

He also knew the importance of leading with love. “Great organizations,” he says, “are marked by an extraordinary bond within. For me, that bond included genuine love, and I didn’t feel awkward about it. I put my heart into my work and those with whom I worked. Teams with a sense of family have uncommon strengths and resiliency. A good family – whether in life, sports, or business – involves love.” And Wooden knows exactly what love means. As a former English teacher, he cares about words, and he’s come up with his own definition:

Love is patient; love is kind. It is not jealous; it is not pompous; it is not inflated; it is not rude; it does not seek its own interests; it is not quick-tempered; it does not rejoice over wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. A leader filled with this kind of love is a powerful force, and has the potential for creating a powerful organization.

It’s a lesson he’s passed on since retiring from coaching. In the past 33 years, he’s brought the Pyramid of Success from the basketball court to the boardroom. At the age of 97, he still makes 20 to 30 speeches a year, minimally about basketball and mostly dealing with the topic of how to succeed as a human being and in the game of life. His speeches and the dozen books he has produced have brought in a nice income, but he still leads a simple life, preferring to put the funds aside to support college for his 13 grandchildren. Although he was slowed down by a fall which took him to the hospital in February, Wooden is still in touch with family and friends, doing whatever he can to uplift the spirits of others.

Wooden is very proud of his grandchildren and of his extended family, the men who used to play for him. “They have become attorneys, doctors and dentists, he says “businessmen, teachers and even acouple of actors. Whatever profession they have chosen they have done well or at least reasonably well and that gives me more satisfaction than anything else.

He also enjoys answering the piles of mail that arrive at his home. He drives to the post office to mail his responses, and he will often pay the postage if the sender hasn’t enclosed it. No doubt, he’s a good correspondent, though he never mails the most important letter of all.

It’s the love letter he writes on the 21st of each month, the day his Nell died. When he’s finished, he ties it with a yellow ribbon, along with the others he’s written, and places the stack on her bedroom pillow. “I haven’t been afraid of death since I lost Nell,” he reveals. “I tell myself, this is the only chance I’ll have to be with her again.”

Alas, we still need him here, so he’ll have to console himself, for the time being, with all the mementos of their life together.

Among them is a pillow in his den. It sits on a sofa, and it’s embroidered with a quote from Mother Teresa: “We can do no great things, only small things with great love.” As far as Wooden’s concerned, these words sum it all up. “When you derive pleasure and pride in perfecting seemingly ‘minor’ details – and teach those you lead to do the same – big things eventually start to fall into place.” That’s what the coach always did, and he always did it with love.
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Each year, the Caring Institute invites nominations of persons age 18 or younger for consideration as Young Adult Caring Award recipients. From the numerous applicants, the Caring Institute’s prestigious Board of Trustees selects five award winners by secret ballot. This year’s awardees are truly inspirational. Their accomplishments in caring for others are but a prologue of things to come. A short profile of each of these young people can be found on the following pages. Reading about them will give anyone confidence that the future of America is in good hands. To nominate a potential Caring Award Winner or to make a tax deductible donation, go to www.caring.org
Helping others is a Harper family tradition. Jami’s grandparents had a pumpkin patch and used to give pumpkins to neighborhood kids. Her mom thinks “community service is something you just do,” and her older siblings worried about water contamination. Jami tagged along while they tested water and set up the yearly Groundwater Festival in Grand Island, Nebraska. From early on, the 19-year-old girl knew “helping others is one of the good things in life.”

But “you should do it in a way people can relate to,” as she realized after becoming one of the festival’s tour guides. One year she had a flash of inspiration while leading a grade-school class through the exhibits. The kids seemed distracted, so she stuck silk flowers in her hair and said, “Follow the foliage.” This got quite a giggle, as you can imagine, and her talk became a hit.

The success made her think about more ways to interest kids in water, especially after industrial pollutants poisoned Grand Island’s wells. She was just 15, but she understood that “you don’t have to be a president or CEO to make a difference.” You just need energy and an idea.

Her brainstorm came while she was channel surfing and happened on the TV show “Hollywood Squares.” The result was a program she called H₂Owood Squares. To make it entertaining, she built a huge game structure, dreamed up a Hollywood theme, and convinced local celebrities to appear. With help from teenage volunteers, she presents at grade schools throughout the state.

And she can’t imagine ever stopping. “There’s nothing,” she says, “like seeing the look on kids’ faces when they really get involved in my game. It makes me so happy to watch them having a good time, as well as learning. It’s just like chocolate for my soul.”

Perhaps chocolate was also on her mind when she dreamed up a children’s book based on the beloved board game, Candy Land. Consumerland is about a community that loses its castle because it is careless with the environment. Fortunately, the castle is simply hidden by smog, and people can see it again once they learn to care for their land and air.

To preserve her own air, Jami campaigns against tobacco. It’s a personal issue since she’s lost family members to smoking. Still, her sense of loss didn’t snuff out her sense of whimsy. Besides speaking out for new laws, she’s left anti-smoking signs chalked out on streets and sidewalks, and designed a game about smoking’s harmful effects. “You don’t always have to do something radical,” she says. “You can just do something fun.”

It’s an approach that seems to work, given the progress of her clean water campaign. Some of the students who assisted her have presented their own educational workshops, and others are planning careers in water resources. To assist them, Jami has set up two endowments with the award money she earned for her achievements.

As for her own goals, Jami says she wants to study architectural engineering at college and specialize in green architecture. “Making buildings environmentally sound will let me combine business with pleasure.” Besides, “engineering is in my blood,” she laughs, since nearly everyone in her family is an engineer. Despite busy careers, they take time to volunteer. And that’s Jami’s plan too. “As I grow older,” she explains, “it just feels natural to help others.” Clearly, volunteering is a Harper family value that’s also in her blood.

Jami Harper

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It was cold that day in Mishawaka, Indiana, as Alexandra and her mom strolled through a store. Alexandra was just five, but she already thought, “You should share your blessings. No matter how little you have, someone has less.” And right before her was someone who clearly didn’t have much. Alexandra felt sad as she looked at a teenage mother holding a baby boy. He was dressed in just a diaper and T-shirt, she remembers. “He had red, chapped skin and a runny nose.” She longed to help the needy young mom, and so, Baby Bundles was born.

Since then, 14-year-old Alexandra has raised $100,000 and donated 2,000 bundles to local women’s shelters. Each bundle contains socks, diapers, a warm blanket, T-shirt, and hat. It’s not easy for Alexandra to get all this, but she wants poor babies to be happy and well. “My mom was always able to take proper care of me when I was a baby,” she says. “Other moms should have the same chance.”

Alexandra’s mother supported her goal. Her aunts and uncles helped out, and the first year they made 20 bundles. But Alexandra didn’t stop since that still left many babies out in the cold. In time, she sought outside funding and took increasing charge of her project. The experience taught her she had what it takes to be a leader. “I get my voice heard by important people,” she says. “Other moms should have the same chance.”

In October, she gathers all her donations and goes off shopping. Then comes the hardest part: getting all the items she needs while staying within her budget.

Besides picking everything out, she puts a bit of herself in every bundle she packs up. “I have to give up my weekends,” she says, “time with my friends, and even my own allowance money.” But it’s all worthwhile when she thinks of the result. “It makes me feel good,” she explains, “to know I am helping to keep babies warm and cozy in the winter.”

While pursuing this goal, she’s picked up some skills she can use all her life. She knows how to market a project, hold meetings, and write persuasive letters. She has also met lots of interesting people, and made some lasting business connections, including a number at Wal-Mart and Kmart. These big-chain stores support the bundles because they like Alexandra’s mission and her resolve. “Success,” as she understands, “is accomplishing something you set your mind to.”

She didn’t lose her sense of purpose last year when she was ill. “Our family had to use Ronald McDonald House during my visits to the hospital, and I wanted to do something to give back.” So she began collecting food for the house. Over a two-month period, she delivered several hundred pounds and over a million pop tabs.

This didn’t keep her from working on her long-term project to keep those babies bundled up. “God puts each of us on earth for a purpose,” she says, “and after you fulfill it, he sends you home.” That’s just a heavenly thought, and it’s brought bundles of blessings to lots of little babies and their moms.
You’ve probably seen one of the many films showing the fair sex fighting back. You might remember “Xena the Warrior Princess” or “Thelma and Louise.” Perhaps you heard Jennifer Lopez say “Enough” to an abusive husband and shove him over a ledge. Maybe you watched Uma Thurman as a sword-wielding avenger on a ferocious quest to “Kill Bill.”

Now Dallas Jessup is showing the meaning of girl power in Just Yell Fire. Her self-defense video is red-hot, but the 16-year-old from Vancouver, Washington, doesn’t care about royalties or ratings. She wants to show teenage girls how to resist date rape and abduction. “It’s time to let the bad guys know,” she declares, “we’re not going to take it anymore.”

Too many girls don’t know how to defend themselves, Dallas thought in 2004 after hearing about the abduction and death of a young Florida girl. “I could have helped that girl,” Dallas told her mom, and those weren’t just words. Dallas is a Tae Kwon Do black belt and certified Filipino street fighter, who can take down a grown man.

She decided to use her skills to “put the predators out of business.” But she didn’t try to do it alone since she thinks real change requires community involvement. “Success,” she says, “depends on knowing your strengths and knowing when you need to ask for help.”

And she knew just where to go. She worked with her martial arts coach on some simple moves any girl could do. She wrote a script and took it to a script-writing teacher who contacted a director. She raised $500,000 in donations. And soon the project turned into a major production with a 100-member cast, including actors from the TV show “Lost.” Then it spread like wildfire after Dallas set up a website where you can download the film for free.

So far, two million viewers in 37 countries have seen Just Yell Fire online. They’ve looked at real-life scenarios of threatening situations and watched Dallas demonstrate her moves: eye gouges, ear pulling, and groin slapping. When she’s done, it’s clear she knows how to hit where it hurts. But what strikes you hardest is her conviction that “caring means giving others the force they need to feel safe.”

Dallas knows she’s reaching girls when she gives one of her talks at schools. “Every single girl has a relieved face,” she’s thrilled to see. “Girls come up to me and say they feel empowered and safe. It’s so good to have them realize they can and should stand up for themselves.”

To keep spreading the word, Dallas is working on a Train the Trainer program. “I have decided to train more students and have them train P.E. teachers,” she says. It’s her dream to bring the program into the school system so every girl can someday learn her techniques.

But girl power is not just about getting down and dirty, as Dallas understands. That’s why she’s also come up with a girl’s “bill of rights.” When she imparts it in her film, you know this lesson in self-defense is also a lesson in self-respect. “I have the right to have my limits and values respected,” Dallas tells viewers. “I have the right to be heard,” and “I have the right to say no.” These are rights for which girls should fight back whenever they face an attacker. Dallas has the motivation and moves to help them all do it.
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Ashlee Kephart

Ashlee couldn’t sleep after hearing about a terrorist attack on school kids in Beslan, Russia. She wanted the surviving children to know they were not alone, so she went right into action. She got a donation of beads; she used her babysitting money to pay for cording; and she convinced her friends to pitch in. Finally, she sent thousands of bracelets to Beslan. Each came with a card showing two hands holding together a cracked heart.

Ashlee designed the card, and she does know a bit about dealing with loss. At age 16, the Brooklyn Center, Minnesota, girl has faced her father’s death and developed an inner strength that astounds some adults. “When people tell you something is impossible,” she says, “it’s because it hasn’t been done yet. But that doesn’t mean you can’t do it.”

She learned this lesson in third grade after collecting $6,000 in supplies for her school nurse. The nurse was thrilled. So was Ashlee, and she began to see that “happiness is making other people happy.” And age shouldn’t stop you, as she realized when she was 11.

At the time, she wanted to play her violin at the Ronald McDonald House. Since she was too young to volunteer there, she sent the music in without her. She collected and donated CD players, recorded music, and karaoke machines that still delight children with life-threatening diseases.

They are just a few of the people who benefit from her fundraising and community service. She has donated 8,000 books to children’s hospitals and orphanages, 45,000 pairs of shoes to underprivileged families, and 10,000 “caring bags” to the homeless. They come with warm socks, a scarf, toiletries, snacks, and a card saying, “I CARE ABOUT YOU.”

She sends this message overseas as founder of Kids for a Better World. Ashlee’s nonprofit donates books, clothes, toys, and household items to orphanages in Liberia and Kenya. They’re also partnering with Liberian charities on a plan to create jobs by building a solar oven factory. It’s an ambitious project, but Ashlee is working to bring it about by setting up an African chapter of Kids for a Better World.

The members of the new group will join Ashlee’s other enthusiastic volunteers. Most come from the local community, though she’s gained attention in other states. With each new volunteer, she gets closer to a dream of making her group self-sustaining. And that’s what a good leader should do, as she’s convinced: “Leadership is helping others realize what they can do, but don’t know about yet. No matter what skills you start with, volunteering will give you a way to use them.”

You can even use your grief to do something good. Ashlee has shown this by writing A Special Way of Remembering. Her recent book is a teaching guide for kids who’ve lost a parent. It’s well worth reading because Ashley understands just what it’s like to suffer a loss.

She also knows that a kind thought helps when you’re out of hope. So she sends new stuffed animals to kids who’ve been through a disaster. They come with “a million hugs,” and they’re “filled with love” that will “take away the blues.” That’s what Ashlee wrote in the poem that goes along with each special furry friend. These words have comforted lots of kids, and they’re one of so many ways this loving girl has helped others know they are not alone.
Vasanth Kuppuswamy

It’s not enough to give money. You must also give of yourself, and that’s what Vasanth does in rural India. The Charleston, South Carolina, student spends his summers in a remote southern village teaching students and improving their schools. This doesn’t leave much down time for the 18-year-old. But he’s driven by Mahatma Gandhi’s belief that “we must be the change we wish to see.”

There was no doubt about the need for change in Maganoorpati, where Vasanth’s father grew up. All you had to do was visit the local schools. There were no library books; there was no clean water to drink; and children sat on cement floors while attending class. Vasanth saw some of this at age 12, when he went there on a family vacation.

He offered to help by teaching English in the elementary school. But the principal told him not to waste his time since no one in the village ever became anything but a farmhand or servant. This response shook Vasanth, yet he refused to let one man’s opinion stop him: “There’s always going to be someone to hinder your efforts, but to rise above it is to be a true leader.”

The next day he stood before a fifth-grade class and said, “You can accomplish more than your parents have.” His faith in them gave them faith in themselves and made that principal eat his words. By the time Vasanth returned the next summer, the children’s test scores had gone up. And they kept rising as he kept coming back to teach. This was so satisfying that he realized “caring is moving beyond your own self-fulfillment and finding self-fulfillment through helping others.”

This insight led him to found the Tamil Nadu India School Fund when he was 14. Since then, he’s raised $60,000 to provide benches and desks, school supplies, and ceiling fans. He’s paid for a basketball field, science equipment, and land for school expansion. He’s even bought a water purification system and helped install it after a full day of teaching.

“When I’m in India, I’m on business,” Vasanth says, and the work doesn’t end when he comes home. During the school year, he spends much of his free time running his non-profit and raising funds. Right now, he’s working on buying computers and setting up a mobile clinic that can vaccinate 2,500 students.

These are ambitious projects, but Vasanth draws support from the American and Indian volunteers on his board. One of them is Bill Smythe, a local teacher and Vasanth’s mentor. Another is Vasanth’s cousin, Gokul, a third-grader who already knows the value of caring. Vasanth is grooming Gokul to head the fund some day since he plans to live in India and be a doctor for the poor. “Right now,” he laughs, “Mr. Smythe and I are teaching him fundraising 101.”

But “philanthropy is more than fundraising,” Vasanth knows. “It’s also being an inspiration in helping people who can’t help themselves.” And you don’t have to go to India to do it. “Any teen can put their mind to something and make a difference.”

That’s what he tells the many young Americans who support his group. “Charleston students see that their Indian counterparts don’t have enough, and they want to help bring about change. But they also need to change things in their own community because that’s what living is ultimately about.” Just “do all the good you can,” he says. “You can be the change you wish to see.”
Deepak Chopra is a physician and healer, a scientist, author and poet, teacher and acclaimed public speaker, a radio and television personality, an ambassador for peace, a peacemaker, and one of the most caring people on the planet. His pioneering work in mind/body medicine has transformed the way we regard health and wellness. In 1999, Time hailed him as one of the top 100 heroes and icons of the century and “the poet-prophet of alternative medicine.” In 2001, Larry King asked him for answers in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. Viewers who tuned in saw someone with enough mind and heart to bridge the abyss between modernity and tradition.

As a young man, he came to know both. Born in New Delhi in 1947, he dreamed of being a novelist before his cardiologist father convinced him to attend medical school instead. In 1968, he came west, where he became a successful endocrinologist and chief of staff at Boston Regional Medical Center. Despite his success, he soon understood the limitations of Western medicine. The nagging thought that he was failing his patients led to increasing bouts of despair.

The turning point came in 1985 after he heard a lecture on meditation. This led him to study Ayurvedic medicine, which stresses a holistic approach to medical care. Health, he began to think, is not just the absence of disease. Instead, he suspected, it’s a balance and integration of mind, body, and spirit. Convinced he had found the secret to healthy living, he immersed himself in the sciences of traditional healing. The nagging thought that he was failing his patients led to increasing bouts of despair.

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mersed himself in the sciences of traditional healing.

Soon he had earned renown as a man of science with the soul of a mystic. In 1992, he served on the National Institutes of Health Ad Hoc Panel on Alternative Medicine. By 1996, he had opened the Chopra Center for Wellbeing, where he combines the best of Western medicine with the healing traditions of the East. His goal there is to help guests feel healthier, happier, and more fulfilled.

Dr. Chopra also tries to get the word out by giving frequent talks. He has a weekly radio show that focuses on love, success, relationships, and spirituality. He’s been a regular on PBS, has appeared at the State of the World Forum, and has given commencement speeches at countless universities, including Harvard and Stanford. He’s also the author of more than 50 books – the most recent being The Third Jesus. They’ve been translated into 35 languages and sold more than 20 million copies throughout the world. His bestsellers include: How to Know God: The Soul’s Journey into the Mystery of Mysteries; Perfect Health; Ageless Body, Timeless Mind; The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success; The Return of Merlin; and The Path to Love.

The voice that speaks to us from these works is a very caring one, so much so that he has been named an Honorary Trustee of the Caring Institute. The high opinion of Dr. Chopra, the revolutionary author, thinker, physician, and man of peace, is shared throughout the world. There has been widespread acclaim for his recent meditation on how to end violence and war. It takes its name from a quote by Mahatma Gandhi: “There is no way to peace. Peace is the way.”

Dr. Chopra’s book Peace is the Way received endorsements from four Nobel Peace Laureates and many other notables. Muhammad Ali said, “Deepak Chopra offers a clear pathway to make this world a better place.” Desmond Tutu observed that, “The daily practices suggested in this book offer readers a way to become more fully human and actively engaged as peacemakers in their homes and communities.” And the Dalai Lama concurred: “I absolutely agree with Dr. Chopra’s view that if we want to change the world, we have to begin by changing ourselves.”

Dr. Chopra believes most people are ready to see an end to war, and his Peace urges us to take the next step in personal evolution. In a practical 12-step program, he shows readers how they can become true peacemakers. The way to peace, he explains, is based on a collective change in consciousness. “If you shift your allegiance to peace, war ends for you today. This happens one person at a time.” This is among the “secrets of enlightenment” that he explores at his center. It’s a wonderful, soothing place, as I have seen for myself. What follows below is an interview I conducted with Dr. Chopra some time ago at the Chopra Center in Carlsbad, California.
Val J. Halamandaris (VJH): Dr. Chopra, thank you for the gift of your time. It means the world that you would be willing to spend some of your precious minutes with us.

Deepak Chopra (DC): Thank you Val, it is a pleasure to be with you.

(VJH): I would like to begin by asking you, what is the greatest lesson that you have learned in your lifetime?

(DC): The greatest lesson I’ve learned in my lifetime is that whatever you want to do in this lifetime can be done; you can accomplish anything you want as long as you have enough love in your heart. So if you are not getting what you’re trying to get, just add a little extra love and you’ll get it.

(VJH): It has been my experience that when people do things unselfishly and with unconditional love that they always succeed. If, however, they harness good works to self-promotion, they always fail.

(DC): Yes. It’s a state of awareness where spontaneous compassion and love are not qualities that you cultivate. You cultivate a state of awareness where compassion and love are spontaneously who you are.

(VJH): Dr. Albert Schweitzer, who was one of my great heroes, said, “When it comes to education, example is not just a factor; it is the only factor that matters. When I ask about heroes and role models, who come to mind?

(DC): Well, actually people like Socrates, and Buddha, and Christ, and some of the great mythical beings of ancient India like Krishna. I wear a pendant on my neck, and on it I’ve got Jesus Christ, and Krishna, and a great Indian mythical being by the name of Ganesh, and I’m constantly aware of their presence.

(VJH): Dr. Chopra, why do people get sick and why do they get better?

(DC): Well, very simply, people get sick because they experience separation from their source, and the source is unbounded spirit, or you might say God or whatever other words by which you mean pure love or pure consciousness.

And healing, the word healing is related to the word holy. Holy means that which includes everything, wholeness. So people get sick because they lose their connection with that wholeness, and they recover when they have a sense of connection with the creative part of the universe.

(VJH): You remind me of Hippocrates, the father of medicine who said, “The source of all illness is abrasions of the soul upon the body.”

(DC): Yes. That is a very good way of saying it.

(VJH): Dr. Chopra, you have done a great deal of work with people who are ill and dying. What advice can you give to caregivers in order that they can continue to give of themselves in full measure, and not be depleted by caring for others?

(DC): I think it’s important to realize that you can only give what you have. You do get depleted if you give out of fear, or out of obligation, or out of a sense of duty. Those who can truly, truly give in the face of all suffering and adversity and fear are people who have overcome their own suffering and adversity and fear.

So if you want to be in a place where you can truly give, you’ve got to really work on yourself. You have to work on your own fears, your own conditioning, and your own projections about mortality. All fear is ultimately the fear of mortality in disguise, and if you cannot die to the past right this moment, you will always be fearful of the unknown, because death is exploring the unknown.

If you’re holding onto the known, you’ll, of course, be confined to the known – to the prison of the known, which is the prison of your past, and you’re going to be fearful of the unknown. But if you can experience the unknown every day or your life, then when you enter the unknown, it will be known to you, and then you can help others do that as well.

So what I would suggest to those who are caring for the dying, is to really touch that part of themselves which never dies, and then help other people to touch that part of themselves. There are great traditions that do that, including Buddhism, where every day you meditate on your own death and you overcome that fear. And then you can help others to do the same thing.

(VJH): Dr. Chopra, if you could advise every young person in
America, what would you tell them?

(DC): I would say, “Can you answer three questions? Who are you? What do you want? And what is the meaning and purpose of your existence?”

If you can answer these three questions to your satisfaction, then you’re all set. But if you can’t, then you need to develop your answers to these central questions. Find out who you really are, what you really want at the deepest level of your consciousness, and determine what is the meaning and purpose of your existence.

(VJH): Mahatma Gandhi said, “If you want to change the world, begin by changing yourself.” Do you agree?

(DC): Yes. The world is your projection. Everything that happens out there, including new experiences, is a projection of who you are, of your soul, and the state it’s vibrating. So no two people experience the world in the same way. We all project the universe we inhabit, and not only that, we draw into our universe. People are souls that are vibrating at the same level of consciousness.

So if you are thinking of drugs all the time or alcohol, then that’s what you will attract into your environment. If you are thinking of God all the time, then there is a completely different vibration of souls that you will attract.

So if you want to change the world, you change who you are, and you vibrate at a different level of consciousness. Then the actual, physical, material world transforms because we don’t live in the world; the world lives in us.

(VJH): In other words, we all move in the direction of our dominant thoughts?

(DC): Yes, but we have to be careful that we don’t manipulate our thoughts. That’s a very artificial thing to do. When you say to people, “Think positively,” if people are feeling lousy inside, then thinking only the positive might even cause them to become more stressed. So thinking is and should be a spontaneous thing, and thinking comes from your past life experiences.

If you really want to change the quality of your thinking, you have to change the quality of your actions, because that will

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create a new karmic, if you will, seed for consciousness.

(VJH): There are many people who dream great things, but it is rare to find a visionary who can also make dreams become a reality. How do you cross the line between fantasy and reality?

(DC): There are several stages to any creative process. The first is intended outcome, the second is information gathering, the third is incubation, the fourth is insight, the fifth is inspiration, and the sixth is implementation. If you don’t do all of them in sequence, then you are not going to manifest anything. You have to do all of the above.

(VJH): I have noticed that many people fail because they are trying to implement before they have finished the thinking process.

(DC): You occasionally will succeed by acting spontaneously, but you will do better if you complete, in sequence, the six steps I just mentioned. If you want to create something new, you do have to change some part in the old context, the old meaning, the old pattern of thinking to a new one. This is called making a quantum leap. You know going from here to there without stopping in between. It is the classic “eureka” experience that Archimedes and Newton and other great scientists experienced when they made a breakthrough.

(VJH): You mentioned the principle of the quantum leap. Frank Lloyd Wright said that we should try to turn our liabilities into assets through visionary thinking. He said we should attempt the impossible because doing this was actually easier than accomplishing incremental progress. He said it was easier to go from A to AAA than A to Z because so many people are trying to go from A to Z, but almost no one is trying to go from A to AAA.

(DC): A to AAA, that is very good.

(VJH): Are you a fan of the architect Frank Lloyd Wright?

(DC): Yes, I am. I’ve seen a lot of his creativity as I’ve traveled around this country.

(VJH): Dr. Chopra, you once said that if you are looking for God, the place to look is in the mirror. Did I quote you correctly?

(DC): Yes, because God is as we are. If you are in fear, the fight/flight response, then God is an angry, dysfunctional parent. If you are in the reactive response, then God becomes a cosmic policeman. If you’re in the restful awareness response, then God becomes peace of mind. If you’re in the intuitive response, God has complete understanding. If you’re in the creative response, God is a creator. If you’re in the visionary response, God is the worker of miracles. And if you’re in the sacred response, then God is the source, and we can become one with that source.

(VJH): Thank you. That was very profound. It strikes me that for the first time in history we have a huge generation of people living to their 65th birthday and beyond. The fastest-growing segment of this aging population is over 85—soon to be the over-100 group. What advice would you give to the nation’s seniors and to the 78 million baby boomers who are on the cusp of entering their retirement years?

(DC): Well, I think we are at a unique time in our history, because not only are people growing older, but they have grown older with good health. Today, there’s a lot of scientific evidence that shows that it is possible to have the wisdom of experience and the biology of youth at the same time.

The so-called biological markers of aging, such as blood pressure, bone density, body temperature regulation, aerobic capacity, fat content, cholesterol and HDL ratios, the level of hormones, hearing, vision, and immune function, can all be regulated now. With an appropriate prevention program and other therapeutic interventions, whether it’s in terms of mind/body coordination, stress management, nutrition, nutritional supplements, or exercise, or breathing techniques, it is possible for most people to be in great shape mentally, physically, and emotionally, and to live well into their later years.
If you look at history, you will find examples of older people who have made major contributions to civilization in their eighth and ninth decades. There was, for example, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, George Bernard Shaw, and Winston Churchill, just to name a few. In the future, there will be many older persons who will leave their mark.

I think we are entering an era where our elders will become the most important people in society. Seniors have the wisdom of experience. They have an enhanced capacity of empathy for others. They manifest caring, love, and compassion. They do have a sense of connection with the creative part of the universe. They have the capacity for joy and the ability to spread it to others, and they have a sense of meaning and purpose.

Because of all this and through sheer force of numbers, the elderly people will be the most influential people in our society. This is good for us on many levels. There are scientific studies that show in those societies where the elderly are venerated, where they are put on a pedestal, where they are honored, where they are revered, not only do they live longer and live better, but the society functions in a much, much saner way. By that I mean that such societies have more affection, and tenderness, and wisdom, and intuition, and creativity. They also tend to endure much longer than societies which do not venerate their seniors. From the point of view of the older population, this means giving back and making the most of the opportunity.

(VJH): I take it that you are advising them to volunteer and get involved in public service. Give us your perspective on the word “service.” Is it an obligation or a gift?

(DC): It is a great gift, an opportunity to say thank you, which brings the gift of happiness to the giver. The best way to feel happy about yourself is to help others. The best way to live a healthier and longer life is to care for others. Again, there is scientific data that shows that even if you care for a pet, you do better; so service means selfless giving.

In my tradition, they say there are four ways of finding God: one is selfless service, the second is meditation, the third is loving devotion, and the fourth is through the intellect. It is said that of these four roads, the last one, is the most difficult, the most treacherous.

(VJH): Fascinating. Dr. Chopra, what advice would you give to people in order that they might lead a long and productive life?

(DC): I think we now know very clearly what makes people live long. Long-lived people have certain things in common. They have a different perception of their body. They don’t see it so much as physical, but as a bundle of consciousness. They have a different expectation of what it means to grow old.

Some people think to grow old is to become useless, and others think to grow old is to become wise, and more giving and more of service. They have a different perception of time. They usually have more mind/body coordination. They exercise. They know how to get rid of toxicity, even if that’s toxic relationships or toxic emotions. They are aware of what they put into their bodies in terms of nutrition, and these days, in terms of nutritional supplements. They make love a priority. They are flexible. They know how to let go.

In fact, of all the psychological studies that have been done on aging, the number one characteristic to explain a long and happy life was the ability to let go, to be flexible. And finally, they believe deep down inside that they have something to accomplish, and they are here to do something which is usually connected to the public good.

(VJH): Interesting. Your response is exactly what I heard from Dr. Viktor Frankl. He talked about the study that he had conducted while he was in a concentration camp. He said it was not the strongest and most physically fit who survived in those inhuman conditions. It was those who saw the glass of life as always half full, the caring people who gave away their little crust of bread to someone else. At this point, I would like to ask you to comment on the difference between meditation and prayer.

(DC): Meditation is the ability to listen to or eavesdrop on the mind of God. Therefore, it is the ability to silence your mind. Meditation is not prayer. It’s listening and being receptive to the messages that God and the spirit of divinity send to you in the spaces between your thoughts.

Val J. Halamanidis (R) presents a Lifetime Achievement Award to Dr. Chopra.
tion that’s beyond the litany of cause/effect relationships. It is holistic; it’s relational, and it is contextual. Intuition is literally tapping into the mind of the cosmos as it orchestrates the infinite activity of the universe.

Prayer is the other way around. In the first case, I’m listening; in the second case, I’m speaking, and this time, I’m speaking to my beloved who is divine. And it’s putting loving attention to and expressing gratitude for the mystery of your existence. The very fact that we’re here is a perpetual surprise. So prayer is more in the form of surrender, a form of letting go. Thy will be done. The Lord is my shepherd. It’s not a beseeching the divine, “Oh please, make me win the lottery.” It is a true and honest experience of surrender and gratitude.

(VJH): I am very fond of a past Caring Award winner nominated by Mother Teresa who goes by the name Uncle Barney. He taught me that worry and prayer are contradictory acts. “If you do one, don’t do the other,” he said.

(DC): Yes, it’s a beautiful concept; a river that also runs in Eastern thought. We describe a condition of unlimited faith as having an open mind, an innocent mind, a child’s mind.

(VJH): Are you saying that we are all trying to get back to our original state of innocence?

(DC): Yes. In fact, in my tradition, again, trying to get back to that innocence is called enlightenment. Enlightenment is nothing but getting beyond all our conditioning and back to our original state.

(VJH): You once wrote that we are spiritual beings having a human experience, not the other way around. Can you elaborate on that?

(DC): If we really experience who we really are, then we recognize that we’re not skin-encapsulated egos, squeezed into the volume of a body for the span of a lifetime. We’re just unconditioned spirits that are trapped in these conditions for a while, and that the end of the journey is actually also the same place where we started from.

T.S. Eliot said it best, “We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.”

(VJH): That was very eloquent. Do you have a favorite author or quotation?

(DC): My favorite quote changes. Right now my favorite quote is attributed to King Solomon. This lost document was found in the early part of the 20th century written in Aramaic on some Egyptian papyrus. King Solomon was obviously speaking to God, and it goes like this:

“You split me, and you tore my heart open. And you filled me with love. You poured your spirit into mind. I knew you as I know myself. My eyes are radiant with your light. My ears delight in your music. My nostrils are filled with your fragrance, and my face is covered with your dew. You have made all things shining. You have made me see all things new. You have granted me perfect ease, and I have become like paradise.”

(VJH): Gandhi once said, “I have come to this fundamental conclusion that, if you want something really important to be done, you must not merely satisfy the reason, you must move the heart also. The appeal of reason is more to the head, but the penetration of the heart comes from suffering. It opens up the inner understanding in man. Suffering is the badge of the human race, not the sword.” Why do human beings suffer?

(DC): Mahatma Gandhi said that in Vedanta, the spiritual tradition he was brought up with, there’s a very clear explanation for why we suffer. He said suffering comes, number one, because we do not know the true nature of reality. Number two, because we identify with the false self, the ego. Number three, because we grasp at things, which are impermanent and not real. Number four, because we run away from other things
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that are impermanent and not real. And number five, because we fear death.

Those are the five causes of suffering in Vedanta. Vedanta also goes on to say that in order to really understand these five causes, go to the first one, which is not knowing the true nature of reality. We often confuse ourselves with our body, with our mind, with our personality, with things we are not because we are spirits. And once you have the experience and knowledge of your own spirit, you also have the experiential knowledge of immortality. And then you will not need to suffer, moreover, because you have realized what you have realized. You will have infinite compassion and love. You will become a healing force who can help others to overcome their suffering.

(VJH): That was very good. Years ago my grandmother, who had no formal education, taught me Plato’s principle of influence in her own simple terms. She said, “Be careful who you spend your time with. If you spend your times with hoodlums, then you are going to be a hoodlum. If you seek the company of the divine, a little of that will rub off on you as well.”

(DC): Right.

(VJH): Can you comment on that for me?

(DC): What we see, we become. It is as simple of that. If you want to know who you are, then examine all the things you’ve experienced in the past and all the people you have been with. If you want to know what you will be like in the future, just examine all the things you’re doing right now and who you’re doing it with, because our soul literally metabolizes experience. Just like our body metabolizes food, we’re the metabolic product of experience. So what you see, you become.

(VJH): As a man thinketh, so is he?

(DC): Yes, as a man thinketh, but before the thinking comes the experience that leads to that thinking. All thought comes from past experience. It’s kind of a different context. We are all the product of our experience. In my tradition, we call it karma, and the psychic remnants of karma unfold in our consciousness. We rationalize them. We explain them. We build stories around them, and we call it every day reality. And at night we do the same thing, except we’re not rationalizing them. We call it a dream. But the mechanics of the dream and the mechanics of every day reality are a result of our actions or our experiences. Once we consciously change the way we act, then our thinking changes.

(VJH): Mother Teresa taught me that caring is the one-word distillation of the Golden Rule, which run through all the great religions of the world. What comes to mind when I mention the word “caring” to you?

(DC): A spontaneous state of compassion and love. You don’t consciously remind yourself of caring, but you can’t help it. Caring people are like a bonfire which gives light in all directions. It doesn’t just light up here and not here, but everywhere at once.
All of this is a function of where you are in your evolution. If you have touched the core of your being, you realize that it’s the core of every other being. Therefore, you’re not actually even an individual; you’re an inter-being in the inter-isness, if you will. This allows you to go beyond your constricted or false self, which is a moment-by-moment fabrication of your imagination. Then there is true caring, true love, true compassion.

(VJH): Dr. Chopra, what is happiness and how do you obtain it?

(DF): Happiness is many things. It’s the ability to love. It’s the ability to experience joy and to spread it to others. It is knowing that you’re connected to the sacred source of all creation. It’s having a sense of meaning and purpose. It’s the ability, therefore, to heal and to heal the wounds of the body, the wounds of the mind, the psyche, and the wounds of the soul. It’s also not the destination that matters; it is the journey, because no matter where you are, there is an infinite road ahead.

(VJH): Dr. Chopra, earlier you said that the greatest lesson that you had learned in your lifetime is that literally anything is possible. Can you elaborate on that for us?

(DF): Yes. Whatever you can conceive of or imagine is possible and more, because the limits of your imagination are again the limits of your experience thus far. As your experience transforms, then the limits of your imagination transform, the event horizon expands, and, therefore, life is full of infinite possibilities.

One of my favorite poets, Rumi who dates from the 13th century, says, “When I die, I shall soar with angels. And when I die as an angel, what I shall become you cannot imagine.” Because in order to imagine that, you have to be an angel first.

(VJH): Dr. Chopra, how would you like to be remembered?

(DF): I would actually like to sink into oblivion and anonymity, and just hope that I made some contribution. Life is a happening and I am privileged to be playing a role at the moment. But like everyone else, I was born. Like all of us, I will have a beginning, a middle, and an ending.

As Tennyson said, “The old order changeth, yielding place to new. And God fulfills himself in many ways, lest one good custom should corrupt the world.” So I don’t want people to remember me.

(VJH): This was a superb interview. I think everyone who reads it will have the sense they have learned a great deal. Thank you.

(DF): Thank you, Val, for all the good work that you have done for humanity.
Childhelp:
Celebrating 50 Years of Fighting Child Abuse

By Val J. Halamandaris
There are thousands of nonprofit organizations created to help children, but none of them is more effective than Childhelp based in Scottsdale, Arizona. For some 50 years, it has done amazing work helping thousands, if not millions, of orphaned or abused children to enhance the quality of their lives.

Emerson said that behind every successful organization there is always a charismatic figure. This is certainly true of Childhelp which is blessed to have two such beloved leaders, Sara O’Meara and Yvonne Fedderson. In the late 1950s, the two aspiring actresses were hired to play the love interests of Dave and Ricky Nelson on the long-running television program, “Ozzie and Harriet.” They became lifelong friends, partners in philanthropy, and the nation’s most preeminent advocates for children.

Last year, the Lifetime Channel produced a film about their lives called, “For the Love of a Child.” The film struck a responsive chord with the viewing public, and was nominated for numerous awards. The movie tells how Sara and Yvonne got started. While entertaining American troops in Korea, they encountered hundreds of orphans, many of them fathered by American GI’s. Sara and Yvonne found it impossible to ignore the poverty and deprivation of the children, many of whom were homeless beggars. Compassion gave way to action as they created numerous orphanages in Korea. The demands of the children became so great they soon found they had little time for their acting careers. They devoted themselves totally to the wellbeing of children and in time, created orphanages in the United States and other countries overseas.

With the fall of Saigon near the end of the Vietnam War, American troops were given orders to evacuate “essential” personnel, which did not include orphaned children—at least not until Sara and Yvonne got involved. Together they removed barriers imposed by the South Vietnamese and American governments, raised the money, and secured the airplanes needed to evacuate the hundreds of children to the U.S. where they were all adopted by American families.

About this same time, long-time friends, Governor Ronald Reagan of California and his wife Nancy, gave the two caring activists a new mission. The governor spelled out the growing problem of child abuse by their parents or guardians. Governor Reagan asked Sara and Yvonne if they would help raise awareness of this problem, help to prevent its occurrence, and bring comfort to those who were victims of it. Sara and Yvonne agreed, broadening their mission and taking the name Childhelp.

Childhelp has accomplished amazing things in the years since then. The number of Americans who recognize child abuse as a major problem has increased dramatically. A national Childhelp hotline, staffed 24/7 by trained counselors, was established: 1-800-4-A-CHILD. April has been observed every year as Child Abuse Prevention Month, and the first Wednesday of April has been set aside as a National Day of Hope. Several villages have been created across the U.S. to give abused children safety, food, shelter, and access to trained counselors. Thanks to Childhelp’s leadership, federal legislation was enacted in 2006 establishing a national registry for those convicted of child abuse. Important as all of this is, nothing takes the place of the love and care, which has been given unconditionally by Childhelp employees and volunteers. Childhelp’s mission continues, as it always has, to assist with the physical, emotional, educational, and spiritual needs of youngsters, treating every child as if he or she were a well-loved family member.

Sara and Yvonne have been honored for their work in thousands of letters from children and their families, and with countless awards. This year they have been selected to receive the humanitarian of the year award from the National Association for Home Care & Hospice. Even more impressively, these two great souls are under consideration for a Nobel Peace Prize. Because of the quality of their lives and the depth of their commitment to helping children, they deserve this highest of world honors. CARING wishes to join in commending Sara O’Meara and Yvonne Fedderson, and Childhelp, the special organization they created.

Childhelp will culminate its 50 year celebration in a gala that will be held in the Nokia Theatre in Los Angeles, California, on Monday, October 12, 2009, coterminous with the Annual Meeting of the National Association for Home Care & Hospice.
Carl A. Hammerschlag, M.D.

A Salute to Carl A. Hammerschlag, M.D.

By Val J. Halamandaris

Carl A. Hammerschlag is a physician, psychiatrist, healer, philosopher, teacher, world-renowned public speaker, and best-selling author. What is not generally known is that he has given away countless hours of his time tending to the physical, mental, and spiritual needs of older Americans. The many speaking invitations he accepts each year take him to the four corners of the globe and produce revenue, much of which he uses to underwrite his psychiatric services for those in the Greater Phoenix area who cannot afford to pay.

This generosity of spirit was evident in him, even as a child. His parents were German Jews who fled Nazi Germany in the 1930s to avoid Adolf Hitler and certain extermination. They took refuge in the German-speaking ghetto of New York City where, despite the freedom it offered, they were always in fear. German-speaking people were held in great suspicion in the U.S. at that time. People could not or did not take the time to distinguish between those who supported Hitler and those whom he persecuted. But this defining experience left Carl with a burning desire to help people and to make a difference.

As a young man, he looked for every opportunity to make the world a better place. For example, he became involved in the civil rights movement, and joined up with the Freedom Riders traveling in the South to help blacks win full citizenship. Generally, he came to the conclusion that he wanted to become a physician and help people in the most direct manner possible.

This dream, as well as his mother’s ambition for him, was realized when he graduated from University of New York Upstate Medical Center with his medical degree. He married, soon had two young children, and enlisted in the U.S. Public Health Service, which sent him to Santa Fe, New Mexico. Having been raised in New York City, this was a huge shock, and the work he did as a general practitioner was backbreaking and endless. He worked around the clock, often ignoring his family to minister to others who were ill and needed his attention. What surprised him most was that he was treated by Native Americans as if he had some role in what was their Holocaust some 100 years before. He said he learned what it felt like to suffer guilt by association and prejudice strictly because of the color of his skin.

In time, his actions, including his willingness to take time and listen to patients, won over most of the Native American population. The Indians learned that he came to them with love and an honest interest in their welfare. In the course of this interaction, the Native Americans invested in Dr. Hammerschlag knowledge concerning traditional native medicine. This allowed him to fuse the best of both modern Western medicine, with its emphasis on science, and traditional medicine, which was based more on the spirit. Dr. Hammerschlag learned that general practitioners were scarce in Indian country, but psychiatrists were never seen. He decided to do what he could to help. He returned to Yale University for his postdoctoral fellowship in psychiatry. True to his word, he did not go to Park Avenue and hang out his shingle. He returned to Indian Country, where he saw to the mental health needs of several Native American tribes, especially the Navajo, whose reservations span much of northern Arizona and New Mexico.

After more than two decades of working with the Indian Health Service, Dr. Hammerschlag put what he had learned into several books, some of which have become bestsellers. He changed his title from “doctor” to “healer,” taking a much more holistic view of medicine. “It is what the heart believes, not what the mind thinks, which determines the course of our lives,” he said. He maintains a small private practice, lectures worldwide, and is faculty at the University of Arizona Medical School, where he collaborated with Dr. Andrew Weil and others.

One of Dr. Hammerschlag’s books, The Dancing Healers is a plea for doctors to rethink their approach to patients. Medical training, he told readers, arms doctors with facts but stifles their emotions. Doctors don’t take the time to connect with the people they treat, and the result can be seen in the growing number of suits for malpractice. If doctors are to regain society’s trust, he explained, they must think less about science and more about caring and healing.

This is among the ideas he has developed in other well-
received books. *Healing Ceremonies* tells the stories of people who have confronted health problems with powerful healing ceremonies, and offers guidelines for building healing ceremonies of our own. In *The Theft of the Spirit*, he discusses wellness in our country and the broad social forces that affect it. There are many problems, he notes, that leave a lasting mark: immorality, selfishness, materialism, racism, discrimination, and the failure to set up a national health system that works.

He offers advice on how to deal with these issues in the presentations he gives around the world. His speech topics include *The Way It Was Is Not the Way It Is*, *The Quest for Vision*, *The Future of Medicine*, *The Last Mask of the Authentic Healer*, and *Facing Serious Illness*. These talks reveal Hammerschlag’s gift for telling stories, his vast knowledge of legend, and his ability to bridge the worlds of science, spirit, and culture.

The publication of Dr. Hammerschlag’s books made him a national and international celebrity. He soon found himself much in demand on the podium because audiences found him to be compelling. In a short period of time, he became one of the most revered of public speakers. He was inducted into the Hall of Fame of the National Speakers Association, an honor reserved for celebrated toastmasters such as Dr. Norman Vincent Peale and Art Linkletter. His sincerity, dedication, and years of volunteer work brought him to the attention of the Caring Institute, whose trustees voted him one of the five most Caring Men and Women in America. Later, he was invited to be a member of the Caring Institute’s Honorary Board of Trustees.

Through it all, Dr. Hammerschlag has retained his characteristic modesty. His great life lesson, he says, is not to take yourself too seriously. “Lighten up and live with joy; have a good time,” he advises. “The task of our lives is not to learn how to suffer. There are no merit badges for suffering. We have got to learn how to live with joy.”

Dr. Hammerschlag lives in Phoenix, Arizona, with his wife, Elaine. Their four daughters have married and given them seven grandchildren. He also continues his volunteer work with Native Americans. His special affinity for caring people, especially those who work in home care and hospice, explains why his column has appeared every month for several years in *CARING* magazine. What follows is an interview which I conducted with Dr. Hammerschlag at his office in Phoenix, Arizona, some time ago.

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Val J. Halamandaris (VJH): Dr. Hammerschlag, thank you so much for giving us some of your time. Time is the great commodity of life, and the fact that you have been willing to share some of it with us means a great deal. Thank you.

Carl A. Hammerschlag (CAH): Thank you as well. It’s good to be with you.

(VJH): I want to take you back to your childhood. Who were the most important people in your life when you were growing up?

(CAH): The most important people in my life were my parents. My parents were concentration camp survivors. My father was only about 31 when he came to this country in the late 1930s. He left to escape Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany, which was an experience that stayed with him for a lifetime. I think that the Holocaust was the defining experience in his life, and after that he was always afraid. He didn’t believe that you have to strive for great things or for great wealth. His greatest goal in life and greatest satisfaction came from having things expectable. He would say, “Don’t give me any surprises. I don’t need any great success, as long as it’s expectable, even, and predictable.” But it was important to him that his son not be afraid. My father’s experience was probably the defining experience of my own life. It is shocking to believe that six million people could be exterminated for the single reason that they were Jews. Ever since I was very young, my identification with the disenfranchised, downtrodden, or victimized has been the most important focus of my life.

(VJH): Tell me about your mother. What kind of a woman was she?

(CAH): My mother was a very strong lady who kept the idea alive that you can be anything you want to be. You could be the dream. I think that her greatest wish would have been for me to hang up my shingle down the block from her so she could pass by every day, point to the sign and tell her friends, “That’s my son, the doctor.” She gave me a lot of freedom. She allowed me to define my own place. When I would go on freedom rides to help integrate the South, she was always afraid, but she didn’t let it show, and she did not set any limits for me.

(VJH): Where did you spend your formative years?

(CAH): I was raised in Washington Heights in New York City. In those days they called it the Fourth Reich. This is because it was home to thousands of German-Jewish refugees. I spoke only German the first few years of my life. This was not a very healthy thing to do during World War II, but everyone around me was also a refugee, and most people spoke German.

(VJH): The experience had to be difficult for you. It was great that you were surrounded by a group of people who were supportive.

(CAH): My defining measure of friendship as a child was, “Would you hide me in your closet if somebody came after me?” It was hard to make friends that way. I think you grow up a little bit suspicious and concerned that people may turn on you.

(VJH): When did you decide that you wanted to be a doctor as opposed to your mother’s wanting you to be a doctor?

(CAH): That is a good question. My mother always wanted me to be a doctor, and I liked the idea early on. Later, I thought I would be a political scientist. My father’s reaction was to say that if I was afraid, I would not be able to succeed in medical school and that I should just drop out of school entirely.

From the time I was a little boy, I wanted to make a difference and to share something. I thought that medicine would be a good way to do that. But what I knew about medicine was from television and the movies – Dr. Kildare and Dr. Ben...
Casey. I thought I would be shining my beneficence on an audience who would bless my hands for saving their lives. Medicine turned out to be different than that. However, I went into it with appropriate altruism, and in the end I believe that I have been able to do a lot of good.

(VJH): What was the biggest surprise you got after entering medical school?

(CAH): I think that the greatest surprise came after I had finished my training and had earned all the degrees and credentials. I discovered that, despite all the learning, there were some things that I couldn’t do. I discovered I had a limited instead of an infinite capacity. I was not the hottest thing on the block. Being given an M.D. degree did not elevate me to sanctity. People got well often in spite of me rather than because of me. I had to stop dramatically overemphasizing my part in the healing process. I did all that I could and very often, it produced positive results. But I came to understand that there are other influences that are important in healing.

(VJH): While you were going through medical school, inevitably you had choices. You could have selected from a dozen specialties. Why did you decide to go into psychiatry?

(CAH): I didn’t want to be a psychiatrist initially. I set my goal on being a general practitioner (G.P.) after I had taken my internship. I had spent two years in the U.S. Public Health Service as a family physician in Santa Fe, New Mexico. I was working day and night trying to help people, volunteering on the side, and trying to be a husband and a father of two children at the same time. My belief at the time was that my wife would understand these demands and that people needed me. My children would understand that they came last because I was a doctor. I was like the shoemaker whose children had no shoes.

My wife helped me to see that I had been working too hard. It became clear to me that the needs were infinite, and that I was never going to fill them all. At the time, I also became increasingly interested in the mental component of healing. In order to learn more of the inner workings of the mind, I went back to Yale University Medical School for my postdoctoral training in psychiatry.

(VJH): Was it what you expected?

(CAH): When it comes to understanding the inner workings of the mind, ironically the mind will always have a mind of its own. There are some things that exceed our capacity to understand. It is one of the great shortcomings of science. I don’t want to sound negative in any way, but science believes that every question can be appropriately asked, and that virtually every question is answerable. It is nonsense, of course, because the really important questions in life don’t lend themselves to easy scientific analysis, which is to say breaking things down to their lowest common denominator and extrapolating to the big picture. I want to make it clear that I am not arguing against either science or intuition; both have their place. The great technological achievements in medicine should not be underrated. However, what has been important in the last 30 years of my life is looking at things with a broader perspective.

(VJH): I want to ask you more about this difference between the intellectual and the emotional as it relates to the healing process.

(CAH): I want to expand on the concept of what it is we believe. What we believe is important, but it can’t be at the expense of what it is that we feel. Too many people say, “What it is I believe is what I know.” I think that what we know is almost nothing. That’s not to disparage our intellect, but to suggest that feelings are at least as important as knowing. As a matter of fact, I believe that when it comes to the pursuit of health and our participation in our health, what we feel is more important than what we know. Its how we come to it, rather than how it comes to us, that is going to make the crucial difference in being able to deal with whatever afflicts us. So if you come to a doctor’s diagnosis that you have a cancer...
with resignation, you will not do as well as if you come to it believing that you can make a difference. Believing that you are connected to things other than yourself can sustain you. If you believe, you can become the hero of your own journey, rather than the victim. That’s crucial.

What you feel is at least as important as what you know when it comes to dealing with the catastrophic medical problems that can confront us. I think that people have to be the principal agents in their own healing. I don’t minimize what I do, but I don’t want to minimize what patients bring to it. Feeling is crucial, and this is the new science of psychoneuroimmunology, PNA for short, which says that how you feel, whether you love or care, or conversely if you’re depressed and miserable, is going to change the nature of your body and your immune system. It’s going to inhibit or promote the healing process.

(VJH): I agree with you. I think that you and Norman Cousins, Norman Vincent Peale, Viktor Frankl, Patch Adams, and a few other people have pioneered this kind of thinking which now has general acceptance.

(CAH): They are all my heroes. They are wonderful people.

(VJH): I have heard you say that they are on the healing edge of medicine. What do you mean by that?

(CAH): Well, the cutting edge is such an invasive kind of assaulitive metaphor. We ought to be on the healing edge of medicine. The cutting edge is not where you want to be. It’s potentially painful, and it inflicts assault and trauma. The healing edge is much better.

(VJH): Who comes to mind when I ask who are modern role models?

(CAH): My heroes are people who can say from their heart what they feel without having to think about it before. Often, they’re people who nobody knows. Native people who lead church services, roadmen in the Native American Church; traditional healers who have helped me to understand that I am small, without feeling as if I’m insignificant.

(VJH): What was it like to be a general practitioner in Santa Fe, New Mexico?

(CAH): Those of us who were raised in the east thought that from Boston down to New York was the intellectual hub of the universe. We thought civilization ended at the George Washington Bridge. If you crossed the Hudson River, we surmised that you had to be immunized against some type of tropical disease. I thought there was nothing of relevance beyond that point. So, it was a shock when I came to Santa Fe, New Mexico, which was the smallest town I had ever seen. I mean there were as many people on my block in New York as there were in the whole city of Santa Fe. I came to native people, and they saw me as the white man. They didn’t know the nature of my history or my involvements in civil rights movements. I was just a generic white person in whom they invested all the negative characteristics of those who had killed and abused their race. It was a rude awakening. I didn’t like being seen that way.

It was as if I shared some culpability for the depredations that were foisted upon Indian people for the previous 100 years, even though I shared no personal responsibility. It was a very important kind of life-changing experience for me because I recognized then that I had judged Germans in quite the same way that Indians were judging me. Deep down I believed that even if you were too old and didn’t participate in the war, even if you weren’t old enough to fight, that underneath you were German, which meant there was likely lurking the ugly head of anti-Semitism. Obviously, it is always easier to judge other people, than it is to be on the receiving end. It was only when I was judged in the same way that I had judged others, that I realized my error.

(VJH): Let me ask you about that. You make a point in your book that we come to the place where we need to be.

(CAH): I think that we’re all learning. Nobody has all the answers. All of us are on a journey whose ultimate destination we don’t know anything about. So we’ve got to stop overemphasizing that idea that we can know it all. The task in our lives is not to know anything, but to open ourselves up to looking again at what we thought we knew, because it redefines our certainty. As a result, we only do or experience those things that we’ve already done or learned or know. In the end, life is an act of faith.

(VJH): I think that it’s very difficult to put yourself in perspective. We are all so very hard on ourselves. It is very difficult to be objective. I think somebody on the outside can do a better job of deciding what we have done with our lives.

(CAH): I appreciate that. The downside is that all of us have the capacity to become seduced by our own ego and to take our-
selves too seriously. The most important thing I have learned is that we must not take ourselves too seriously. If somebody wants to come and do an interview, it puts us in the spotlight. We become captivated by ourselves, hypnotized by the sound of our own voice. The ego is a good manager, but it is a lousy boss. You don’t want to spend too much time paying attention to it, because then you’ve got to spend most of your life feeding it. That is not what it was intended to do. Each of us has our own journey of life. We do what we can, and I think that we’re obligated to make some difference, but we can’t dramatically overemphasize our part in the process.

(VJH): Tell me why you purchased a sculpted rattlesnake and placed it in the middle of your diplomas?

(CAH): I once went to a very sacred place for native people in South Dakota near the town of Sturgis. It’s called Bear Butte. This is a place where the Cheyenne have their seven sacred arrows. It’s a place where the tribes of the Plains, including the Cheyenne and Lacota, come for Vision Quest. I had wanted to make this journey and spend some time there. I took with me some native instruments that had been given to me by people I value to have them blessed. As I was preparing to go up to the top, some native people stopped and asked me if I would say a prayer for their recently departed father and grandfather. The wife and the daughters of the deceased had driven and walked as far as they could go, but they could not make it to the top. They had mistaken me for a native person, seeing the instruments. I was so happy that it bloated me up and I thought, “Oh isn’t it wonderful. I’m really here, not as my diplomas. The snake is this reminder not to buy on the wall because it is as important to my education as any of my diplomas. The snake is this reminder not to become too captivated by the ego.

(VJH): That’s great. You were inducted into the Speakers Hall of Fame. People say you move an audience better than anyone. Who are the best speakers you have heard in your lifetime?

(CAH): The best speaker that I have ever heard is Elie Wiesel. He touches my heart because we share similar experiences. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was another. They are both people who speak to my heart.

(VJH): Young people today are conflicted. They don’t know who to admire. I think instinctively, most children growing up know that we ought to be doing something that benefits humanity. On the other hand, they want material wealth that society values which pushes them to be self-centered. What are your reflections on the young people of America, and what advice would you give them?

(CAH): Before I respond to that, let me lay some groundwork. It is very important for young people to have something that they believe in and people who fill them with a sense of respect and perhaps even awe. That’s true for adults as well, but it’s especially true for children because they need to have their feet planted in something they believe in. Before we can talk about children, we need to talk about our culture as a whole.

There are very few things that we believe in anymore that sustain us. Everything that we once believed in has become less believable, including the leadership of this nation, which has been shown, at least, to be shallow, if not frankly untrustworthy. Our judicial system, our political system, our medical system, and our religious systems do not inspire confidence.

We all need some credible ethic of morality rather than people making up their own rules. Whatever you do can be justified. Expediency, not morality, has become the watchword of our civilization.

What does it have to do with children? We cannot expect our children to be able to believe in anything if we do not provide them with credible norms that allow them to see that we ourselves are living with integrity. We have to be the change that we hope our children will also continue. If they can’t see it in us, we can’t expect them to walk our talk. We need to provide

\[\text{Dr. Hammerschlag is one of the most requested speakers in the US, He has been inducted into the National Speakers Association (NSA) Hall of Fame and received the NSA’s highest award}\]
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Dr. Hammerschlag is a strong advocate of home care and hospice. He has volunteered his psychiatric services to thousands of Native Americans.

some credible norm. I don’t say this in any patronizing way. It seems to me that if you care, then this is the story that you want to tell. If we are going to sustain ourselves as a people and as a planet, we are going to have to believe in something that allows us to make a difference, so that unborn generations and all of those who come after will still have some place to walk. I’d give our children dreams and possibilities other than just sports heroes, who can negotiate financial contracts. I think Charles Barkley was right when he said, “I play great basketball, but I don’t want to be a role model or a parent to your kid.”

(VJH): I think that’s right on target. Dr. Albert Schweitzer said, “When it comes to education, example is not a factor. It’s the only factor that matters.” If you could talk to all the young people of America what advice would you offer?

(CAH): First we have to understand that I’m a parent and my children don’t listen to me a lot because I have said it all before. If they knew that we were talking here for an hour, they would think that this is about 58 minutes more than I need. So it’s a little presumptuous to believe the young people of America on a large scale would listen. This notwithstanding, I think that the most important thing to tell the young people of America is, “Don’t abandon your dreams and don’t let somebody else put down your dreams because they think they can’t be achieved.” If you believe and work at it, you can be virtually anything you want to be.

(VJH): What I want to explore with you is the notion of what is possible. I learned early on not to let other people’s limited view of reality limit me. Please give me a comment on that.

(CAH): I think reality is the way that you see it. The way somebody else sees it is the way it is for him or her. We get into difficulty when we hold other people responsible for having to see it the way we see it. Usually this is just a tribute to narcissism. If we can get somebody to see it as we know it, it convinces us that they way we see it is the only way it is. Most of us only spend time being with people who see things the way we see them. As a result, we only look at what we already know. The most important things for us to see are the things that we don’t want to look at. The most important things for us to know are the dark spots that we would often choose not to illuminate. I think that our selectivity of belief is crucially important. Statistics are fine, but they do not always explain what is happening. Nine out of 10 people with carcinoma of the pancreas will die within a five-year period of time, says medical science. Every person that I know who has cancer of the pancreas is viewed as having a one in 10 chance. Is it going to happen? Many times it doesn’t happen. But I do know that how people come to it is going to make a difference in what happens and in the quality of their lives. What I am giving you is the difference in point of view between a healer and a doctor. A doctor is going to help somebody address just the facts. A healer is going to make somebody understand that their relationship is with the world and with others. How you come to it is going to make a difference in the outcome.

(VJH): Is healing about building a relationship of trust between a healer and a patient?

(CAH): Yes, that’s certainly part of it. Belief in the practitioner and their personal qualities and attributes matters. If you like somebody that you are working with, it’s going to have a far greater impact than if you dislike them. The truth is what you feel is going to make as big a difference in your health outcomes as your belief in a practitioner. I think that we train students to be great doctors. A great doctor can make the diagnosis, treat the patient, and may even add a preventative module that will help the patient understand how it is that they became sick, so that they can avoid exposure to it in the future. But a healer is somebody who can do that and who can help the individual understand something about their relationships, their place in the world. A healer takes a holistic view of life. I think that we need to train more healers.

(VJH): What I hear you saying is that a healer is somebody who can help you make the connection between the physical and the mental, because so much of illness is mental.

(CAH): Yes. And the spiritual, I don’t want to get away from that. We can talk about mental, we can talk about the physical, but the spiritual is crucial. This is not a plea for God. I’m talking about the essence of the human spirit, that part that propels us forward. It’s that part of us that allows us to deal with the transitions and even the potential catastrophes in our lives. We need to help people come to understand their spirit. It can also be something that connects them to a spiritual source. I don’t care whether it’s a belief in God or a belief in spotted owls, whales, dolphins, old growth forests, the land upon which you
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were raised, or whatever. It’s just something that reminds you that you are connected to something greater than yourself, that you are not in this alone. This understanding and belief is going to make a difference in whatever you are facing.

(VJH): *Do you have a favorite quotation?*

(CAH): My parental and grandparental injunctions were things like, “Always do your best. Make us proud of you.” My favorite quotation comes from Gandhi who was a great hero of mine. If you will excuse the paraphrase, Gandhi said, “If you’re going to be somewhere, be there.” I would like that to define my life. I think most of us find ways not to be where we are; believing that wherever we are it’s never enough. I think the task in our lives is to be where we are and to be there with joy. So I don’t care if you are an Olympic athlete or like Stephen Hawking who is confined to a wheelchair. You make the best of whatever gifts that you have. Hawking was asked what it was like to be in a wheelchair and he said, “What I like to do best is to think. Look at how much time I have to be where I like to be, doing what I do best. Look how much time I have to think.” If you are going to be somewhere, be there. I think that it doesn’t matter what happens to us. We cannot control the events of our lives, but we can control our reaction to them. Whether we are relegated to a wheelchair with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, like Hawking, or have an amputation, or are confronting cancer, what matters is that you respond with a positive attitude. The task in our lives is not to wish we were someplace else or to complain that we got dealt a terrible hand. The test in our lives is not to learn how to suffer. There are no merit badges in suffering. For a long time, I thought that was the case. I think the most important lesson for me has been not to take myself too seriously.

Lord require of you but to do justice, and love kindness, and walk humbly with your God.” As I have said, the most important lesson for me has been not to take myself too seriously. I think that wherever we are it’s never enough. I think the task in our lives is to be where we are and to be there with joy.

(VJH): *Give me your thoughts on “the graying of America.” What kind of advice would you give to the senior citizens of America?*

(CAH): It would be presumptuous of me to give advice to the great generation. Although now that my own hair is gray, they say in Indian country that, “Finally now you may be able to heal.” The graying of America will reshape every aspect of our society. By the year 2050, we are going to see a very significant percentage of the American population that is above the age of 65. The fastest-growing segment will be over the age of 85. We live in a culture that lauds youth and hard bodies, and we tend to relegate to obscurity those people who no longer meet that idealized image.

The sad truth is that the whole history of civilization would be different if we only listened to the stories of people who had experiences, and have something to teach us. The whole history of civilization would be different if we only viewed older people as conquerors and achievers. All of us are on a journey that’s going to teach us something about the ups and downs of life. We cannot afford to disregard the talent and wisdom of seniors by relegateing them to this kind of geographic and emotional obscurity.

I think we need to get our old people to tell us more stories. I think that we live in a civilization that has to spend more time telling and listening to stories rather than looking at television. We need to understand something about what we’re doing here on earth, about process and meaning. I think that old people have something to share with us that is going to make sense.

So I would tell seniors to continue to engage in life, to volunteer, to run for office, and find ways to give back. They will feel better about themselves. They will be healthier, and all of society will be the better for it. We need again to become a nation of storytellers, rather than watching violent movies and disasters on television, which we have allowed to give definition to our lives.

(VJH): *I asked Mother Teresa, “What is the greatest lesson that you’ve learned in your lifetime, Mother Teresa?” She said, “Well, you’ve got to love with your whole soul. Love thy neighbor as thyself and love the hole in your heart as much as your heart.” How would you answer that question?*

(CAH): I don’t think Mother Teresa’s advice can be improved upon. I also like the Prophet Micah who said, “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and love kindness, and walk humbly with your God.” As I have said, the most important lesson for me has been not to take myself too seriously. Lighten up. Live with joy. Have a good time. The task in our lives is not to learn how to suffer. There are no merit badges in suffering. For a long time, I thought that was the case. I would say, “You think you had it tough. Let me tell you about my relatives who were marched to the slaughter like sheep.” I learned what is important is forgiveness; having an attitude of gratitude and learning to live with joy.
(VJH): Isn’t that Dr. Viktor Frankl’s profound point? The one thing that you can control, even in the darkest of circumstances, is the way that you look at life. You can choose whether the glass of life is half empty or half full. The survivors, he said, are the ones who always managed to turn to the positive and see the glass as half full.

(CAH): You stated the healing paradigm. What matters is mentally how you come to a disease, not how it comes to you. The stresses in our lives are not events. Stress is the reaction to an event. You can’t let the events in your life define your participation. It’s how you choose to come to the event. Dr. Frankl’s existential theory involves the same principal.

(VJH): I have heard you say that we have become too much of a materialistic society. We don’t value people intrinsically as we should because each of us is a child of God or thereafter, by the content of our character. Would you give us a comment?

(CAH): I agree with that. Christopher Lasch has written that we have a “culture of narcissism,” where the watchwords for civilization are “me,” “mine,” and “now.” We suffer from what I call the “Trump syndrome,” which is an irrational longing for luxury–to get things and put your name on them and the more you can collect the closer you are to winning the game. I have nothing against earning money and enjoying a little luxury, but we have made it a national obsession. The truth is that we don’t really own things, they own us. A culture which emphasizes “me” and “mine” tends to ignore those who come after us. It tends to glorify the classes who have, and alienates the classes who have not. When we emphasize acquisition, selfishness, indifference, greed, and living for the moment, it makes it hard for civilization to endure. If we continue to be so “uncaring,” it is my view that this, more than anything, will sow the seeds of our destruction.

(VJH): What does “caring” mean to you?

(CAH): Rabbi Hillel, who was born about 110 B.C., was asked to summarize the Hebrew faith in one sentence while standing on one foot. He said, “What is hateful to you, do not do unto your neighbor; this is the entire Torah, all the rest is commentary.” Mother Teresa is right that caring is the one-word summary of the Golden Rule that runs through all the great religions of the world. Caring is the understanding that yes, you have some responsibility to care for yourself, but a similar responsibility to care for others. You have got to share what you have and be able to give back at least as much as you get. Caring is the glue in the social compact; it is what holds us together as a society. The most enduring civilizations were those that evidenced a high degree of caring.
A Salute to Dr. Carl A. Hammerschlag

(VJH): What is happiness?

(CAH): We seem to have the notion that we are all entitled to be happy all the time. The truth is nobody is always happy. We have the right to pursue what makes us happy, but it is not an entitlement or a guarantee. The point I would make is that happiness is a journey, not a destination. It is what you think that matters most. Lincoln said that people are about as happy as they allow themselves to be. You can’t buy happiness. Owning material possessions or amassing huge piles of gold will not make you happy. Happiness comes from being “the best you can be,” it means being true to your values, keeping faith with your ancestors and looking out for the next generation. Most especially, happiness comes from serving others. I think Dr. Albert Schweitzer put it best when he said, “One thing I know: the only ones who will really be happy are those who have sought and found how to serve.”

(VJH): What is your advice about how to lead a long and fulfilling life?

(CAH): You can start by having good genes, eating right, getting plenty of rest, exercising in moderation, and avoiding toxic habits. You don’t think of your life as something that is behind you. You think about all the things you want to do and make an effort to do what fires your imagination, most of which should involve giving back and helping others. The most revolutionary act in contemporary life is to find a way to come to each day with joy. Nobody gets old by living a certain number of years. We get old because we quit thinking, we quit growing, or we let the volume of our memories exceed the size of our dreams.

(VJH): One of the things that impressed me about the Native Americans was their holding leaders to a standard that made them responsible for their decisions and their effect seven generations into the future. In this country, we seem to make decisions only for the moment – or the next election. What have you learned from your days serving Native Americans?

(CAH): Respect for life. Humility. Gratitude and coming to each day with joy. Like Native Americans, I do not think that the earth is given to us by our parents. It is on loan to us by our children. I’ve learned from native people that life is short and fleeting. We are neither the beginning nor the end of human existence. It allows us to come to peace, not only with our own mortality, but the fact that part of the gift, which is our life, is to be able to share it in a way that will help others.

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one important message native people have given us, and we need to heed their warning. To Native Americans, everything from rocks to trees is alive. They begin every interaction with the earth and the animals on it by saying, “Thank you.” We need to get back to that, too. We need to give more thanks. We’ve got to stop being so selfish and self-centered. We cannot be defined by our successes and material possessions. Nobody makes it alone. In native country they say, “Everything is filled with spirit.” I think we need to come to that view as well.

(VJH): Dr. Hammerschlag, how would you like to be remembered?

(CAH): I would like people to say, “He gave us as much as he took and he loved.”

(VJH): Excellent. Is there anything that you would like to say that has not particularly been prompted by a question?

(CAH): There is so much that we do well. There are so many “caring people” but we never hear of them. This needs to change. Let’s focus on our strengths. It will help us to get better.

We tend as a nation to focus on the nature of our shortcomings. This has the effect of clipping our wings emotionally. There are some things that we are not doing well, like providing health care for Americans, being able to deal with the problems of institutional racism, and being able to equally distribute justice in this country. Those are very serious problems. The redeeming features of our society, however, will be how well we are going to share our humanity with each other. That is a task to which we can commit ourselves. If there is any problem, it’s that we are not dealing humanely with each other. We are all children of God. If we share our humanity there is something innately liberating about it. I think that’s a story we have to tell. If we focus on the problem, we become enslaved by all those preconceptions that keep us looking at how difficult it is to make progress. I would prefer, as Plato has suggested, that we not chain ourselves and look at the slate wall and at the shadows of our problems, because they will only be magnified. Rather, I would prefer that we get up, find the courage to walk out to that cave opening, and see things as they really are in natural light.

(VJH): There was a profound point in your book that I meant to ask you about. You said, “It’s the tunnel that is the illusion and not the light.”

(CAH): We so need to capture and memorize all the science to convince ourselves that we know at least as much as everybody else knows. We so pursue the factual basis of our profession, because we’re afraid that if we haven’t mastered that, we won’t be able to perform the technical tasks demanded of us. So we soon suffer from tunnel vision. We don’t pay attention to people or what is going on in their lives. When we are young and insecure, we need to search for certainty. When we’re older, we understand that the reality is that we can really know only very few things with absolute certainty. What matters in the end is how we treat people. If we treat them with love and respect, the odds are good that they will heal themselves or at least improve and get better.

(VJH): That’s great. I enjoyed that. Any further comment?

(CAH): Only to add that of all the things that I may have done, said, or written, my most important contribution is to have raised and been raised by my children. They have been profound teachers. They have steadfastly refused to confuse the public me with the truly ordinary man that I am, and to love me in spite of it.

(VJH): Great. Thank you, Doctor. This has been just fabulous.

(CAH): Thank you, as well, for all the good things that you do.
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