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*'Steve Nobel has written a most illuminating and inspiring guide for our inner journey. His wise and compassionate teachings stir our imagination, while his useful exercises strengthen our confidence, providing inner and outer resources for the great enterprise of spiritual growth. The result is an invaluable guide for both the new and the experienced seeker, which reveals that growth can be a joyous journey with attainable goals.'*

Dr Elizabeth Puttick,  
author of Women in New Religions

*'In Freeing the Spirit Steve Nobel gives a most clear and concise definition of just what it means to grow as a human being. His book is a treatise on effective ways to identify our life issues and work to heal them and bring ourselves closer to wholeness (holiness). The book is full of useful practical exercises which you can undertake in your own time and which will shed light on life in all sorts of ways.'*

Leo Rutherford,  
author of Your Shamanic Path and Way of Shamanism



# Freeing the Spirit

Ancient Modern Magical Techniques  
To Awaken Your Inner Potential

By

Steve Ahnael Nobel

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## PREFACE

**Y**ou may have read the book by Portia Nelson called *There's a Hole in My Sidewalk*, which has a beautifully put story that is often told and used in therapy training and personal development circles because it is a metaphor for how we can live our lives. This is my abbreviated version.

One day a person walks down a street and falls into a hole.

The next day he walks down the same street, sees the hole yet falls in again.

The next day he walks down the same street, sees the hole, and walks around it.

The next day he chooses a different street.

In life there are always holes and the possibility of falling into them. There are lessons to be learnt in holes, the most important of which, often seen in hindsight, is that holes are best avoided. In life we all walk down many different streets and some of them have holes in them that we may fall into. We can fall into holes of addiction, anxiety, co-dependency, depression or madness, and such places prove generally to be very painful; however, they can also be a sort of sanctuary if the outside world appears to be very hostile and scary.

By the time I was an adolescent and adulthood was worryingly peeping over the horizon, I had fallen into a very deep hole of depression and I somehow lost my sense of purpose and direction. I dropped out of school, became quite anxious and more and more introverted and the colour seemed to be draining away from my life. Panicking, I began to seek desperately for what was wrong with me, seeking salvation



first in conventional medicine, and then I more alternative approaches such as hypnosis, macrobiotics, and yoga. Later I explored some forms of spirituality that I would now definitely avoid. Despite my frantic attempts to leave my hole I remained there for many years. There I blamed, suffered in silent anguish and raged about the unfairness of life. 'Why me?' I thought, 'I should have been warned.' I looked to my parents but I had little appreciation of the holes my parents had fallen into because, being British, such things were not much spoken about. In time I was to commit the same error with my own children and hide my pain and misery from them hoping that it would not hinder their chances for happiness. I was to discover that life does not work out that way.

Like some actor in a Greek tragedy, I had learnt to put on many masks in order to cope. 'Well,' I thought, 'if I cannot find happiness then I will fake it.' I tried to be the perfect father, friend, husband, lover and work colleague, yet often I failed miserably. Behind my masks I seethed with anger and frustration and often this left me feeling drained of even the necessary energy to cope with life. One day I realised that I had forgotten what love felt like and felt instead only an inner icy and gaping emptiness. Although I had distant memories of the innocence of my childhood, that was long past and long lost. I felt confused about what it meant to be a man and I had a vague sense of being entangled in other people's ideas of what masculinity meant. I looked for helpful role models but found that there were few inspiring leaders or heroes around, despite the image Hollywood tried to portray.

So, confused and alone, life did not seem worth living and in my late twenties I decided to press the eject button. However, events did not go exactly to plan and instead of finding myself in the afterlife I found myself in the psychiatric unit of a London hospital. There I could at last stop pretending; my mask had slipped and for that I breathed a sigh of relief.

I remained in the psychotherapy group for several years and I met other people who also were in holes. In time I came to understand all the intricacies of my hole, how I felt being there and how I happened to fall in. But despite these insights, which did at least help me regain some compassion for myself, I remained in my hole.

In 1992, in the space of only a few months, I began to find remarkable spiritual teachers and talented healers who pointed the way to the mysterious realms of spirit. I was intrigued. I began to work with these teachers – after all, what did I have to lose? – and my worldview began to expand. I then explored working with other teachers. My life started to change, although I had to face some strong challenges first. At last I began to feel that my icy wound was beginning to heal and be filled with light. Now I am less startled by the miracles that happen in my life.

In *Freeing the Spirit* I have put together the essence of the teachings I have found most useful in the laboratory of my life. Writing the book has been not only a great joy but also a journey through all my self-doubt and inner resistance, and as such has been one of my greatest learning experiences. The result is an attempt on my part to teach and write about that which I still most need to learn.

## INTRODUCTION

I wrote this book 20 years ago and it was published after 911 which shook the world. I am republishing it now in 2022 and much has changed in this time. The world shut down because of a pandemic. Now, at this time of writing there is a confrontation between Russia and the West in Ukraine. If anything events such as these have increased the desire for many to find a greater meaning in life than merely living, paying the bills, shopping and surviving. This book contains many important elements that I have found useful in the art of self-transformation. In particular I address four important areas.

**Growth** – the process of following our dreams, of stretching beyond all our limits, through our barriers of fear out into virgin territory.

**Spirit** – that powerful creative force that exists within the psyche and is at the core of all life, from the smallest electron to the mightiest star. It has been sought down the ages and once felt is never forgotten.

**Power** – not the kind long associated with control, domination, threat and punishment, but the power that is found within. Opening to this power is like stepping into a current of energy where life becomes juicier and more vibrant.

**Magic** – the art of weaving the unseen into the seen. Every magical act can be put to creative or destructive uses, and because such acts have consequences, responsibility is needed. Magic is possible because the universe is possible.

*Love Steve Nobel (May 2022)*

## THE MYSTERY OF GROWTH

### The Garden

*Sky-blue stillness  
Dappled shade and sun  
Tall tress protecting  
Bright blooms hung  
Amongst the abundant green.  
Composting waste  
Burnt ashes of pain  
The garden becomes  
My best teacher again.  
Cyclic shades grown green.*

Susan Hill

### What is Growth?

Down the ages many seekers have asked 'What is the purpose of life?' and the question is no less important today. The answer I have found that feels right in my heart and has proved the most useful is that life is a process of growth whereby we are compelled to be and become all we can be in this lifetime. As I understand it this process of growth is all-embracing and inescapable for it encompasses every living

form on the planet and include the collective evolution of the consciousness of humanity. The wonderful thing about this process at an individual level is that as we stretch to become more than we currently experience ourselves to be, there seems to be no limits and so the process just keeps on going. Some teachers have suggested that the spirit itself is not a final product but is ever unfolding, and it unfolds through our process of growth.

It seems that everything in the universe is involved in the process, although when we look around we may be tempted to think that some people have opted out for a while, or even a lifetime. It may sometimes seem that they are moving in the opposite direction, becoming less than they can be, yet even these people cannot escape growth for long. Growth can be wonderful, joyous, scary or exciting since it involves continually extending our limits and resistances into unknown territory.

On way I understand growth is by looking at nature and at how plants and trees grow. They do not grow in a logical or linear fashion but within the context of their supportive ecosystems. In many ways we are just seeds that wait for nature's call to send out roots and shoots. When the time is right we just have to move and leave the safety of the seed stage and begin moving through the darkness, coping with any obstacles we find on our route to the surface and the sunlight. As we grow we gain understanding of what we are becoming – some of us may become oak trees whilst others may grow into bountiful apple trees. However, unlike trees we have choice, so if we choose to we can pull up our roots and move to a different part of the forest where the light is better and the climate and soil more to our liking. In this amazing world of action and growth we can discover all the rich potential we hold inside, and it is only when we blossom that we realise our ever-unfolding potential. In my worldview this process does

not start in our current lifetime but is something that has been going on over numerous lifetimes. For me birth and death are but gateways to different phases of our growth, and so both before our birth and after our death we have the ability to direct our future growth. According to current metaphysical wisdom we can choose to incarnate again and choose also the circumstances of our incarnation. Choices at this level are unlike the everyday choices we make for we may choose to face very challenging circumstances in order to handle and overcome negative characteristics that have developed over many lifetimes. On the other hand we may choose positive challenges so that we stretch into learning new skills, talents and abilities. Often we choose to incarnate with a combination of both so that we have challenges to push against and new possibilities to pull towards. Although we have made the choices that set the stage for this lifetime, those choices may well make us feel overwhelmed and afraid. There are many strategies in life for avoiding growth and remaining safe in the seed stage. When life feels incredibly dull and predictable and we are unhappy, it is likely that we are avoiding the path of our heart and growth. Nothing is permanent in life; everything changes, and we cannot hold on to our strategies for avoiding growth for ever. Ultimately we will grow, either now or later.

## **Growth and Polarity**

This vast and mysterious universe contains such diversity and all of it exists within the bounds of the law of polarity. Polarity underpins how our physical universe operates since everything in existence has an opposite yet complementary state and these opposite states are in a constant dance of mutual attraction. We live in a universe of relativity where everything exists in a state that is relative to something else. Without the darkness of night we would not be able to distin-

guish the lights of the Milky Way; without the density of rock we would not understand the fluidity of water; without birth there could be no death; and we can experience joy only because there are states that are not joyful. There is nothing that can be conceived of that does not have an opposite and yet complementary state or quality. We so often take polarity for granted, yet if we stopped for a moment and thought about it, is it likely that this extraordinary universe arose out of a series of random molecular accidents? For me it is inconceivable that it was not designed by a higher intelligence so that all life has the opportunity to evolve and grow.

### ***Polarities that Exist in Life***

*Birth - Death*

*Attraction – Repulsion*

*Expansion – Contraction*

*Construction – Destruction*

*Light – Darkness*

*Open – Closed*

*Inner – Outer*

*Objective – Subjective*

*Female – Male*

*Spiritual – Material*

*Conscious – Unconscious*

*Miraculous – Mundane*

*Being – Becoming*

*Love – Fear*

*Joy – Suffering*

*Compassion – Cruelty*

*Acceptance – Denial*

*Independence – Dependence*

*Expression – Suppression*

*Wholeness – Fragmentation*

It is important to note that the law of polarity has nothing to do with the judgements we make, such as what is right and wrong, since these belong purely to the human world and are not characteristics of the universe itself.

Perhaps the greatest polarity that we are here to learn to grow through is that of love and fear. Love is a part of what we are, it exists within the fabric of our soul and seeks to express itself through our bright spirit. From the quality of love all other soul qualities arise. A soul quality could be described as something that makes our body smile when it is expressed, such as freedom, joy, enthusiasm, compassion and wisdom. These qualities are developed through an experiential awareness and understanding of their opposite pole, so in order to understand and know compassion the lessons of cruelty must be understood and assimilated. Similarly, for wisdom there is ignorance, for clarity there is confusion, for connection there is alienation, and for joy there is suffering. These restrictive tendencies are the challenges of the physical universe that serve to awaken the full expression of the soul qualities that lie dormant within us. Fear exists in the physical universe only so that we may know love. Fear is the challenge we will inevitably face when on a path of growth, for fear is a part of the great illusion of this world and its main purpose is to help us remember love.

### **Growth is Always Challenging**

*Then the time came  
when the risk it took  
to remain tight in a bud  
was more painful than  
the risk it took to blossom.*

Anais Nin



Life is meant to be challenging. This is not to say that life has to be hard or difficult or a struggle or painful, simply that it is meant to be challenging so that we are motivated to stretch beyond the familiar into virgin territory and thus awaken and discover more of who we truly are. Challenge means many things to many people and it is important to know how you define challenge since this will fundamentally affect your experience of it. Since challenge exists within polarity it will be experienced either as a push out of a familiar situation or a pull towards something new. The former would involve some kind of loss or ending, such as the death of someone close, divorce or redundancy, and the latter would involve some kind of gain or new beginning, such as a birth in the family, a new relationship or the beginning of a new business or project. Whichever form it takes, challenge is there to help us awaken dormant abilities, talents and soul qualities that may be slumbering within us and, like Sleeping Beauty, await the magical kiss from some passing challenge to wake them up. Yet at some level we all have an inbuilt resistance to growth, with the nature of this resistance depending on our level of awareness of it. Unconscious resistance to change tends to manifest as physical symptoms (tiredness or aches and pains), emotional turbulence (sudden bouts of fear), or mental anxiety (doubts and confusion).

Growth always involves some sort of change, yet there is a danger that we may become a growth addict, so goal orientated that we forget it is the journey rather than the destination that is important and never stop to smell the roses along the way. Malcolm Stern came through public school not really knowing what he wanted to do. After a stint in accountancy he became an estate agent, which he thought was a 'radical move' at the time. During this time Malcolm went through a number of challenging life events, including being stalked by a woman for four years. The stress and anxiety of this pe-

riod caused his physical health to deteriorate and he began to realise that his lifestyle had to change. His journey took him into counselling and group therapy. He went to work for Greenpeace for two years and spent some time on the ship Rainbow Warrior. In 1979 he attended the World Symposium on Humanity and discovered there that his life was about service. Malcolm went on to train as a psychotherapist and to write a book on relationships. He helped to co-found Alternatives, a London-based non-profit organisation promoting mind/body/spirit events, and now says that he is 'happy to be used by life'.

Challenge can involve doing something that is just a small step beyond our comfort zone, or it can be a great leap of faith that really tests us. It is challenging to be a parent, to have parents, to move to a new area, to change career, to begin meditating or to follow a vision. Challenge may come as a consequence of actions we have taken in the past or it can come in the form of a crisis, which can be a time of both threat and great possibility. Challenges can of course, be fun, joyful and freeing – and ways to expand our self-confidence and self-esteem. It can be challenging and thrilling to speak our truth, 'walk our talk' and step upon the path of our heart and follow our dreams. It can be challenging to step away from the crowd and find our own truth and path rather than simply following others. It can be challenging to break out of limiting cultural values or a rigid sense of personal identity and step into the unknown. Facing challenge and handling it will inevitably lead to a greater sense of inner power. However, growth is a powerful process because it is also a risky one. There are no guarantees along the way; we may plot a course to a particular destination yet life will always throw up the unexpected. The element of uncertainty allows challenges to be very real and unpredictable.

A fellow director at Alternatives, Tom Cook, spent 28 years as a television director, producer and executive in New York, Sydney, Auckland and London. After experiencing a rare type of hepatitis he realised, at the age of 49, that what he really wanted to do was devote the rest of his life to becoming an artist, something he had no training for. Although a part of him considered this to be a mad idea, he followed his creative dream. The transition was not an easy one, but Tom was soon painting and selling pictures as well as holding art workshops in order to help others get in touch with their creativity.

Make the decision to chart a course and steer your life out into the unexplored territories of your psyche to discover more about who you are and could be. This is a journey that we must all take, and we can go either kicking and screaming or singing and dancing along the way.

### **Growth Through Joy or Suffering**

*The gentle spring rain permeates the soil of my soul,  
A seed that has lain deeply in the earth for many years just smiles*

Thich Nhat Hanh

Sometimes it can seem as if life must be difficult and include large doses of pain and suffering. We are all used to hearing 'no pain no gain' and 'suffering is good for the soul', and many of us have had harsh experiences that have been full of pain and suffering. Pain can be a powerful motivator, and for some people it is the only one. Modern-day living so easily generates considerable amounts of stress and pain that we can be fooled into believing that this is the only way life can be. Pain may seem a better option than feeling nothing at all, and a life full of drama may seem more attractive than a life filled with boredom. Qualities such as courage and success have long been tested and developed through arenas of conflict and pain and we can forget that they can

be developed in other ways also. The Buddha taught about the nature and cessation of suffering, but I was never able to absorb fully the first noble truth of Buddhism that 'All life is suffering'. Then a few years ago, whilst participating in a workshop not related to Buddhism, an inner voice said 'the first noble truth is that suffering exists'. After the workshop I did some research and found a Buddhist teacher who taught this message. Thich Nhat Hanh a Vietnamese Zen teacher living in exile in France, dismisses the idea that the Buddha taught that everything is suffering. Instead, he interprets the first noble truth as saying that suffering simply exists. He points out that because the Buddha spoke an ancient dialect of the Indian language and his words have never been recorded in his own mother tongue, his teachings have been exposed to the dangers of mistranslation and misinterpretation.

There are many things that generate suffering – an inability to let go of the past, a refusal to forgive, for being caught in delusion and fantasising about the future as a way of escaping the present, being locked in a feeling of being needy or valueless, being stuck in judgement, being highly self-critical and feeling that life has no meaning. By believing in the necessity of suffering we lock ourselves into a mindset where life and growth must be bound with suffering. Naturally a refusal to confront difficult or painful feelings is also likely to lead to suffering. Only pain embraced and accepted has the potential to be transformed.

On the other hand joy needs to be cultivated, for it grows in the fertile soil of trust, self-love and a sense of freedom. Joy comes from choices that support such a state no matter what choices other people are making in their lives. Growing with joy does not mean always appearing to be happy or seeking to hide any difficult feelings; rather, it is being authentic, being in the present moment and honestly expressing whatever is in our hearts. Opening to and expressing inner potential leads to

joy. The joyous state is an inner state, not dependent on any of the 'false idols' in the world. Joy is a gateway to inspiration; it looks at how life could be. Feeling and expressing joy can break the habitual thought patterns that produce feelings of being stuck and unhappy in a world where pain and suffering are so prevalent. Growing with joy means that life can become an exciting adventure rather than a daily slog. Doesn't that sound more appealing?

Joy can be blocked by a number of things, such as guilt. Can we really allow ourselves to feel joyful knowing that there is so much suffering in the world? Although being joyful in such a world can feel like a betrayal, joy is the greatest gift we can give for it shows another way to be and experience the world. Joy can be expressed through just a gentle smile or a kind touch or through a wild dance or passionate song. Joy is the natural state of our soul; it is our inheritance and as such is meant to be expressed in the world.

## **Choose Joy**

- ◆ Each morning when you wake up, consciously choose joy – and no matter what happens throughout the day, continue to choose it.
- ◆ Place your attention on noticing the joy in the world and actively seek it out in every moment.
- ◆ Have you noticed that joyful people are naturally more attractive? Make a point of finding out what makes other people joyful.
- ◆ If being in nature brings you joy the spend time each day in nature.
- ◆ If being creative, such as painting or singing, brings you joy then give yourself some time each day to explore this.
- ◆ Keep a journal where you can note down your daily encounters with joy.

## **Meditations**

Freeing the Spirit includes a number of meditations. There are a few general points to note here so that you can be well prepared before any are attempted.

1. You will need to find a space where you will not be disturbed for a set period of time. This space will need to have a feeling of serenity and stillness. You can if you like light a candle each time you meditate. These meditations can be done either in silence or with ambient music, as you prefer.
2. Intention is everything so it is important to be clear on the purpose of the meditation. Read it through a number of times to get clear on its vital points. You can have a friend guide you through the meditation or you can record it on tape and play it back as you are meditating. Alternatively there are CDs available on some of the meditations found here (see page 204 for further information). These meditations involve closing your eyes and opening the inner eye of the imagination and using a variety of visualisation techniques.
3. In regard to posture these meditations can be done either sitting or lying down. It is important that the chest is open so that breathing is unrestricted and also that the spine is relatively straight.
4. The meditations begin and end with awareness of the ongoing cycle of breath. Yogis say that the in-breath and the out-breath are the two guards of the city of life. Breath is a reflection of our state of being, and so when we are tense or frightened our breathing is very different from our breathing when we are joyful or serene. Awareness of the breath is a very ancient technique and can be used for becoming more present, for increasing life-force energy or simply for signalling to the body consciousness that meditation practice is about to begin.

5. With awareness of the breath you may find that you enter a place of stillness and peace, or you may find that you are more aware of the restlessness of the mind. In the latter case this may occur because your mind is over-stimulated and not used to this kind of practice. However, with practice and perseverance, and without fighting, the mind can be harnessed and its energy directed towards the focus of the meditation.

## **A Meditation on Joy and Suffering**

*Find a posture where your spine is straight and close your eyes and become aware of the cycle of your breath. Without changing how you breathe notice your natural rhythm and watch your in-breath – the pause – the out-breath – the pause. Do not interfere with or attempt to control your breathing, simply notice it, placing your full attention on this cycle. Although thoughts and feelings may arise in you, simply notice them and bring your attention back to the breath. Accept where you are with this process and continue to place your full awareness on the breath.*

*Now spend some time dwelling on suffering. Fix your attention on the feeling of suffering and what it means to you. Allow any images, thoughts, memories or feelings of suffering to arise. Stay centred and focused and do not allow yourself to become lost in your stream of consciousness; stay present and still, mindful of your breath. This simple awareness of your suffering is a step towards healing. Then when you are ready, give permission for all the suffering within you to diminish. See it shrinking so that you can hold it as a ball of pulsing energy in your hand. See it shrink to the size of a marble, and then of a pea, and then of a grain of sand – and then it is gone.*

*Then spend some time dwelling on joy. Fix your attention on the thought of joy and what it means to you. Allow any image, memories or feelings of joy to arise. Do not get lost in*

*this stream of consciousness; stay conscious of your breath and the joy that is within you.*

*When you are ready, give this joy permission to increase and allow it to expand and fill your body, mind and emotions. Become filled with the feelings of joy until you are a radiant start sending out joy to everything and everyone around you.*

*With your awareness of your cycle of breath, slowly come back to full waking consciousness.*

## **Growth Through Inner and Outer Power**

Power is an essential quality for growth and it can act both as a propelling force and a limiting one. Power either threatens to ensnare us from the outside or it radiates out through us from our spiritual core.

The Threatening Face of Power is rooted in a deep sense of feeling powerless in life and in the conviction that all power exists outside of the self. We are often conditioned to believe that power primarily exists within such things as multinational corporations, organised religion, governments, the scientific establishment, the military, and so on. Such bodies appear so powerful and we seem so small in comparison. We can also get caught up in thinking that if only we could know enough, look good enough, be strong enough, be connected enough, be critical enough, be aggressive enough or manipulative enough then somehow we could get to be powerful too. Such modes of power are based in fear and have little belief in inner power, or if they do they see it as an aggressive force to be used to dominate others. Such a worldview sees power as a scarce commodity where only a select few can wield the baton of authority, and so often power must be taken by stealth, force or deceit. Naturally, all of this is a recipe for conflict, which in turn will generate victims and persecutors and, inevitably, pain and suffering. Life then becomes a battlefield of



winners or losers; some even see this conflict continuing into the afterlife, with the winners going to somewhere nice and the losers ending up somewhere horrible for eternity. Such ideas have tended to be responsible for the violence, warfare and mayhem on our planet.

The Radiant Face of Power is rooted in a state of internal connectedness and an appreciation of the spirit that dwells within. This power flows from our core out into the world and allows for an aligning and harnessing of all our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual resources towards upliftment and growth. This inner power is friendly yet it is also unpredictable, for it seeks to sweep us beyond the safety of the known and out into the great mystery of our unknown potential. This inner power seeks to make us a vehicle for change in the world and to engage us in issues where transformation is needed. This power sees no enemies, only a flow of interconnectedness – since we are all connected through spirit – and visions to be supported. This power flows through the gap between our thoughts and manifests in our words and actions on our life's path. Without this power we would cease to exist, for it ever sustains us and creates us anew. Paradoxically this power is also to be found within our vulnerability, for it is here that are found the gems of gentleness, playfulness and innocence. It is also, strangely enough, to be found within the things we fear the most. There is a saying in witchcraft that goes 'where there is fear there is power', and this is because fear is an energy that has the most potential to be useful. Fear is where our energy is at its most contracted and liberating any internal patterns of fear creates a greater amount of mental, emotional and physical energy for more positive uses.

Our power resides in the core of our spirit, which could be defined, if such a thing were possible, as the divine indwelling soul and the intelligence that creates and sustains the universe anew in each and every moment.

## **A Meditation on Inner Power**

*Begin to relax and be aware of your breath.*

*Relax physically by being aware of any tension in your body and, with awareness, ask your body to relax. You can tense parts of your body and then relax then to notice the difference if this helps.*

*Notice your breath and use the polarity of the inward and outward breath to take you deeper into relaxation. Do not interfere with the breath, simply be aware of it. In this state notice all your thoughts and feelings and allow them to be whatever they are.*

*Within your body is a point where you feel the most centred and tranquil. This may be in your heart or belly regions. Explore where you feel most centred. You will know this place when you find it by the sense of peace and tranquillity that is there.*

*This is also your place of power and you can open to this inner power and allow it to flow through you as if there is a fountain of energy that is beginning to pour forth from you. Being mindful of your breath, allow this power to radiate throughout your physical body; allow it to be absorbed into your bones, your blood, your organs, your muscles, tissue and skin. Feel the whole physical body absorbing this pure energy and then allow this power to flow into your emotions. Feel this pure sparkling energy stream through your emotions. As you feel this energy allow it to flow into those places that hold your anger, envy, hostility, grief and pain. Allow this inner power to liberate the power locked in your emotions and let this energy flow.*

*Then allow this power (it can be either a calming or an invigorating force) to flow into your mind. Allow it to stream into all the places in your mind where your energy is locked into limiting your thinking patterns. Allow this energy to begin to disentangle itself and add to the flow of power passing*

*through your mind. Stay in this flow as long as you wish, then come back to your centre or power and begin to be aware of your breath. When you are ready, return to full waking consciousness refreshed and alive and ready to meet the day.*

## **Making and Breaking Masks of Power**

For this exercise you will need a piece of card or paper big enough to cover your face. A paper plate will do if there is nothing else to hand. With this you can make a mask that represents all the threatening aspects of power you have experienced in your life. Into this mask you can pour all the abuse and hurt and situations where you have felt people have had power over you. Gather some art materials - crayons, paint, feathers, beads, coloured wool, glue, glitter, and whatever else you wish. Before you begin to make this mask, spend some time in meditation recalling all the times you have felt threatened and bullied and controlled. What feelings do you have about the abuse of power? When you are ready, allow the emotions that are bottled up inside you to pour out into the mask as you make it. If any words come to mind then simply speak these into the mask. Take your time and when you are finished sit with your mask and feel the power of it. You can either keep this mask as a reminder of the work you still want to do around this issue or, if you are ready, you can choose to burn it in a sacred ceremony to celebrate being free of what it represents. This exercise can be done alone or as a group activity.

On a different occasion repeat this exercise but this time make a mask that represents the positive and radiant aspects of power that you wish to invite into your life. This mask can be placed somewhere in your home or garden to remind you of your radiant inner power.

## **Expressing Power Safely**

For thousands of years across the planet it has not been safe to express inner power, and countless people have been hurt, rejected or killed for speaking their truth or acting with integrity. Just as a child will learn to feel afraid of fire after being burnt, so too on a larger scale we have learnt to play small in life. It is generally safe now at least in the Western world, to allow this inner power to radiate out and touch others. Opening to inner power will inevitably lead to a more empowering way of living, and the world now needs people to help anchor this new vibration of inner power. As more of us embrace our inner power with gentleness and wisdom, old limiting power structures cannot help but collapse, making way for more enlightened channels for this radiant power.