

The Feminine Fire

The divine creative force you hold within

Volume 5 Issue 1 – Spring 2012

Divine Dominoes

Sometime around the end of junior high and the beginning of high school – about the time my girlfriends and I were starting to get big crushes on guys and the first shy, tentative pairing-up of couples was taking place – I was faced with that first-time anguish of really “liking” a boy who did not “like” me back.

Being the philosophical little thing that I was, I thought about this a lot – and not just about my own situation but about the predicament I saw so many of my classmates in. This was all easy to observe because it was taking place on a very small stage: In spite of being the quintessential baby-boomer class – the largest to graduate from our high school before or since – there were only 102 of us. Everyone knew everyone and everyone had a pretty good idea whose heart was throbbing over whom...

I liked Kenny but Kenny liked Lynne. Lynne liked Evan, but Evan liked Ginny. Ginny was stuck on Corey, but Corey had eyes only for Dawn. Dawn had a crush on Randy...and so it went. There were, of course, the pairs that were getting it right – girls who were hooking up with guys who liked them back.

Agonizing Over Loneliness

But for the most part there seemed to be an awful lot of unrequited love going around. One day, as I sat agonizing over the fact that Kenny didn't like me and wondering why the heck Evan didn't like Lynne (and get her completely out of the picture so that Kenny just might notice me), I was struck with a wonderful imaginary vision. In the scene – which was sort of foggy and filled with light -- Evan suddenly turned around and noticed Lynne. Immediately the two were drawn together like two domino-shaped magnets. They clicked together and their fusion set off a cataclysmic chain reaction. One by one pairs of mismatched and unrequited lovers shifted, rearranged themselves, snapped together, and then fell like dominoes. Ginny

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and Corey were snapped together, then Dawn and Randy, and on and on, until Kenny and I and every other lonely soul had found its mate and the domino line of once aching-hearted lovers tumbled into happiness.

Where There is Love, There is God

Although this wasn't by any stretch of the imagination a real visionary experience it has stuck with me. I think the reason for this lies not so much in the lovely notion that loneliness could be vanquished, but in the way it hinted at the interconnectedness of all life. Inherent in the way the dominos clicked together and, especially, in the way they dissolved into the foggy, glimmering cloud of light, was a glimpse behind the veil that hides the web of life from our everyday eyes.

Last week, I was driving down the street in my beat-up jeep with the words of the song of Ubi Caritas playing at top volume: *Ubi caritas et amor, ubi caritas, dios ibi est* (Where charity – i.e., unconditional love – and love are, God is there.) While stopped at a light, I was thinking about a friend's sister who is gravely ill and envisioning her wrapped in this all-powerful, healing love. Suddenly, I experienced one of those brief, startling moments when perception shifts and the world alters.

Looking out at the people who were on the hilly sidewalk I had a momentary vision of a living, conscious force that was rippling along in waves, connecting everyone and everything I saw. One young woman was sailing down the hill and another one was trudging up it with her parcels. Suddenly, I

had the clearest awareness of how wonderful it would be if the two could get things right in their lives. If they could just walk the highest path they were meant to walk and manifest their inner divine light as much as humanly possible. In that brief instant I saw the potential rightness and goodness of their actions and their lives pulsing out and setting off waves of rightness and goodness across the cosmos.....

Gandhi on the Power of Prayer

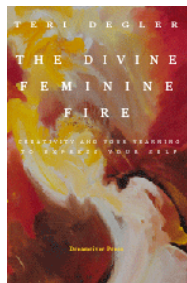
While those of us in the contemporary spirituality movement often talk about the Oneness of all things, those moments when we truly know it are precious beyond imagining. They remind us that every note of love we send humming out into the universe strikes the tuning fork that is another soul and sets it humming too. The same is true, as we all know, for hatred, anger, jealousy, fear, and all the other negative emotions – hence, all the commandments, strictures, and niyamas against them!

Still, I can't help but believe love and light are the more powerful. Gandhi is quoted as saying, "Prayer is not an old woman's amusement. Properly understood and applied it is the most potent instrument of action." The most potent instrument of action! Just think about that!

And for every action, we know, there is a reaction – a domino effect, if you will....

News from the Muse

The Divine Feminine Fire is coming out in German!!!



The Divine Feminine Fire is being published in Germany by the wonderful spiritual book publisher Aquamarin Verlag. They plan to have the book out in October '12.

AND the Italian e-book edition *IL Divino Fuoco Femminino* is now available

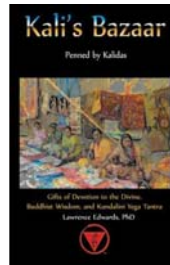
on-line! A makes a great gift for those Italian relatives!!

<http://www.ebookizzati.it/ebook-il-divino-fuoco-femminino-teri-degler-ebookizzati-icc-srl-idprd41.html>

Don't miss these two terrific new books by friends!

Kali's Bazaar – by Lawrence Edwards, PhD

Kali's Bazaar is a singularly beautiful and moving collection of poetry. Lawrence, also the author of *The Soul's Journey*, is one of those rare individuals who walks the talk. He has meditated and studied Eastern traditions for more than 35 years, and he brings the radiant love and understanding gained

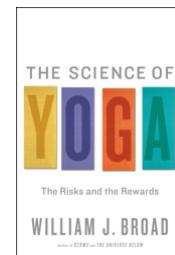


from his practice to both his books and his "day jobs" as a licensed psycho-therapist and neurotherapist. Recently, the Cincinnati Children's Hospital recruited him to develop an integrative care program for out patients. Since then, he has been in private practice in Cincinnati where he offers biofeedback, neurofeedback, mindfulness, and meditation training.

Lawrence will be a featured speaker at the 2012 KRN Conference!! See below!

The Science of Yoga: the risks and rewards – by William J. Broad

A senior writer for the New York Times, Bill had been writing about science for over three decades and been practicing yoga for even longer, when it suddenly came to him that he could write a book combining the two and answer many of the questions he – and many of us – have had about this fascinating tradition. *The Science of Yoga* is an objective look at the risks and the rewards of yoga and covers everything from the evidence that it can improve your sex life to your creativity.



Hey, I even get quoted in the book! Bill interviewed me for a couple of hours – and what do I get? A one line quote! Worse, he quotes me making a joke!! So much for my 15 minutes of fame ☺ But, seriously, don't miss this book! It is an absolute must for anyone who wants to know more about this ancient, life-changing spiritual practice....

...and great news!!!

Kundalini Research Network's bi-annual conference is coming in June to the Himalayan Institute in Pennsylvania – see info on Page 5

Women Inspiring Women



Dena Merriam

Dena Merriam is an extraordinary example of an inspiring woman and of what a phenomenal impact one individual can make. She is the founder of the [Global Peace Initiative of Women](#) – an organization that has become a major force on the international scene. Since its inception in 2002 it has brought women from warring factions – such as Israelis and Palestinians and Iraqis and Americans – together to dialogue; it has founded youth programs in conflict areas, and it has organized summits aimed at finding creative solutions to our present crisis with spiritual leaders around the globe.

You might think that an ordinary person like you or me could never accomplish anything of this magnitude. But in 1998 Dena was indeed someone very much like most of us, a mother and career woman working in a public relations firm in New York. She certainly had no forewarning that she was about to be thrust on the world stage, but in that year she was – through a series of seeming coincidences – assigned to help organize the Millennium Summit of Religious Leaders that would be held at the UN in 2000.

As her work on the Summit progressed Dena found herself wondering why so few women religious leaders were being invited. When the question was raised at meetings with various religious groups, she was often told “We don’t have any” or even “Don’t go there”. While this troubled her, there was little she – as a fairly small cog in the great UN wheel – could do. Eventually this was to change!

The catalyst for this transformation occurred during the opening ceremonies of the Summit. One of the handful of women delegates was a Buddhist nun from Thailand. This woman was already seated in the General Assembly Hall of the United Nations headquarters in New York City when a Hindu leader from an order of monks who are forbidden to look upon women started to enter. Noticing that the nun was in his line of sight, the monk and his entourage refused to proceed. During the turmoil that ensued, Dena was given the unenviable task of asking the nun to move.

This, she says, was a pivotal moment. Although working on the Summit and dealing with the world of institutional religion had made her increasingly aware of the problem of women being underrepresented and even unaccepted, she says “I was shocked that it would happen in Hinduism”. A long-time meditator and student of Yogananda’s teachings, she adds, “I had always thought of Hinduism as much more individual and less institutional.... Later in the day, when I apologized to Mae Chee Sansanee Sthirasuta, (the nun) from the Thai delegation, I bonded with her on a very deep level.”

Later during the summit Dena organized a breakfast where the women participants could air their concerns about being so underrepresented. At the breakfast, it was suggested that a special meeting focusing on women be convened in the future. Enthused, Dena had the idea presented to Kofi Annan and, with his blessing, began to organize it. As a result, in 2002 a summit of 500 women from 75 countries was held at the United Nations European headquarters, the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

Out of this historic meeting the Global Peace Initiative of Women of Religious and Spiritual Leaders was born. Soon, however, the name was shortened to its present form to reflect the importance of not just women spiritual leaders but, in fact, all spiritual women to the process of global peace.

And Dena stresses that the word “peace” here is very broadly defined. We can’t have peace, she says, unless we also address critical issues like climate change and the development of sustainable economies. “The issues,” she stresses, “are all interconnected.”

Dena goes on to suggest that it is the ability to see this interconnectedness – of not just of issues but of everything in the universe – that women bring to the table. Interrelationship, integration, inclusiveness, and co-operation are, she points out, values that come to us from the feminine side of our being, and it is these values that will lead to creative solutions to the crises that face us. The values linked to the desire to divide and conquer – long associated with the masculine



side of our being – will simply no longer do.

Dena is quick to emphasize that she is not talking about women versus men here, but about aspects of our inner selves. Men, she says, are continually encouraged to take part in GPIW events, and the organization's emphasis is increasingly less on women per se and more on these feminine values – values that both genders have access to.

It is not, she says, that our inner masculine nature is less important than the feminine, but that the historic lack of emphasis and understanding of the feminine has left us so out of balance – and, consequently, without adequate access to feminine values like cooperation and co-creation that are so desperately needed at this time.

One of the keys to this re-balancing is the recognition of the Divine Feminine – a force seen in a number of spiritual traditions as the cosmic trigger for the evolution and transformation of consciousness. And, Dena is emphatic, nothing less than a transformation of consciousness is required. The problems the world faces today cannot be solved by traditional thinking. She reminds us that in many traditions the Divine Feminine is seen as the creative force of the universe. Bringing this cosmic force back into balance and unleashing its creative energy is what is needed in the search for global solutions.



Hindu Buddhist Summit 2009

Dena's Advice on Creativity

The projects Dena Merriam has been involved in reveal her to be an exceptionally creative thinker – an individual who is continually coming up with innovative approaches to age-old problems. But Dena is also a creative person in the traditional sense. She is the author of five art books on contemporary sculptors that also include the work of her father, world-renowned sculpture photographer David Finn.

Not surprisingly, Dena sees the Divine Feminine as being as essential to her creative process as it is to the transformation of consciousness. "One of the ways to help bring about this major shift in consciousness is to

begin to connect with the natural world...

When I was in India getting ready for the 2008 conference in Jaipur, *Making Way for the Feminine: For the Benefit of the World Community*, I was looking for inspiration, and I began to connect more with the natural world. I spent time sitting by the Ganga. For millennia people have meditated there, and it has been a source of inspiration. In the process of sitting there, my experience of the Ganga changed. I received a direct experience of the living forces that exist in the rivers, in the mountains, in the forests. These forces are our allies. We can connect with them – and not just connect with them, but *work with them*.... This was an epiphany for me. As I sought to be connected with these forces I realized that this is to be connected to the feminine force, and I came to a deep understanding of how to allow this force to flow through me."

Meditating and tuning into the feminine life force is, she suggests, an excellent way to tune into the source of creative inspiration. But perhaps the main source of creative inspiration in her life has been her spiritual practice. While Dena's spiritual practice has been based on meditation and the teachings of Yogananda, she believes that any spiritual practice followed with sincerity and dedication, can be a source of creative inspiration.

Yet another source of inspiration, she says, can be found in visiting holy places. In these long-revered spaces you can connect with the sacred energy that has gathered there over time and be inspired by it.

Beyond this, Dena has found one of the most wonderful sources of creative inspiration in her life is simply meeting with and being in the company of other people – especially those who are spiritually aware. She has often found that the mingling and exchange of energy that occurs in these situations triggers new ways of perceiving the world and engenders surprisingly innovative solutions to problems.



Jaipur Women's Interfaith Summit 2008

Creativity Exercise

Prāna's in the air

When we say “spring is in the air” we don’t usually stop to think how true this is – or on what deep levels it is true...

Khalil Gibran is famous for saying, “And forget not that the earth delights to feel your bare feet and the winds long to play with your hair...” This paints an evocative sensual picture of a living, feeling earth and of a wind that is the loving life-breath itself.

And, indeed, the ancient hatha yogis told us this was indeed the case.... They said that when the universe was created, the cosmic power of the divine feminine manifested – became *manifest*, became what we know as real – as the life energy they called prāna. And that this miraculous energy then, in turn, became manifest as the earth and all the creatures that inhabit it.

They also gave the name prāna to our breath itself and called the yogi practice of breathing exercises practiced in yoga, prānayāma...

At no time of the year is the life force more visible than in spring time. The soft, pale green of awakening blades of grass and just born pine-needles, the pink of hyacinths that almost seems to pulsate, the mysterious translucent glow in the petals of a daffodil.

For this creativity exercise, you need to be outside – in the most natural setting you can find even if it is simply your own back yard. Prepare yourself by doing the white light breathing exercise #1 in [the first TFF newsletter](#) and, having your pen, paper or other art materials to hand.

1. Stay in this meditative state and begin to walk around. Explore. Seek out the evidence of new life bursting out around you.
2. As you walk, remember to breathe in yoga fashion, allowing the bottom, then the middle, then the top of your lungs to expand and fill as you slowly inhale; reversing the process to exhale, gently emptying the bottom first and then on upwards.
3. Stay conscious of your breath – conscious that it’s the life force itself you’re breathing in.
4. Pause when you see the new life – get as close to it as possible. Let your eyes feast on the color. Sink into it. Breathe in its delicacy.
5. Walk on until you find two or three more colors – even just different shades of one color. Breathe them in.
6. Describe, paint, or express in some other creative way the colors and what you have experienced.

KRN Conference Consciousness Expanding: Kundalini Transformation Now!

June 15-17, 2012
Himalayan Institute
Honesdale, Pennsylvania

To give you just a taste of what an extraordinarily diverse and exciting group of speakers will be exploring kundalini as the power of Consciousness that is transforming us today, here are just a few:

Kundalini – The Power of Radical Freedom
Lawrence Edwards, PhD, long-time student of yoga and meditation, is on the faculty of New York Medical College and maintains private practice in psychotherapy and other modalities that help us become our optimal selves.

Yoga Research – Current Perspectives
Sat Bir Singh Khalsa, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School and Associate Neuroscientist who teaches Kundalini Yoga and practiced a yoga lifestyle for over 35 years.

All Is One
Judith Miller, PhD, is a Professor of Developmental Psychology at Columbia University; who has been assisting people on a spiritual path for 25 years through breathwork and integrative psychotherapy.

Kundalini In Judaism - A Kabbalistic Perspective
Rabbi Jerry Steinberg is a practicing mystic who has studied kundalini yoga. He lectured on mysticism and meditation at the University of North Dakota and is currently rabbi of a congregation in Ontario, Canada. His memoir is being published this spring by ECW Press.

For more on the other internationally renowned speakers like **Barbara Harris Whitfield, RT, CMT** and **Charles Whitfield, MD** go to <http://www.kundalininet.org/>

Don't miss the chance to be at this fantastic conference!!

About Teri

The creator of this newsletter is Teri Degler. She's an award-winning author who's written ten books including *The Fiery Muse: Creativity and the Spiritual Quest* (Random House, Canada). Her most recent book, *The Divine Feminine Fire* (Dreamriver Press, USA) is an Amazon.ca # 1 Bestseller in two spiritual categories. See teridegler.com