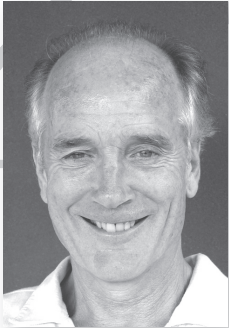


Keep Being Here Anyway



Alan Lowen

Hello friends,
It is exciting and gratifying to watch The Art of Being® getting on the map in America. In Europe, for many years it has been an important resource of personal growth, life-celebration and spiritual awakening. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Omega Institute especially for their recognition, because it is really through my regular summer and winter programs for Omega, and involvement in other significant events like their New York weekend conferences, that many people who would not otherwise have discovered The Art of Being have been able to do so. I frequently receive beautiful letters of appreciation from people who have participated in these events, and I'm receiving a growing number of invitations to bring The Art of Being to new audiences and venues in the USA.

The two themes that I am especially asked for are death and sex. I could have phrased this more elegantly, but it is precisely because so much has been swept under the carpet, distorted, exploited and "Disneyfied" about both these themes that we need to engage with their simple, sometimes raw and essentially beautiful nature. Yes, death also has the potential for immense beauty, as anyone can tell you who has been privileged to sit in the presence of someone who knows how to surrender to their death with tranquil presence and spiritual consciousness.

It is natural to be afraid of death; but our culture indulges this fear rather than seeing in it our opportunity to learn the precious qualities of courage and trust that are just there, like apples on the tree of death, waiting for us. And where can we better learn how to let go than in death? We confront so many goodbyes in our lives - little deaths! - and we are often unable to find or be the good in them. So much of our pain comes from trying to hold on to that which is going or has gone. Given the possessive indoctrinations of our society it isn't surprising; but clinging on keeps us infantile. Learning to let go grows us.

I doubt that anybody reading this needs a discourse from me on the ways sex is abused in our culture. The most important thing for me to say in a short letter like this is that all our struggles, judgments, fears and games around sex are not to do with sex at all. They all arise from the disconnection between our sexuality and our feelings, our heart and our being. This is why all The Art of Being's Tantric workshops, like Sacred Sex, Body, Heart & Soul®, Natural Tantra and so on, are designed to

reconnect sex and body, sex and feelings, sex and heart, sex and soul. Each workshop has its own particular way of inviting this. What they have in common - and it is true of ALL Art of Being workshops - is that they invite participants into EXPERIENCES. This doesn't mean a sexual free-for-all! The experiences have been refined over many years. They are meticulously crafted to create safe and boundary-honoring spaces within which people - singles or couples - are guided into processes, usually with others, that invite healing, opening, connection, sensitivity, delight and deep awakening into being. They bring beauty and happiness into our intimacy. In the end, all Tantra is the awakening into our total presence that enables us to BE IN LOVE.

So yes, the call to bring some light and healing to these two potent issues is a good sign. This Fall we're finally bringing Body, Heart & Soul®1 to the East Coast - Vermont in October! You can read about the whole 4-part Body, Heart & Soul course in depth on our website. It is The Art of Being's education in sexual loving, intimate relating and the essence of Tantra. The 7-day residential workshop in Vermont, Body, Heart & Soul Part 1, is a journey shaped by the fact that our sexual nature was generally not honored and celebrated when we grew up, not by our parents nor our peers. This workshop is a beautiful way to come to love the gift of your male-female nature integrated into your whole being, and to get free of the bonds of shame, anxiety, body issues and feeling-fears that may be in your way.

Later on next year I'll also be offering for the first time a workshop at Kripalu in Massachusetts, and in December this year I'm teaching a death-and-dying Training program on Maui with Ram Dass and Frank Ostaseski among others: thrilling!

Also of course, New Year brings High on Life, our truly fabulous Hawaiian vacation workshop, and as you'll see in the brochure, it's designed to provide deep adventuring into your own art of being, and into the tropical glories of Maui in winter - season of the whales! Do you know how amazing it is to dive one meter down and hear the whales singing? If you'd like a sample, go to <http://www.whalesong.net/> and be astonished!

Everything we present invites you to become the full-flowing celebration of all the gifts that YOU ARE! Living our gifts is how we say thank you for being!

Aloha, alan

The Only Story That Matters

About thirty years ago, in the days when I was leading encounter groups in England and interspersing them with whatever trainings attracted me, I participated in a 3-month intensive workshop in London. The group met twice a week and for a couple of weekends, and ended with a 5-day residential group in the countryside. It was the final Saturday afternoon of those last five days, just a day left, and I remember how lazy the atmosphere was in the group room. Someone was playing a guitar, and everyone, including the group leader, was lounging around as though nothing more would happen. I was lying belly down on a cushion, casually observing everyone and enjoying this family we had become. Suddenly my eyes came to rest on a middle-aged woman; I realized I had made no contact with her at all during the entire three months. She didn't know I was looking at her. I was simply recognizing how much I disliked her – so much that I hadn't even wanted to tell her; I wanted nothing to do with her, and had unconsciously erased her from the circle, made her non-existent! The fact was shocking to me, and I silently began to pay attention to what it was about her that I found so repellant. The realization of who she represented to me was like a bomb exploding through my entire psychophysical system. I was engulfed in a black wave of horror. My head fell into the cushion beneath me, and I found myself sinking into an abyss of anguish that gradually overwhelmed me until, as though from fathomless depths I could hear myself sobbing. She was the nun who ruled the orphanage where for five years she had terrorized me as a young child. I had learned, as people do, to bury the deepest horrors of those years so that I could survive and function in life, and now, as though patiently waiting for this moment, the nightmare I had lived in came roaring out of the past.

I didn't say a word, and I wasn't afraid of what was happening to me. It was as though the force of what was coming was so huge that I knew resistance was futile. I think I even understood, from a place beyond intellect, that without receiving this I couldn't open into the totality of my being. The truth is, I had chosen this when I walked out of Oxford and dedicated my life to the cause of BEING. In any case, I let myself fall all the way into my ghost of Sister Damion. That

was her name. She was like Nurse Ratched (who was placed fifth on the American Film Institute's list of the 50 all-time greatest movie villains), in "One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest". That film had come out the previous year and I vividly recall how it gripped and chilled me. It may even be that it had already helped remove some of the earth under which Sister Damion was buried. Life has a wondrous way of bringing us to critical moments in the moment that matters.

There is an old saying, "When the disciple is ready, the master appears". I guess I had already learned to accept that the master, the teacher, can come in many forms. Our part is to receive him however he comes. And here he came, in the form of an invitation to meet my nightmare. I wasn't in my past. My past was dramatically present to me, but with one great difference. I was safe. I was among people who loved me and could let me be. As I fell further and further into my dark ocean of tears, I could sense the presence around me of everyone in the room. I knew they were all with me. I knew I didn't need to acknowledge them. Their hands were on me, gentle, caring, and I was in free fall. I didn't want to save myself. I only wanted to fall all the way.

There came a point where Sister Damion and the orphanage disappeared. I was in the womb, then beyond the womb. All images evaporated. Only there was the sound of sobbing in a dark infinity; as though that was all there ever was; but now, no heaviness, no pain. A soft sweetness, like a smile, began pervading the space in which I had drowned. A deep amusement crept little by little into my sobs so that they began to laugh at themselves. I was laughing and crying at the same time, and rising, rising until I felt myself among people again, heard their laughter mingling with my own, their hands still stroking my curled body. After what seemed an age, I raised my wet face. I was shining. I could feel my own radiance.

Many things happened then. I could see clearly all that I hadn't been living, and I found a vastly deepened trust in my own life journey. My life changed completely. I went to India, met Osho Rajneesh (he was Bhagwan in those days) and became his disciple, a sannyasin with a new name – Anand Rajen

– and no past. I left England and lived in India with him for three years, then on his controversial ranch in Oregon where we built a city in the desert. Eight years later I let all that go, became Alan again, and soon after founded The Art of Being®.

There are many other stories of course, and they belong to my book. What matters here-now, and the point of this story, is that I never spoke in the group about what had triggered me, or about Sister Damion. It wasn't necessary. What mattered was the depth of the opening into being that it brought me. The one who rose up out of the abyss was different from the one who fell into it. Across these three decades I have fallen and risen many times, and each time I have become more light; light as consciousness and spirit, and light as playfulness and easiness in being this mysterious "Alan".

WE ARE ALL SUCH MYSTERIES! And the purpose of the stories of our lives is to be continuously and ever more significantly opened through them into our boundless potential, so that we are for ever becoming richer and lighter manifestations of ourselves. This is why, in my workshops, I don't spend time processing and analyzing what happened to participants. All that does is throw us off the path of being, and back into the clutches of the mind stuff that we get lost in – thinking life! – where we unconsciously forget how awesome and miraculous life is when we are PRESENT!

It isn't that the stories don't matter. It is that the story that matters is the one that is happening right here-and-now, whether it comes knocking on our door from out there in existence, or rising out of the depths of our inner world, making the past for a little while meaningfully present. To be here now doesn't mean that we don't have a past. One of the absurdities of the "instant-enlightenment" brigade is the belief that with a single touch or look or word from "the enlightened one", all our stuff dissolves, the past is no more, and we become enlightened. That's really just a paper-thin mind-game to save us from all that we're afraid to meet in ourselves. Befriending our fears is what brings us the blessings we seek.

©Alan Lowen, August 2006

The Universal Experience

Aug 25-27, 2006 Omega Institute, New York
led by Alan Lowen

One of the most beautiful and life-transforming workshops available on the theme of death, dying, loss and letting go, this remarkably real journey into life's greatest mystery has restored trust and understanding for countless people. The Universal Experience will almost certainly transform your relationship with death. Its greatest blessing, however, is the effect it is likely to have on the way you live your daily life.

"If somebody could only take part in a single workshop with me," says Alan Lowen, "I would say to them, make it this one!"

Sacred Sex

Aug 28-Sept 1, 2006 Omega Institute, NY
led by Alan Lowen

This workshop is for couples and singles alike—anyone who wants to experience the heart of tantra.

"Tantra is not about technique, It is about learning to be in love; not essentially with somebody, but as a way of being. It calls us to embrace in friendship the totality of our being so that we are able to pour ourselves fully into life."

This workshop offers a process of gradual surrender to your own nature, a return to your natural body, heart, and soul. It opens you deeply to yourself, and as much or as little as you wish, to others. In the process, you dissolve old survival patterns that sabotage intimacy and happiness.

Reclaiming the Body's Wisdom:

Internet radio with Voice America
www.voice.voiceamerica.com/

Thursday December 14 Noon Pacific (3pm EST)
"Reclaim Your Primal Body" with Mary Desaulniers
Ph.D. interviewing Alan Lowen

Body, Heart & Soul® 1: Restoring Sexual Innocence

Oct 27 - Nov 3, 2006 Skymeadow Retreat Center, Vermont
led by Alan Lowen

The purpose of this 7-day journey is that you can be deeply at home and happy being the man or woman that you are, enjoy real intimacy in your sexual relationship(s), and learn how to keep opening to all that becomes available when you are truly present in your body, feelings, heart and soul.

Guided into an ever-deepening Yes to your male/female nature, you find yourself gradually letting go of the limiting sexual judgments you may have grown up with, and reclaiming whatever freedom and entitlement you may have lost in the realm of your sexuality. Body, Heart & Soul 1 is designed to restore innocence, playfulness, celebration, integrity and sacredness to the way you live your sexual nature as an intrinsic part of your whole being.

Course fee: \$ 750 (early booking \$690 until Aug 27)

Food & Accommodation: \$480

Registration:

Kelly Rees Tel: 503-914-1300

E-mail: bhsusa@artofbeing.com

Freedom to Feel, Freedom to Love

Oct 27 - 29, 2006 Skymeadow Retreat Center, Vermont
led by Alan Lowen

This first weekend of Body, Heart & Soul 1 is also a complete workshop in itself. It invites you to discover and experience the power, richness, beauty and playfulness of your own existence as a man or woman. It is about learning to let your sexuality become a way of growing and of healing; and it is about beginning to find in yourself that which enables you to enjoy all the gifts of intimate loving in your life.

Course fee: \$375 (early booking \$325 until Aug 27)

Food & Accommodation: \$160

Registration:

Kelly Rees Tel: 503-914-1300

Email : bhsusa@artofbeing.com

'Ipuka I Ke Ao - Doorway into Light

Dec 2-3 Maui

a 2-day workshop featuring Ram Dass, Alan Lowen and Aulii Mitchell
"our bodies die, our souls continue the journey"

Info: Call Bodhi Be, Spiritual Director / 'Ipuka I Ke Ao
808-573-8334 Email beloveds@hawaiiintel.net

High on Life 2007

December 28th, 2006 - January 18th 2007, Maui, Hawaii

led by Alan Lowen & Jan Day

Our annual vacation workshop invites you to break out of winter into a tropical paradise far removed from the cold climes of North America and Europe. High on Life will again take place on Maui, amidst the beauty and magic of our island home. High on Life is our deep celebration of nature, heart, being and spirit, balanced between the workshop sessions where we open all the gifts of our being, and our sojourns into the glories of Maui. This is an experience to treasure your whole life, both for the awesome loveliness and for the inner blessings. There is a third element too: the Art of Being community that we become for the time we are together is a blue-print for how we can love, learn, heal and celebrate together..

EARLY BIRD PRICE for bookings by 28th September 2006 \$3300 includes course fee, meals and standard accommodation

Email: info@artofbeing.com • Tel: (808)-572-1435 • 1-800-871-1068 • Fax: (808)-573-1096

NB We currently have only 6 places available for men on this workshop and a waiting list for women.

25-27 Aug	The Universal Experience	Omega Institute, NY	Alan Lowen
28 Aug - 1 Sept	Sacred Sex	Omega Institute, NY	Alan Lowen
Oct 27 - 29	Freedom to Feel, Freedom to Love	Skymeadow, Vermont	Alan Lowen
Oct 27 - Nov 3	Body, Heart & Soul 1	Skymeadow, Vermont	Alan Lowen
Dec 2-3	'Ipuka I Ke Ao - Doorway into Light	Maui	Ram Dass, Alan Lowen & Aulii Mitchell
Dec 14 (3pm EST)	Reclaiming the Body's Wisdom- Internet radio	www.voice.voiceamerica.com	Mary Desauliers interviews Alan Lowen
Dec 28 - Jan 18	High on Life 2007	Maui	Alan Lowen & Jan Day

INFORMATION & REGISTRATION

MAIN OFFICE : The Art of Being® LLC
PO Box 790269, Paia, HI 96779, USA
Tel: +1-808-572-1435 (voicemail)
or 1-800-871-1068
Email: jan@artofbeing.com
www.artofbeing.com

FOR WORKSHOPS held at Omega Institute, New York
Contact Omega Institute directly at 1-800-944-1001
or book online at www.eomega.org/

For our European program, including our 2 year Body, Heart & Soul training; full descriptions of all our workshops; to order CDs and read more articles, go to:

www.artofbeing.com

You can download the European version of the Art of Being® Journal from our website (click on publications). We can email the Journal to you or send it by mail on request: call (808) 572-1435 or email jan@artofbeing.com

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PO Box 790269, Paia, HI 96779
www.artofbeing.com
Tel: (800) 871-1068

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Thanks!

