

**Welcome to WOMEN'S WEAVE, the MUSE-LETTER from the Women's Quest staff.**

Our goal is to provide motivation to continue on your quest for health and balance. Each issue includes practical tips and inspiration for the body, mind and spirit. See <http://www.womensquest.com/> for a description of our programs. We look forward to seeing you at one of our retreats in 2003!

We're eager to show you the loveliness of winter in Colorado...great trails in the Rockies...the magic of Italy...

In case you're wondering if you didn't receive the past few issues...you didn't. Our staff has been stranded on the precarious top of a mountain since July. (Just kidding.) We had a full summer and fall-traveling and teaching...generally away-from-computer time. Our cozy office is now inviting, we have ideas and inspiration we would like to share, and our computers are purring. The newsletter will again be coming to you by email each month.

**The topic of this issue of the newsletter is PEACE and A-BUN-DANCE!**

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**WOMEN'S WEAVE MUSELETTER: 10: Peace, A-Bun-Dance & Thanks-Giving**

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**1 - Peace is Every Step - by Colleen**

This past summer I attended a gathering with Thich Nhat Hanh. He is a gentle and powerful teacher of mindfulness, and the author of several books. My favorite book of his is Peace is Every Step.

I have a tag from the gathering hanging in my car to remind me that every day we have the opportunity to create peace in our lives. The tag reads: "Peace is Every Step!" It blows in the wind as I fly down the road. It is up to US to start the Peace Train.

I have always used my imagination in creating everyday ways to bring Peace into my life. It only takes the time of a thought!!!! I've listed my simple Made Up ways to MAKE PEACE.

Albert Einstein said: "Imagination is more important than Knowledge." Our minds and hearts are POWERFUL...by imagining and praying for a better world and a more peaceful planet we do our part to create peace. You don't need to be in a church or one your knees to think good thoughts. You can do it anytime, anyplace and in any way. How cool!! Your thoughts are very powerful so if you don't like the situation or the way people are doing things, instead of sending negative mean thoughts to (a particular person) it is better to send loving healthy thoughts filled with peace.

\* As we celebrate THANKSGIVING I am reminded of how giving thanks can create peace as well. GIVING THANKS creates gratitude that will generate more for you to be grateful for. It is a wonderful cycle. Once you start noticing your blessings, you may not be able to stop! When I go to bed I consider all the BLESSINGS in my life. I limit myself to 5 things each night, because I could stay up all night recognizing all that I have to be thankful for. Every night I fall asleep giving Thanks for the beautiful day - and guess what happens: Another day comes and it is even more beautiful. This simple act can create more Peace in your life. Appreciate your ability to be grateful!

**In the car:**

\* I take deep breaths at each stoplight...breathing in THANKFULNESS. I breathe out frustration or anything blocking me from allowing myself to feel peaceful and thankful.

\* I use the steering wheel as a medicine wheel...everywhere it turns I program it to spread love and understanding.

\* I always sing - all the time. But mostly when I am in the car or in the shower because no one can hear me. Music washes away the dust of everyday life. Singing tends to clear the air. When I sing I am always in a good mood and spreading happy molecules. Belt out a tune for Peace!

**At home:**

\* I light a candle each day. This candle is for friends, family, or anything that I want to bring more light to. I take a moment to ask that love, peace, and protection surround the people (or places or situations) I have on my heart.

**In the mirror:**

This is the place we need to really have compassion!

\* A simple task is to say "THANK YOU BODY for carrying me around all day. Thank you hips, tummy and every miraculous body part for participating with me in this glorious dance of Life!"

\* Another trick is to simply to SMILE. I smile whenever I feel a little crabby. Smiling opens our central channel and connects us with the wisdom of our higher selves to give us peace and perspective. Smiling releases hormones that course through our system to make us feel happier and boosts our immune system. When I'm at the mirror I make faces...this helps me not take myself too seriously...(HEE HEE! I can make some extremely silly faces!)

**When I am out on a run:**

Each day before I go running, cycling or skiing I put a little imaginary angel on the bottom of my shoe. (This angel is very skinny, she doesn't mind being squished!) I ask this angel to bless my path and everywhere I step (or cycle or ski) that day. I believe this creates a wonderful healing grid of blessings all over my mountain neighborhood. You could do this with your car tires, bike tires, and baby joggers! It takes a second to become conscious and ask for this blessing along your daily path.

**Far out Peace Plans** (These thoughts may be to weird but I'll share "em anyway.)

\* I see my cat sleeping all day long...he is in the wonderful space called Dreamtime (where it is very Peaceful)...so in my mind I ask him to spread Peace while he sleeps! When I ride my horses I give them a task for spreading peace. They're Peace Ponies. Most animals like to be given a job...so why not get them working for Peace!

Creating PEACE does not mean that you have to spend hours each day meditating. It just means that you have to infuse your everyday life with GRATITUDE, GRATEFULNESS and SMILES.

When I talk about "programming" something, I'm just setting an intention with my mind and heart. I ask and trust that what I am asking will be done. It is like a prayer. It is good to invite god (however you know him/her) to help! I don't question, "How could this work?" or drain my energy with a negative thought like "This is stupid." I simply set my wonderful peaceful intentions and let the fun begin. TRY IT!

" We pray for the power to be gentle; the strength to be forgiving; the patience to be understanding; and the endurance to accept the consequences to holding to what we believe to be right. Help us to devote our whole life and thought and energy to the task of making peace, praying always for the inspiration and the power to fulfill the destiny for which we were created."  
-adapted prayer from Week of Prayer for World Peace, 1978

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## **2 - Peace & A-Bun-Dance by Gretchen**

Colleen and I were talking the other day during a workout. We were speaking of how distressing it is that so many women create an internal war of self-hatred, especially towards their bodies. No matter what your perspective on world politics, this story relates to the value of loving ourselves and cultivating internal peace.

A Native American boy was talking with his grandfather.  
"What do you think about the world situation?" he asked.  
The grandfather replied, "I feel like two wolves are fighting in my heart.  
One is full of anger and hatred. The other is full of love, forgiveness and peace."

"Which one will win?" asked the boy.  
The grandfather replied, "The one I feed."

When I consider abundance, I recognize the multitudes of ways that I am blessed in my life - by friends, family, health, bountiful nature, plenty of food, plenty of "stuff", time to do the things I enjoy, and on and on. (In moments of contracting-awareness I can focus on the "non-enoughs" - not enough time, etc....but really there is PLENTY, and I am showered with feelings of gratefulness, when I realize my blessings.) I rather like the logo: LIFE IS GOOD.

Imagine this: You're cooking a meal, and you happen to consider how wonderful it is to have delicious food, a pleasant place to cook, people you love with whom you can share the meal, a safe home, good health, ETCETERA! This abundance calls for A-BUN-DANCE! How 'bout putting on some music, and DANCING! Let your arms swing wide while you're stirring, move your hips as you put things in the oven, and gallop over to the sink. There is no rule that cooking (or anything) has to be serious, and dancing brings joy and creativity into the body. Remember King David from the bible; he danced for the love of God. (David's wife, Michal, was not pleased; she could have used a Women's Quest retreat and learned how to loosen up.) Dancing is a way to CELEBRATE, a way to offer thanks, a way to sweat your prayers, a way to MOVE emotions that are moving inside you.

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## **3 - Music for Dancing by Gretchen**

At Women's Quest retreats I have the PLEASURE of playing DJ – choosing music to create a quiet mood, to get women dancing, to open the visioning heart to the landscape within. I love exploring the territory between yoga and creative movement - finding the way with rhythm and music. I believe that the essence of yoga leads to finding ways to unfold your body in your OWN unique way, and that expression is more important than the geometry of form. Witnessing women create their own steps, their own dance...is rewarding and inspiring. I love how music can take me, move me, surprise me... There is a difference between Being Moved (by the forces of expression coming through the body), and Moving (thinking about how you're gonna move.) There is magic and mystery in Being Moved. It takes opening to the unknown, trusting yourself, and listening to impulses and sensation. Sometimes the right music helps.

If you looked at your body with a microscope, you would realize that you are ALWAYS moving - all your cells are a-wiggling around in a lovely dance of molecules. Make that dance visible! A-bun-dance is worth being thankful for.

There's an African Saying: If you can walk, you can DANCE!

Here is a list of music I RECOMMEND:

Check Amazon, or listen to the CD at a store listening-station, if possible. Amazon has some of these titles used. (It is too hard to describe each one - but they are all ones I think are great!) I put an \* by 10 that are my "favorites."

For contemplation, gentle yoga, massage:

\* Deva Premal: Love is Space, The Essence

Stephen Micus: Athos, To the Evening Child

Shiela Chandra: A Bone Crone Drone, Weaving My Ancestor's Voices

Coyote Oldman: Compassion, In Medicine River

David Darling: Eight String Religion

Paul Horn: Inside the Great Pyramid, Inside Monument Valley

Brian Eno: Music for Airports

Anuvida & Nik Tyndall Rieki: Healing Hands

\* Shastro & Nadama: Zen Notes, Shaman's Healing

Carlos Nakai: all recordings are good, especially collaborations with Peter Kater

Windam Hill record label has great piano recordings <http://www.windham.com/>

More active yoga, "trance dance," dance/movement exploration:

\* Asana 2: moving meditation [variousartists]

Chinmaya Dunster: Yoga on Sacred Ground

Tulku: Trancendence

\* Moorcheeba: Who Can You Trust, The Big Calm

Kruder & Dorfmeister: DJ Kicks

Dead Can Dance: Into the Labrynth

Deep Forest: Boheme

Jennifer Berezan: Returning

Website <http://www.prabhumusic.com/> has a good selection of music in this "category"

For general hearty dancing:

\* Moby: Play

\* James Asher: Feet in the Soil

\* Afro Celt Sound System: vol. 2

\* Massive Attack: Protection

Professor Trance: Shaman's Breath, Medicine Trance

Angelique Kidjo: Logozo, Oremi, Fifa

Gabrielle Roth: Tribe, Bones, Trance

Buddha Bar III

Music with vocals which women at WQ retreats often ask about:

\* Tuck & Patty: Best of Tuck & Patty

Boys on the Side [soundtrack]

Sarah McLaughlin: Fumbling Towards Ecstasy

Joan Armatrading: What's Inside?

Annie Lenox: Medusa

Des'ree: I Aint' Movin'

Alana Davis: Blame it on Me

Natalie Merchant: Tiger Lily

Jana Stanfield: Brave Faith <http://www.janastanfield.com/>

Christopher Williams: Side Streets Live <http://www.christopherw.com/>

\* Brian Joseph: We're Gonna Laugh <http://www.brianjosephmusic.com/>

Christian music good for dancing:

\* Waterdeep & 100 Portraits: Enter the Worship Circle

Hungry [liveworship]

Kelby Anno-Bruno: The Whisper That I Heard

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#### 4 - Soul Spark: POEMS

O keep squeezing drops of the sun from your prayers  
and work and music  
and from your companions' beautiful laughter  
and from the most insignificant movements of your own  
holy body.  
Now, sweet one, be wise.  
Cast all your votes for DANCING!

- Hafiz

OUR JEOPARDY by Thomas Carlisle

It is good to use best china  
the most genuine goblets  
the oldest lace tablecloth.  
There's a risk, of course,  
every time you use anything  
or anyone shares an inmost moment,  
or a fragile cup of revelation.  
But not to touch, not to handle,  
the artifacts of being human-  
is the quiet crash, the deadly catastrophe  
where nothing is enjoyed or broken  
or spilled or spoken,  
or stained, or mended -  
where nothing is ever lived, loved, laughed over, wept over,  
where nothing is ever lost,  
or found.

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#### 5 - 2003 Winter Wonderfest Retreat

February 19 (Wednesday) - February 23 Sunday

See <http://www.womensquest.com/> for description, price, and details for this lovely winter retreat in the Rockies.

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If you have a comment or suggestion, or if you would like to contribute to an upcoming WOMEN'S WEAVE MUSESLETTER, contact Gretchen Shansby at [magnoliahealingarts@juno.com](mailto:magnoliahealingarts@juno.com)  
For information on our retreats and programs, see <http://www.womensquest.com/>  
or contact [colleen@womensquest.com](mailto:colleen@womensquest.com)

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