



HEART to HEART

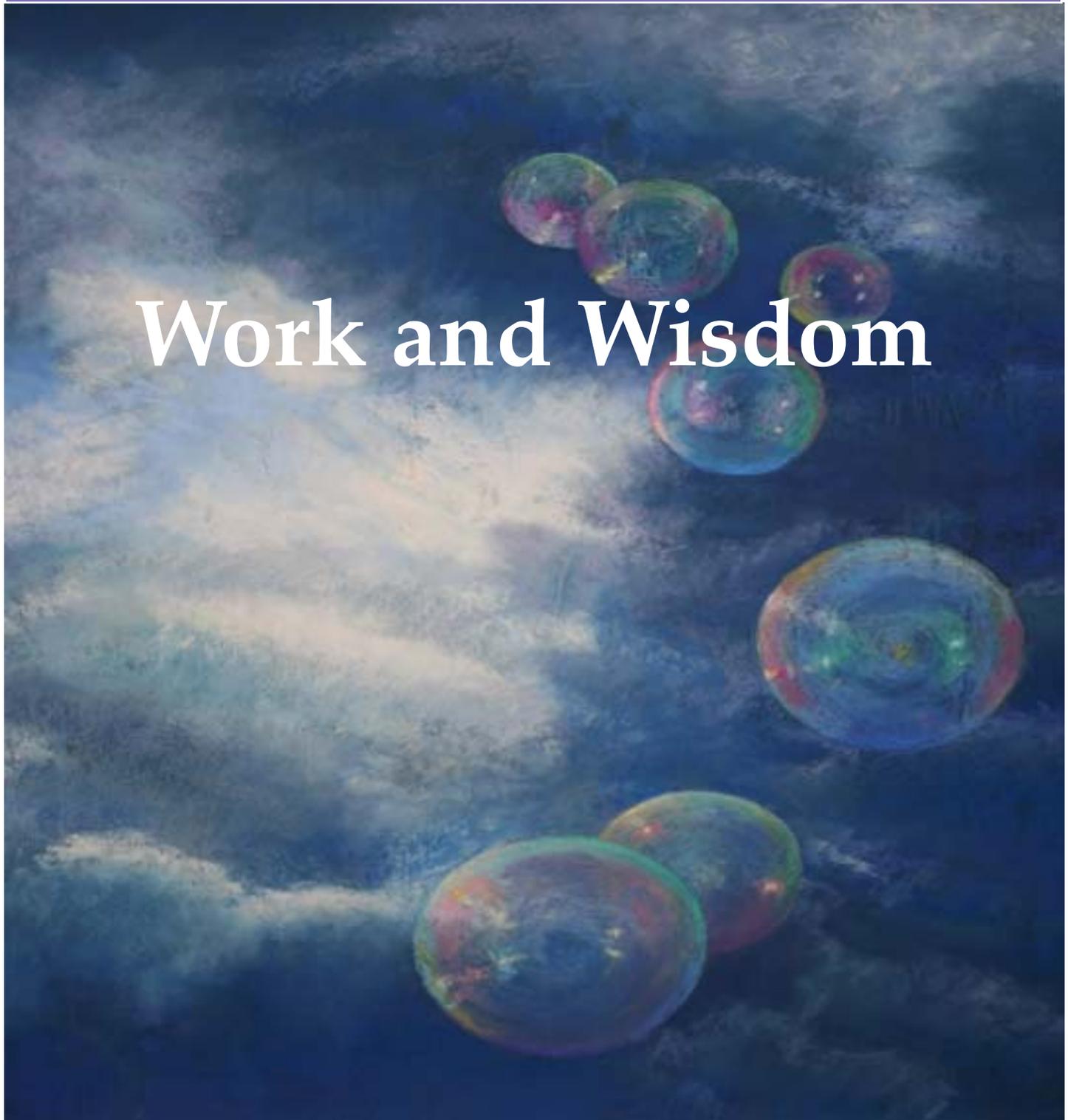
Consciousness speaking to Consciousness

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Work and Wisdom

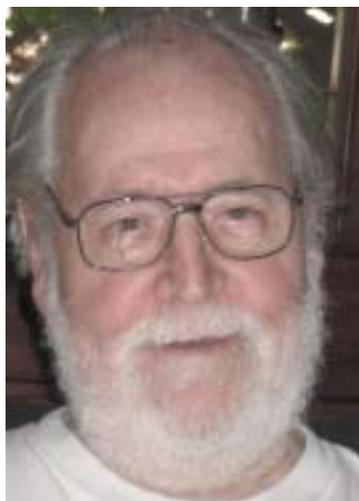


Watercolor "They Nearly Reach the Sky" by Barbara Steinacker, Columbia MD, an AHAM Graduate who combines work with wisdom. To view other artwork of Barbara's, visit www.bsteinacker.com



CONSCIOUS ATTUNEMENT TO YOUR WORK AND LIFE

The following is an excerpt from the book *The Handbook to Perpetual Happiness* by A. Ramana pp. 220-221



Very few people are *really* alert and consciously attuned to what they are *actually* doing in the ordinary course of their day. Only a few people can intentionally hold their mind *totally present* with regard to the current task at hand. Instead, with the majority of people their minds are running or jumping from place to place, either in the past or future. It is always on this or that, on what will be, or might be, or should have been. Even when they are dealing with a current project their mind is often more concerned with “how it *ought* to be,” or on wanting to change it, or wishing it was different. Or, they dream about the day when it will be complete, or perhaps about something else they would prefer. The mind is always seeing what it could do to improve or change a thing, or to end it, and thus it is not often being-with whatever is currently present – just as *it is* – with no resistance to it. Candidly ask yourself these following questions regarding your own ordinary mental tendencies, habits, feelings and behavior. And be strictly honest with yourself – really tell yourself the truth:

- “Do I ever start anything only to drop it unfinished, or incomplete, to then begin something else that may (or does) also end unfinished as well?” ___yes ___no
- If so, how often? “How many incomplete projects do I now have lying around at work, and at home, from the past month?_____ The past year?_____ The past 5 years?” _____
- “Do I find it difficult to make up my mind on some *definite* goal that I desire to achieve, knowing or believing that I *do have* what it takes to succeed with it if only I could decide just what it is I want to do?” ___yes ___no
- “Do I ever procrastinate in doing something – or put off finishing it if it is something I have started but have not yet completed – knowing it would bring me genuine satisfaction if I would only get around to doing it?” ___yes ___no
- “Do I secretly (without admitting it to anyone) have inner fears, or the feelings of self-doubt with regard to my ability to respond easily and effectively to all the demands made on me, or daily required of me?” ___yes ___no

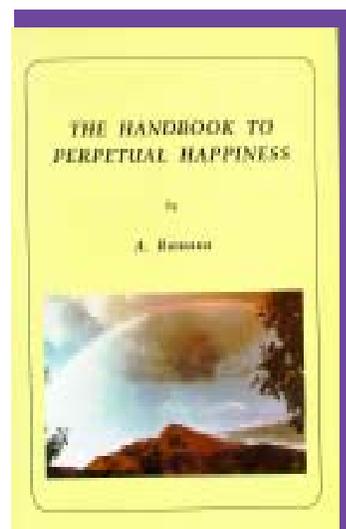
If your *true* answer is “yes” to *any* of these questions, then two things are fairly certain about you. First, you are quite ordinary – or average. For over 95 out of every 100 people, who tell the truth about it, must also answer – “yes” to *all* of them. So don’t feel bad, or put yourself down if your honest answer is “yes” to any or all of them. You have a lot of company. However, would you like to be in a place where you can honestly answer “no” to *all* of them? If so, that is what this book is about.

The second thing a “yes” answer to any of the above questions indicates about you is, you are not really as happy, secure or at peace – within yourself – as you wish to be. You probably live a great deal of the time in a state of disorder, frustration, confusion, doubt, stress, incompleteness, worry, envy, or fear. And, your moments of real happiness and real peace are probably “few and far between.”

Incompletion in your life and affairs is truly a breeding ground for self-doubt, while your procrastination just breeds more and more of it. The results being, a very poor self-image.

All these feelings of self-doubt, along with their causes and their effects, can be easily eliminated. This occurs simply by your conscientious and faithful compliance or adaptation to the life-giving principles and processes in this teaching. ♥

To learn how to “plan your work and work your plan,” go to page 231-235 in the Handbook. To order a copy of the book, go to www.aham.com/bookstore/index.html.



“Seva”... A True Surrender To The Divine

By Elizabeth Mac Donald AHAM's Assistant Spiritual Director and Senior Trainer



Elizabeth and Lina (Chapel Hill, NC)

AHAM began thirty years ago this August and has come about in a true spirit of “Seva.” At that time, I was busy working in a career and bringing up two daughters, as a single Mom. This was all new to me and I was certainly in a place of not knowing how this all was going to come about. Ramana assured me that we would be guided each step of the way from the Source, the Heart and that all that we would need would be given at the perfect time. And, I intuitively knew this was true and trusted what he was saying implicitly. He said that it was even more than surrender ... it is *sacrifice*, or “making sacred” one’s actions.

Ramana’s words from “Radical Realizations” can best describe what is meant by “Seva”... *“truly offering or dedicating oneself – one’s being, one’s mind, heart, will, body, life, actions, etc., – to the Divine. Therefore, it conveys the true, original sense of the word ‘sacrifice,’ which is, ‘making sacred’ all of one’s actions and deeds, by consecrating and dedicating them to the service of God.”*

Over the years, we have had a number of folks who have contributed to AHAM in this way. *Everyone’s* contribution has created AHAM in the place that it is today. One participant in Seva just recently shared with an I SIT (Intensive Self-Inquiry) graduate, her experience in this regard ... *“AHAM is the sum of all of us and can create whatever is necessary to serve whoever is on the doorstep at the moment.”* And, then she proceeded to share ... *“and glad you are part of the sum.”*



Teresa and Doug (Asheboro, NC)

As I write this note to you who are reading this now, it is shared in love and gratitude for *making sacred* your daily actions and by *dedicating them to the service of God*. We have seen major changes happening on this planet since 1978. Let’s continue to focus on the perfection of this Divine Plan we are being guided by and continue to give way to this Grace-full Presence that is working through us all ... it is like a Guiding Hand taking us through the darkness and into the Light ... following this “unerring intuition” all the way Home.



Charlotte (AHAM Center)

George Bernard Shaw says it beautifully” ... *I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die. For the harder I work the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle to me. It’s a sort of splendid torch which I’ve got to hold up for the moment and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing on to future generations.”*

And, Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi says it all in such a few words from his *Essence of Instruction* ... *“Abiding in this state of bliss beyond bondage and release, is steadfastness – in service of the Lord.”* ♥

**Have you heard about
the
SPRING FLING?**



Willie, Greensboro, NC



No Conflict Between Work and Wisdom

From *Be As You Are: The Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi*

Page 60

Questioner: *How is it possible to become selfless while leading a life of worldly activity?*

Bhagavan: There is no conflict between work and wisdom.

Questioner: *Do you mean that one can continue all the old activities in one's profession, for instance, and at the same time get enlightenment?*

Bhagavan: Why not? But in that case one will not think that it is the old personality which is doing the work, because one's consciousness will gradually become transferred until it is centered in That which is beyond the little self.

Questioner: *If a person is engaged in work, there will be little time left for him to meditate.*

Bhagavan: Setting apart time for meditation is only for the merest spiritual novices. A man who is advancing will begin to enjoy the deeper beatitude whether he is at work or not. While his hands are in society, he keeps his head cool in solitude.

Questioner: *How is that done?*

Bhagavan: You have to ask yourself the question "Who am I?" This investigation will lead in the end to the discovery of something within you which is behind the mind. Solve that great problem and you will solve all other problems.

Page 134

Questioner: *Is it possible to enjoy awareness of Reality (samadhi) while busy in worldly work?*

Bhagavan: The feeling "I work" is the hindrance. Ask yourself "Who works?" Remember who you are. Then the work will not bind you, it will go on automatically. Make no effort either to work or renounce; it is your effort which is the bondage. What is destined to happen will happen. If you are destined not to work, work cannot be had even if you hunt for it. If you are destined to work, you will not be able to avoid it and you will be forced to engage yourself in it. So, leave it to the higher power; you cannot renounce or retain as you choose.

The Self is all. Are you apart from the Self? Or can the work go on without the Self? The Self is universal so all actions will go on whether you strain yourself to be engaged in them or not. The work will go on of itself. Thus Krishna told Arjuna (in the *Bhagavad Gita*) that he need not trouble to kill the Kauravas because they were already slain by God. It was not for him to resolve to work and worry himself about it, but to allow his own nature to carry out the will of the higher power.

Page 135

Questioner: *But the work may suffer if I do not attend to it.*

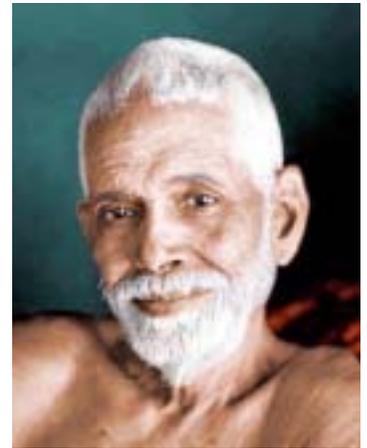
Bhagavan: Attending to the Self means attending to the work. Because you identify yourself with the body, you think that work is done by you. But the body and its activities, including that work, are not apart from the Self. What does it matter whether you attend to the work or not? When you walk from one place to another you do not attend to the steps you take and yet you find yourself after a time at your goal. You see how the business of walking goes on without your attending to it? So also with other kinds of work.

Questioner: *If one holds the Self in remembrance, will one's actions always be right?*

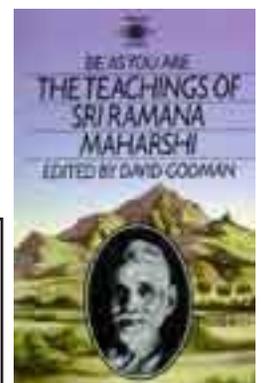
Bhagavan: They ought to be. However, such a person is not concerned with the right or wrong of actions. His actions are God's and therefore right.

Questioner: *How can my mind be still if I have to use it more than other people? I want to go into solitude and renounce my headmaster's work.*

Bhagavan: No. You may remain where you are and go on with the work. What is the underlying current which vivifies the mind, and enables it to do all this work? It is the Self. So that is the real source of your activity. Simply be aware of it during your work and do not forget it. Contemplate, in the background of your mind, even while working. To do that, do not hurry, take your own time. Keep the remembrance of your real nature alive, even while working, and avoid haste which causes you to forget. Be deliberate. Do not imagine it is you who are doing the work. Think that it is the underlying current which is doing the work. Identify yourself with the current. If you work unhurriedly, recollectedly, your work or service need not be a hinderance. ♥



Be As You Are available from
AHAM Publications.
[www.aham.com/bookstore/
index.html](http://www.aham.com/bookstore/index.html)





Sam and the Family's visit to Hawaii

During the New Years holidays my daughter Pam and her family visited me in Hawaii. They had a wonderful visit enjoying the sunny weather and the Aloha spirit. During this time I moved my meditation space into my bedroom to have my privacy and to free the rest of the house for the family to enjoy. During the early meditation times I sometimes could hear the grandchildren getting up and wanting to be near their mom and dad for comfort and security.

One morning before my morning meditation I went to the kitchen to get a drink of water. When I turned around to go back to my bedroom, I saw Sam standing right behind me. He looked sleepy, but had a little smile on this face looking at me. I thought that this was very strange, as he normally would knock at his parent's bedroom wanting to be with them during the dark hours of the morning.

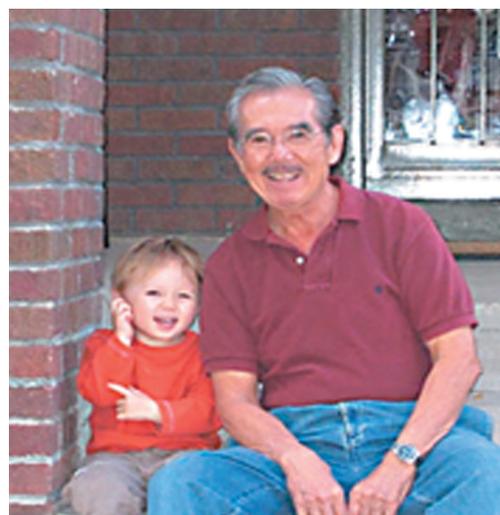
The baby Mia was up several times during the night, and I could see that both Pam and Karl needed the rest. My first thought was to take care of Sam, but I would have to delay my morning meditation. Instead of going to my bedroom I carried Sam to the sofa in the living room and put him on my lap and comforted him with my arms. Sam is a very active and energetic child and does not sit still for long and I thought that he would want to get up and play in a few minutes. He quietly sat on my lap and during this time he was quiet and still. As I sat on the sofa holding him I decided to quietly do the Self-Inquiry meditation, even if it lasted just for a few minutes. Sam continued to be calm and quiet and every time he needed to move or change positions I would lightly stroke his back or his head to comfort him and focused on being in the Heart all this time. The meditation felt very peaceful. When I looked at the clock an hour had gone by and Sam was still awake, but was still and calm. This was very unusual for a little boy who normally cannot sit still even for a few minutes.

After my meditation was over Sam was hungry and we had something to eat. Later, I shared with Pam about Sam sitting still for over an hour during my meditation and she said, "I know. Sam told me that he meditated with grandpa this morning." I was very surprised, and was not aware that Sam was meditating with me. Pam then told me, "Ever since you came back from your retreat on Vancouver Island and did you meditations at our home, Sam was very curious and interested to find out about how you meditated. Now he knows." Somehow after that morning we seem to have created a closer bond, and I feel that he will always remember and keep this experience in his heart for the rest of his life. Thank you. ♥

Namasté,

Ted S., Hawaii

Ted is a recent graduate of the Self-Inquiry Training that was held on Vancouver Island, BC., Canada



Sam (left) Grandpa Ted

Upcoming Intensive Self-Inquiry Programs: April 19-27 and August 2-10, 2008. There is a 30-day registration cut-off date. Call or email the Center for information. Ph: (336) 381-3988 or email: ahamcntr@asheboro.com



Words of Wisdom



Work is Love Made Visible

Real success is achieved when you like what you do.
No one can succeed in any endeavor that they don't like.
If you don't love what you're doing, then don't do it.

Your chances of success are directly proportional
to the degree of pleasure you derive from what you do.

Do something that you have a deep personal interest in.
Do something you'd enjoy spending twelve to fifteen hours a day
working at, and the rest of the time thinking about.

Don't set compensation as your goal.
Find work you like and the compensation will follow.

Work is not your punishment.
It's your reward, your strength and your pleasure.

When your vocation becomes your vacation,
you'll never work another day in your life.

– Max Steingart

To find joy in work
is to discover
the fountain of youth.
– Pearl S. Buck



If you cannot work with love
but only with distaste,
it is better that
you should leave your work.
– Kahlil Gibran

Work and Wisdom

“Why should your occupation or duties in life interfere with your spiritual effort? For instance, there is a difference between your activities at home and in the office. In your office activities you are detached and so long as you do your duty you do not care what happens or whether it results in gain or loss to the employer. But your duties at home are performed with attachment and you are all the time anxious as to whether they will bring advantage or disadvantage to you and your family. But it is possible to perform all the activities of life with detachment and regard only the Self as real. It is wrong to suppose that if one is fixed in the Self one's duties in life will not be properly performed. It is like an actor. He dresses and acts and even feels the part he is playing, but he knows really that he is not that character but someone else in real life. In the same way, why should the body-consciousness or the feeling “I-am-the-body” disturb you, once you know for certain that you are not the body but the Self? Nothing that the body does should shake you from abidance in the Self. Such abidance will never interfere with the proper and effective discharge of whatever duties the body has, any more than the actor's being aware of his real status in life interferes with his acting a part on the stage.” ♥

– Day by Day with Bhagavan, p. 211





Zucchini-Spinach Soup

Zucchini and spinach create a palate-pleasing combination. Serve this soup either warm or cold with croutons.

- 3 zucchini
- 1 bunch spinach
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 2 onions, diced
- 3 potatoes, cubed
- 6 cups vegetable broth
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper



1. Slice zucchini into 1/4-inch thick circles. Thoroughly wash spinach, place in salad spinner and spin dry or on towels and pat dry.
2. Heat oil in a 3-quart saucepan. Add onions and cook for 6 to 8 minutes. Add zucchini, potatoes, and vegetable broth, bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for 35 minutes. Add spinach, salt, and pepper, and cook 5 minutes more. Place half of the soup in a blender or food processor and puree. Repeat with the other half. Reheat if needed and serve.

Makes 7 cups, 6 servings.



Daily Messages

AHAM sends out Daily Messages for transforming the mind and realizing the true nature of the Self, or real God, based on the Teaching of Sri Ramana Maharshi. If you wish to receive these FREE daily messages, Monday to Friday, simply e-mail your request to the AHAM Center at: ahamcntr@asheboro.com Subject: **Daily Messages**

Here's an example:

The sense of doership is bondage, and not the actions themselves. "Be still and know that I am God." Stillness will prevail and there will be no agitation of the mind. Agitation of the mind is the cause of desire, the sense of doership, and of personality, or the personal sense of "I." If that is stopped, there is quiet. — Sri Ramana Maharshi.



Heart Watch

Every four hours, during our Heart Times, one of our staff sits in silent meditation in our sanctuary and consciously envisions a successful conclusion of the particular need of each person for whom a request has been made. If you would like to have a request placed in our Heart Watch book, then phone, mail, or e-mail your prayer request to the AHAM Center. ahamcntr@asheboro.com; Subject: **Heart Watch Request**



We Make a Life by What We give



The First day of school our professor introduced himself and challenged us to get to know someone we didn't already know. I stood up to look around when a gentle hand touched my shoulder.

I turned round to find a wrinkled, little old lady beaming up at me with a smile that lit up her entire being.

She said, "Hi handsome. My name is Rose. I'm eighty-seven years old. Can I give you a hug?"

I laughed and enthusiastically responded, "Of course you may!" and she gave me a giant squeeze.

"Why are you in college at such a young, innocent age?" I asked.

She jokingly replied, "I'm here to meet a rich husband, get married, and have a couple of kids..."

"No seriously," I asked. I was curious what may have motivated her to be taking on this challenge at her age.

"I always dreamed of having a college education and now I'm getting one!" she told me.

After class we walked to the student union building and shared a chocolate milkshake.

We became instant friends. Every day for the next three months we would leave class together and talk nonstop. I was always mesmerized listening to this "time machine" as she shared her wisdom and experience with me.

Over the course of the year, Rose became a campus icon and she easily made friends wherever she went.

She loved to dress up and she reveled in the attention bestowed upon her from the other students. She was living it up.

At the end of the semester we invited Rose to speak at our football banquet.

I'll never forget what she taught us. She was introduced and stepped up to the podium. As she began to deliver her prepared speech, she dropped her three by five cards on the floor.

Frustrated and a little embarrassed she leaned into the microphone and simply said, "I'm sorry I'm so jittery. I gave up beer for Lent and this whiskey is killing me! I'll never get my speech back in order so let me just tell you what I know."

As we laughed she cleared her throat and began, "We do not stop playing because we are old; we grow old because we stop playing."

There are only four secrets to staying young, being happy, and achieving success. 1. You have to laugh and find humor every day. 2. You've got to have a dream. When you lose your dreams, you die.

We have so many people walking around who are dead and don't even know it!

3. There is a huge difference between growing older and growing up.

If you are nineteen years old and lie in bed for one full year and don't do one productive thing, you will turn twenty years old. If I am eighty-seven years old and stay in bed for a year and never do anything I will turn eighty-eight.

Anybody can grow older. That doesn't take any talent or ability. The idea is to

grow up by always finding opportunity in change.

4. Have no regrets.

The elderly usually don't have regrets for what we did, but rather for things we did not do. The only people who fear death are those with regrets."

She concluded her speech by courageously singing "The Rose."

She challenged each of us to study the lyrics and live them out in our daily lives.

At the year's end Rose finished the college degree she had begun all those years ago.

One week after graduation Rose died peacefully in her sleep.

Over two thousand college students attended her funeral in tribute to the wonderful woman who taught by example that it's never too late to be all you can possibly be.

When you finish reading this, please send this peaceful word of advice to your friends and family, they'll really enjoy it!

These words have been passed along in loving memory of ROSE.

REMEMBER, GROWING OLDER IS MANDATORY. GROWING UP IS OPTIONAL.

We make a Living by what we get. We make a Life by what we give.

God promises a safe landing, not a calm passage. If God brings you to it, He will bring you through it. ♥

—Anonymous





Upcoming Events



March:

- 6 - 9 Conscious & Clear Living **Refresher Program**
- 14 - 16 Sat Sanga
- 19 - 23 Neutralizing Your Negative Past (NNP)

April:

- 4 - 6 Awareness Retreat Experience
- 19 - 27 Intensive Self-Inquiry Retreat/Training

For information on any of our programs, contact the AHAM Center at: <ahamcntr@asheboro.com>
Subject: Program Information

Awareness Retreat Experience (ARE)

Why not "give yourself" 2 to 5 days retreat time of abiding in Pure Awareness? This is simple, effortless "being meditation" at AHAM's tranquil, 37-acre meditation Retreat Center. The "Awareness Retreat Experience" is perfect for those wanting to "get away from it all" and to experience deep peace, solitude, and relaxation. Enjoy our quiet meditation trails and beautiful Reflection Lake. There is personal guidance into the experience of Self-Inquiry – "the eyes open" meditation that can be used by anyone, anytime, and anyplace. Experience this, and much more of AHAM's transformational teaching... all in a very "laid back" and relaxed format.

A retreat experience can be scheduled to fit your schedule. It is also already offered on selected, specific weekends. Contact the Center soon.

If you would like to receive AHAM's e-Heart to Heart magazine, email the Center at:
ahamcntr@asheboro.com
Subject: Heart to Heart

Feel free to pass it on to your friends or loved ones as well.



AHAM's Sat Sanga (Main) House



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Save the Date!



AHAM's 30th Anniversary Celebration
August 22-24, 2008